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1978

CASTRO SOROMENHO AND HIS TOTAL VISION OF AFRICA

by

GERALD B. SCHARFMAN

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ABSTRACT

CASTRO SOROMENHO AND HIS TOTAL VISION OF AFRICA

by

Gerald B. Scharfman

Adviser: Professor Ernesto Da Cal

No one in the history of Portuguese literature dedicated more of his life and his works to Africa than Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho. Born in Mozambique and raised in Angola, he alone, of all the writers of his times, succeeded in synthesizing the realities of the African present through its past. For Soromenho, those realities consisted of three distinct pieces of a puzzle which came together almost dialectically to create the contemporary world in which he lived. First, there was the tribal African living the drama of life in a hostile world totally devoid of external influences. Second, there were the Portuguese explorers of the last century who endeavored to penetrate, then exploit and eventually dominate Africa. Last, there was colonialism, the inevitable result of European exploration, in which Africa could and would be worked for the benefit of Europe. And before Soromenho could properly depict this African present, he had to thoroughly analyze and understand the African past.

Beginning in the remote district of Lunda, in the northeast of Angola, Soromenho sought out and studied the African

within his own nuclear family, the tribe. Ever sympathetic to the victims of oppression, Soromenho always took the side of the underdog. Further, in Soromenho's world of universal values, that underdog could be Man or men. In his early novel, Noite de Angústia, the tyrant is the supernatural, the victim, Man. In Homens sem Caminho, on the other hand, the oppressors are the bellicose Quicos who defeat and destroy their hapless foes, the peaceful Lundas.

Soromenho painstakingly lays the foundations of the past, through his short stories, novels, articles and monographs so as to better focus on the issues of his present. That present is, of course, the clash of cultures in colonial Africa. As the causes of this strife are rooted in economic imperialism, the exploitation of man by man is one of the principal themes of his last three works. But the wider theme is that of Man as the ultimate victim. Nowhere is this more true than in Soromenho's best-written and best-known novel, Terra Morta. We learn, through that novel, that when one man suffers degradation and despair, all men are diminished thereby. In this particular novel, nothing remains in the "dead land." In fact land is a symbol for life, that life which has been snuffed out of everyone by the ravages of colonialism.

Soromenho's total vision of Africa, then, is a synthesis of all the elements of his colonial present. The tribal African leaves his traditions for the cultural limbo of "civilization." Yet he never quite adapts to the new ways being forced upon him. The old Portuguese merchants who had made their fame and fortune

in Angola during the slave trade and the rubber boom of the last century, are now poor and embittered men. They are slowly withering away in decadent colonial towns in the jungles. Worse still, they are as powerless to reverse the verdicts of history as they are to cope with the new race of people they have created, their mulatto children. And the white colonial officers in these novels have chosen the certainties of survival in the jungle to the instability of life in Portugal. In Soromenho's last three works, a full stomach in the jungles of Lunda is preferable to starvation in the streets of Lisbon.

Soromenho is the ultimate humanist throughout his literary career. The vast majority of his fiction reflects that vision, thereby increasing its own universal appeal. As we come to understand that Soromenho was persecuted during his entire life, from within as well as without, we appreciate his works even more. Soromenho, an Afro-Portuguese white living in exile in Europe while writing exclusively of Angola, is uniquely suited to bring us a total vision of Africa. He gives us the best vision he has.

FOREWORD

When I began this study of Castro Soromenho's life and works, my only guide into the jungles of Lunda was Professor Gerald Moser. The study would never have progressed without his preliminary work in this field. He also very kindly arranged introductions to Professor Fernando Mourão of the University of São Paulo and D. Mercedes de Castro Soromenho, my subject's widow. I visited Mourão and D. Mercedes in São Paulo and they both gave me graciously of their time, patience and hospitality. All of Part Two of this study is dedicated to D. Mercedes who first made me aware that no in-depth work had ever been done on her husband's pre-colonial fiction. I am also grateful to Antônio Cândido, Antônio Soares Amora and especially Adolfo Casais Monteiro who all treated me most cordially during my visit to São Paulo. I spent two full days with Casais Monteiro plumbing the depths of his knowledge of both Soromenho and his works. Both men had much in common and, unfortunately, both died in exile.

I could not have gone to Portugal to continue my research without the financial aid of the Fulbright Commission. Its director in Lisbon, Carlos de Azevedo greatly facilitated my efforts there. I also gained great insight into Soromenho through two of his close friends, José Cardoso Pires and Maria Lamas.

Finally, this study came to fruition through the unending patience and love of Professor Ernesto Guerra Da Cal. Professor Da Cal was midwife to this study while his very lovely wife, Elsie, nourished me physically and spiritually with her sopinhas. Together, they helped me shape a study which hopefully does credit to Castro Soromenho and to Portuguese and Angolan Literature.

One last word of gratitude must go to my family for its forbearance and loving help during my years of research and writing.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Portuguese-speaking world of this century, no writer has been more misunderstood, maligned or ignored by entire sectors of the Lusitanian literary community than Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho.

Only Soromenho, because of his highly ambiguous position in Portuguese letters, could find himself being praised by the occasional literary critic Franco Nogueira (more noted for his role as Foreign Minister under Salazar) on the one hand, and by João Pedro de Andrade and Jorge de Sena, high priests of "Neo-Realist" criticism (and vehemently anti-Salazarist) on the other, simultaneously! The former would describe Soromenho, of all the thousands of Portuguese who had been in Africa, as the only one to describe his experiences "de uma forma que antes dele ninguém utilizara em Portugal."[1] João Pedro de Andrade would be much more precise in expanding the frontiers of what he perceived Neo-Realism to be, by saying:

> Talvez que Ferreira de Castro escrevesse a Lã e a Neve e Assis Esperança Servidão sem o exemplo dos seus camaradas mais novos; . . . . Talvez mesmo que Castro Soromenho tivesse escrito Terra Morta sem o intuito de servir uma escola, . . . , entre os seus livros anteriores . . . e esse romance há uma diferença . . . e se realiza na afirmação duma força persuasiva e serena de objectivacao dos factos, que faz de Terra Morta, depois de A Selva, a mensagem das letras

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[1]Alberto Franco Nogueira, Jornal de Crítica Literária (Lisbon: Portugália [1954]), p. 63.

portuguesas de mais largo significado.[2]

Jorge de Sena echoed those sentiments with: "Castro Soromenho veio a escrever uma obra prima destas [i.e., neo-realistas] e do romance ultramarino."[3] It should be remembered, however, that A Selva was first published in 1930 and Terra Morta nineteen years later, which leaves a rather lengthy pause in the letras portuguesas de mais largo significado.

Somewhere in the middle of that spectrum bounded by the F. Nogueiras on one side and the J. P. de Andrades and J. de Senas on the other, noted critics would render one or another judgment. João Gaspar Simões, for example, said: "Não creio que haja em Portugal escritor que melhor tenha escrito literàriamente sobre a África."[4] More or less in the same vein, Jacinto do Prado Coelho would call Soromenho a "contista e romancista de mérito invulgar."[5] And Adolfo Casais Monteiro, whom one would never mention in the same breath with either the Nogueiras or the Neo-Realistas, would say of Soromenho's opus magnus, Terra Morta:[6]

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[2]João Pedro de Andrade, "Ambições e Limites do 'Neo-realismo' Português," Tetracórnio, ed. José-Augusto França (Lisbon, 1955), p. 59.

[3]Jorge de Sena, "Tentativa de um Panorama Coordinado da Literatura Portuguesa de 1901 a 1950," ibid., p. 23.

[4]João Gaspar Simões, Crítica III (Lisbon: Delfos, 1969), p. 48.

[5]Jacinto do Prado Coelho, ed., "Jornalismo," Dicionário de Literatura, 2 vols. (Porto: Livraria Figueirinhas, 1969), 2:509.

[6]Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho, Terra Morta, Coleção Gaivota, 1 (Rio: Livraria-Editôra da Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1949).

> Terra Morta é sem dúvida o melhor romance de Castro Soromenho. A segurança, a naturalidade, a verdade humana das cenas e dás figuras, a nitidez e a transparência de estilo, que são apanágio do romancista em pleno domínio da matéria que trabalha, põem esta obra num plano que raras vezes temos visto alcançado pelos nossos romancistas contemporâneos.[7]

Even the mulatto poet-geographer Francisco José Tenreiro from São Tomé, while admitting that he did not quite understand the significance of Terra Morta, could still affirm that "Castro Soromenho era o escritor que mais firme mergulhara no coração de África."[8]

Even a brief introduction to the most important of Soromenho's critics would be incomplete, however, without reference to Roger Bastide, the French anthropologist and literary critic who had dedicated so much of his life to Afro-Brazilian studies, and Manuel Ferreira, novelist and short story writer of Cape Verdean themes, literary critic and the outstanding Portuguese scholar in the field of Afro-Portuguese literature today. First, Bastide:

> Le poète brésilien João Cabral de Melo Neto a recueille récemment l'ensemble de son oeuvre poétique sous le titre significatif de Duas Águas. Nul titre ne conviendrait mieux sans doute à l'oeuvre romancée de Castro Soromenho--avec ses deux pentes, celle du roman poétique (que je préférarai d'ailleurs épique) et celle du roman réaliste, de l'Afrique sans les hommes

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[7]Adolfo Casais Monteiro. O Romance e os seus Problemas. Coll. Biblioteca de Cultura Contemporânea, 1 (Lisbon: Livraria-Editôra da Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1950), pp. 314-315.

[8]Francisco José Tenreiro, "Um Romance de Castro Soromenho," rev. of Terra Morta by Castro Soromenho, in Portucale, 25-27 (Janeiro-Junho 1950) 130.

blancs et de l'Afrique colonisée, ...[9]

Then, Manuel Ferreira, who states that Soromenho:

> . . . começando por adivinhar o sentido mítico das histórias e lendas de povos angolanos para depois apreender as suas estruturas sociais, nomeadamente na última fase da sua obra. . ., e já de posse de um processo narrativo de maior contenção, ganha um avanço na interpretação dos desajustamentos das relações sociais e humanas entre brancos e negros, prenunciando tempos instáveis e dramáticos.[10]

Judgments on these and other criticisms will have to be made, obviously, as their words are brought to bear on Soromenho's specific works. Can we, for example, support Bastide's dichotomy of the epic-poetic versus the realist, as most of the studies on Soromenho affirm? Do Soromenho's works, in fact, foreshadow "unstable and dramatic times" as asserted by Manuel Ferreira, or is the latter's judgment purely one of hindsight, unsupported by the works themselves? How valid is Casais Monteiro's remark that Soromenho's works are superior to those of Álves Redol[11] when the old presencista's feud with the Neo-Realists spanned the better part of three decades?

There are many others who have written on Soromenho and his works but they deliberately concentrated on one or another aspect or period for reasons totally alien to literary criticism and scholarship. On the one hand, there are those like Amândio

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[9]Roger Bastide, L'Afrique dans L'Oeuvre de Castro Soromenho (Paris: Pierre Jean Oswald Editeur, 1960), p. 7.

[10]Manuel Ferreira, "Angola," Grande Dicionário da Literatura Portuguesa e de Teoria Literária, ed. João José Cochofel, publ. in fascicles until the editor's death circa 1975 (Lisbon: Iniciativas Editoriais, 1973), p. 303.

[11]Adolfo Casais Monteiro, tape-recorded interview with the writer, São Paulo, 7 April 1972.

César and Mário António. The former was a self-styled fascist, a spy for the Portuguese Secret Police (P.I.D.E.) and an apologist for Portuguese totalitarianism at home and Portuguese Colonialism abroad. The latter was alleged to have been a founding member of the Communist Party of Angola (P.C.A.), later finding greater safety in Lisbon by cooperating with the regime and denouncing all his past ties. These two are most noteworthy for their misrepresentations, even invalidations, of Soromenho and his works. On the other hand, there are those like Fernando Mourão, a professor of African sociology at the University of São Paulo, a long-time friend of Soromenho and today the curator of his personal library, and Professor Gerald Moser, the outstanding scholar in the United States in the field of Afro-Portuguese literature and also a personal friend of Soromenho's who seemingly treat as inconsequential, whennot omitting altogether, Soromenho's close collaboration with Portuguese colonialism in the late 1930's and early 1940's.

Castro Soromenho was a product of the colonial environment from his earliest days as a journalist. We will attempt to establish that fact beyond the shadow of a doubt. We will also attempt to show why Soromenho was "adopted" by the Neo-Realists in the 1950's after had been shunned by them for a decade. We will examine the question of the "nationality" of Soromenho's literature: whether he should be considered a Portuguese writer concentrating entirely on Angolan themes (as Casais Monteiro has asserted), or whether he was an Angolan writer, as he himself claimed, when interviewed for an Angolan literary review in

1959.[12]

Throughout this study, nevertheless, we will attempt to bring to light what we believe to be the underlying theme not only in Soromenho's works but in his life as well. That theme was, and is, Soromenho's love for Angola. His entire life, through his works and in his actions, was dedicated to transmitting that love of Africa to the Portuguese in the metropole. To that end he would write for any newspaper or magazine that would give him the living space for his views, experiences and creative abilities. To that end he would be a journalist, a short story writer, a novelist, an historian, an ethnographer--as long as those occupations allowed him to write of his beloved land. Yet from the outset he was doomed to fail, not because he could not rise to heights of literary brilliance but because the majority of the Portuguese were totally disinterested in all things African. Of those few who were interested, the great majority cared only for those men who wrote strange tales of exotic "negroes" in darkest Africa. As Soromenho's literature quickly evolved away from this view, reflecting his own personal and ideological evolution towards a more realistic view of Portugal in Africa, he lost even those few supporters and readers he had had in former days. He was to become completely isolated from the literary communities in Portugal, scorned by the colonialists for his turnabout and ignored by the Neo-

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[12]Fernando Mourão, "Entrevista com Castro Soromenho," Cultura, 11 (May 1960) 7.

Realists for having "collaborated" with the former (and, by extension, with the regime that fostered colonialism) for fourteen years. He would be forced into exile in the late 1950's because of relentless persecution by a government in Lisbon which had, only seventeen years earlier, awarded him its first prize for colonial literature and now found the ingratitude of his realism intolerable. He would spend much of the last nine years of his life in the misery of poverty, political persecution and separation from his family, the components of exile for so many thousands of Portuguese during the 1960's. And after finally finding safety in Brazil, after finally reuniting his entire family, after finally securing a full-time position teaching African sociology at the University of São Paulo, two weeks excactly after this appointment, he died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage, his life's work never to be completed.

PART I

THE MAN

CHAPTER I

AT HOME IN ANGOLA

Castro Soromenho was born in the coastal town of Chinde, in the district of Zambézia in Mozambique on 31 January 1910. HIs father, Artur Ernesto de Castro Soromenho, had come to Mozambique around 1900, possibly to attempt to make his fortune, as some of his countrymen before him had attempted to do in Africa. In 1906, he met and married a young woman named Stella Fernançola de Leça Monteiro, the daughter of a Judge of the Supreme Court in Lisbon and descendant of a family of Portuguese colonists who had planted their roots in Cape Verde a long time before.[1] Curiously enough, both Arthur and Stella, although they met in Mozambique, had been born in Porto. Seven children were born to the couple, in rapid succession. Between child-bearing and child-rearing, the family moved to Angola in 1911, when Castro Soromenho was a year old. With the advent of the Republic (5 October 1910), Soromenho's father, an ardent republican, joined the colonial administration in Angola. At age five, Castro Soromenho was sent to a boarding school in Lisbon, where he remained until midway through high school. In 1925, his father recalled him

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[1]Waldemar de Castro Soromenho, taped-recorded interview with the writer in São Paulo, 1 April 1972. Hereafter referred to in these notes as Wald. de C.S. Waldemar is Soromenho's oldest son and was twenty-one years of age when interviewed.

to Angola, interrupting his education. He spent two years with his father, who by now had been governor of various districts in Angola and who probably, in 1927, became governor of the Lunda district in the northeastern corner of Angola.

The only important enterprise in Lunda at the time is Diamang, the Diamond Company of Angola. According to James Duffy, Diamang "began operations in 1920. Capitalized mostly by Belgian and British interests of the Union Minière, it immediately became Angola's chief financial support. Exempt from taxes and duties, and with the Lunda labour force at its exclusive disposal, Diamang was--and is--a small monopolistic empire."[2] Given this fact, Artur de Castro Soromenho's appointment as governor of that district takes on added importance. At seventeen, Soromenho obtained a job with Diamang, as recruiter of forced labor. The only way we know that he recruited "forced" labor is that this was the principal method of supplying labor for Diamong.[3]

A problem arises in determining how long Soromenho worked in this capacity. His son recalled that Soromenho worked there for only a few months before entering the colonial

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[2]James Duffy, Portugual in Africa (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 140-141.

[3]See Hugh Kay, Salazar and Modern Portugal (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1970), p. 217; Norman A. Bailey, "Native and Labor Policy," Portuguese Africa: A Handbook, ed. David M. Abshire and Michael A. Samuels (New York: Praeger, 1961), pp. 167-168.

administration. His widow supported that contention.[4] They further claimed that Soromenho worked in the colonial administration as a district officer (chefe de posto) from approximately 1928 through 1937, when he left Angola after spending some months in Luanda. They stated specifically that he spent ten years, from 1927 to 1937, in the jungles of Lunda. Gerald Moser repeats this claim, although in a less exact fashion, when he says that Soromenho "served for many years as a chefe de posto in various interior districts."[5]

When this study of Soromenho and his works was first begun, this writer's natural inclination was to believe without serious question what had been said in first-hand, taped interviews with the author's widow and children and others in São Paulo who knew him well. The inclination also, was to accept Moser's affirmations totally. But as examination was begun into Soromenho's early life, especially as chronicled in a major newspaper in Luanda during the early 1930's, great lacunae and contradictions clearly arose. In all fairness to D. Mercedes de Castro Soromenho, it must be stated that since she did not meet her husband until 1937, was together with him for a very brief time in Lisbon and did not see him

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[4]Mercedes de Castro Soromenho, tape-recorded interviews on 1, 5 and 10 April 1972. Hereafter referred to in these notes as Mercedes de C.S.

[5]Gerald Moser, Essays in Portuguese-African Literature, Penn State Studies, No. 26 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1969), p. 45.

again until they were married in Argentina twelve years later (1949), the accuracy of her accounts of Soromenho's early life in Africa are open to question. Much of Professor Moser's biographical data comes from D. Mercedes herself[6] and the remainder directly from Soromenho and Professor Fernando Mourão of the University of São Paulo. Moser and Mourão apparently also glossed over Soromenho's employment record in Angola as well as his contributions to certain newspapers and magazines in Lisbon in the late 1930's and early 1940's. That Soromenho "Perhaps out of modesty, . . . never seems to have written about his own career as a writer," as Moser states,[7] is true only insofar as he did not write about his career as a writer. However, that it was "perhaps out of modesty," although not an unreasonable conjecture on Moser's part given his lack of facts, is less certain, as evidence will attest later on. Moser goes on to state that "Even the little we know of the exterior circumstances of his life is merely what he disclosed to publishers, editors and his academic employers."[8] As will be proposed, Soromenho did not live in a vacuum between publication of his various works and did have another existence which he deliberately chose to keep secret. The reasons for that decision will also be dealt with.

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[6]Mercedes de C. S., interview, 1 April 1972.

[7]Moser, p. 44.

[8]Ibid.

The information now at hand, while certainly not complete, does contradict certain assertions made by Soromenho's immediate family and Moser, while allowing for speculation of much greater probability on what occurred from 1927 or 1928 to 1935. It was in 1935, there is good reason to believe, that he did in fact enter the colonial administration for a short time.

In late 1931, Artur de Castro Soromenho, "Governador da Lunda,"[9] comes to Luanda after having been in an automobile accident some short time before. It is not unreasonable to hypothesize that Soromenho's father was governor of the Lunda district for three or four years before his presence was registered in Luanda by the newspaper Última Hora.[10] It is also possible to hypothesize that when Artur de Castro Soromenho became

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[9]"Notícias de Sociedade," Última Hora (Luanda), 5 November 1931, p. 1.

[10]Última Hora began as an afternoon tri-weekly in Luanda on 11 November 1930. The two major periodicals which predated it were the Boletim Oficial de Angola, begun in Luanda in 1945 and A Província de Angola, begun in Luanda on 16 August 1923. Última Hora became a bi-weekly and finally an afternoon daily on 15 May 1935. From its founding, it was a very strong liberal, republican newspaper, in the terminology of the times. It sought to defend the Republic, the interests of both the whites and the blacks in Angola (i.e., economic, social, political, etc.) and the freedom of the colony's press. It was a courageous newspaper which constantly raised questions of public and private corruption. It dropped the word "Republican" from its masthead in 1935, by which time that word in Salazar's "New State" was synonymous with opposition. Any periodical in opposition was bound to be short-lived. With Volume VI, No. 979 of 15 August 1936 the paper changed its name to Diário de Luanda. According to Júlio de Castro Lopo, who was the principal historian of journalism in Angola before its independence, this newspaper was considered one of the three most important in the colony. See Júlio de Castro Lopo Jornalismo de Angola (Luanda: Centro de Informação e Turismo de Angola, 1964), p. 119.

governor, he took his son Fernando with him to his new post and secured a position for him with Diamang. Since Diamang was dependent on the governor for its labor supply,[11] employing the governor's son, even at the bottom of the proverbial ladder as a recruiter of forced labor, was the least the Company could do. The only real question here is how long did Soromenho engage in the practice of bonding workers for terms of up to two years[12] in the diamond mines of Lunda? Before an answer to that question is attempted, it is necessary to briefly discuss exactly what forced labor for a company like Diamang meant to the Africans. For only if the reader has factual knowledge of that particular institution will he be able to more fully understand the power and scope of Terra Morta, Soromenho's most penetrating and best-written novel. James Duffy most succinctly describes the operation as follows:

> Private certified recruiters are permitted to contract labourers for . . . employers under the State's supervision. The recruiter is paid a little over £14 a head for his work. In Angola, in 1959, recruiters were issued licenses for a total of 180,000 men; in 1960, for 190,000. There is no reason to suppose that recruiters contracted for fewer men than their licenses permitted--past practice suggests that they probably recruited more--. . . .
>
> The labour supply of the interior is under the control of the administrator and his chief of post. Village chiefs are instructed to produce a certain number of 'malingerers' or tax-delinquents, whose contracts are signed and who are then sent off to work in various parts of the province. The possibilities for bribery, corruption and abuse in such a system are immediately

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[11] Kay, p. 217; Bailey, pp. 167-168.

[12] See Duffy, p. 184.

> apparent . . . . [the] economies of both colonies still rest largely on the supply of cheap contract labour."[13]

The armed struggle for independence which erupted in Angola on 4 February 1961 would, of course, sweep away the old labor codes and the distinctions between indígena ("native") and não-indígena ("non-native") but until that time, forced labor was part and parcel of daily life in all the Portuguese colonies. Some of Soromenho's closest African friends who were poets in the 1950's and 1960's, and are today leaders of the independent nations of Angola and Mozambique[14] cried out bitterly in their works against the institution of forced labor.[15]

It is this writer's belief that Soromenho worked for Diamang as a recruiter of forced labor from circa 1928 through 1931. In late 1931 or early 1932, it appears that he left Angola and went to Portugal. What is certain is that in a dispatch from the district of Lunda dated 31 May 1932, the Colonial Minister arrived in Saurimo, the capital of Lunda, accompanied by the governor of the district, "sr. Seromenho [sic] e sua gentil filha."[16] The writer contends that if the young Soromenho had been with his father on this most important

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[13]Ibid., pp. 185-186.

[14]Mercedes de C. S., interview, 1 April 1972.

[15]See John Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, Volume 1: The Anatomy of an Explosion (1950-1962) (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 24-25, 37-42.

[16]"A viagem do sr. Ministro das Colónias," Última Hora, 16 June 1932, p. 1.

occasion, the dispatch would have mentioned his presence. An indication of Governor Soromenho's ability to preside over a well-disciplined administration comes in the body of the dispatch.

> No dia seguinte, . . . houve apresentações, cumprimentos. Este distrito não tem reclamações a apresentar. Vivem, parece, no melhor dos mundos, o comércio que se faz representar na sua máxima força (5 comerciantes! . . .) nada reclamou nem pediu. É o primeiro e creio que o único distrito que assim procede.[17]

The above-cited disptach not only tells us something about Governor Artur de Castro Soromenho, but also about the state of the entire colony at the time. It also suggests that the Salazar government will find a way to reward such an efficient and dutiful servant as Artur de Castro Soromenho.

The key to our taking issue with biographical data that had been furnished by sources already cited, comes in a dispatch in Última Hora (15 August 1932, p. 1) under the section entitled Sociedade.

> Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho - Pelo Moçambique chegou, vindo da Metrópole, este nosso camarada na Imprensa metropolitana que nos veiu [sic] apresentar os seus cumprimentos que agradecemos a retribuimos.

Obviously, Castro Soromenho was not in Angola continuously from 1925 to 1937 as others have asserted. From the above, it is clear that he left Angola, probably in late 1931, and went to Portugal to work as a journalist. It is also obvious that he knew the members of the editorial staff of Última Hora, as he was known to them. What is not clear is 1) when did he leave

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[17] Ibid.

Angola? 2) where did he work? and 3) when and why did he leave Portugal to return to the colony? There is only one of these questions that can be responded to with some certainty: where did he work. Because he had been schooled in Lisbon from 1916 to 1925 and because he had family there, it is probable that he worked in the capital. The other questions will have to wait for a more detailed biography based on further documentation rather than word of mouth.

Concerning Soromenho's journalistic career in Lisbon during his stay (1930-1932), one thing is certain: of the two principal periodicals in Lisbon which treated principally with the colonies, he wrote for neither.[18]

One might wonder, at this point, why so much attention is being lavished on journalism. Soromenho became a journalist after three or four years of recruiting forced labor for Diamang, and remained a journalist, on and off, until 1950. His first contribution to Última Hora was a short story[19] which

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[18]They are Portugal Colonial (1931-1937) and O Império Português (1929-1934). Both were monthly publications and dealt very thoroughly with colonial news, problems, culture, etc. Both periodicals probably died for want of readership, which was the fate of almost all privately-owned metropolitan periodicals concerned exclusively with the colonies. Since these two were monthlies it would be unfair to expect Soromenho to make his living solely by contributing articles to one or another of them. On the other hand, it is highly possible that if he didn't write for them, he must have worked for Lisbon's dailies.

[19]Castro Soromenho, "Aves do além" 24 April 1934, p. 3.

was reprinted in two collections of his short stories. Many of his other articles and stories were even to be incorporated into his later novels and anthologies, in one form or another. By describing the characteristics of the periodicals to which Soromenho contributed, we may also make some judgment as to the nature and evolution of his ideologies. By the same token, we gain insight into his political thought by noting the periodicals to which he did not, or could not, contribute. In these respects, especially in Portugal of the 1940's and early 1950's, we will also be able to infer certain judgments about Portuguese attitudes to things African, including so-called "colonial literature," which is of paramount importance to any study of Soromenho and his works. Furthermore, the periodicals themselves, most especially those of the 1930's concerned wth Portugal's possessions in Africa, give us a vast source of background information. This material enhances our perspectives of the situational elements bearing on the development of Soromenho the writer.

The early 1930's are no less fraught with turmoil in Angola than in the Lisbon metropolis, except for the continuing sense of isolation and abandonment felt by the colonists. Later on, as Mussolini invaded Ethiopia and Hitler began rumbling about regaining German territories lost in Africa after World War I, those feelings rose to a fever pitch and the Lisbon government, for the first time, began to pay serious attention to Africa. In the meantime, Última Hora ran editorials complaining of Lisbon's continuing use of Angola as a dumping ground for convicted

criminals (degredados)[20] and attacking the unabated balance of payments deficit between Angola and the metropole.[21] Other articles fought a running battle against the ever-encroaching power of Salazar's censorship. These last battles took on different forms in the press. One dispatch[22] cited the dismissal of a high colonial official who had discharged his duties most honorably for six years and was replaced by a high school teacher who just happened to be a member of the Executive Council of the União Nacional, Salazar's ruling party. The new replacement was also the editor of a Luanda newspaper of the same name.

In the midst of all this, notice of Soromenho's return from Portugal had been published on 15 August 1932.[23] On 10 September 1932, Soromenho's father arrived in Luanda "accompanhado de suas filhas."[24] On 22 February 1933 Última Hora carries the following item: "Seguiu já para a Lunda accompanhado de sua filha, o sr. Antero Castro Solomenho [sic], governador deste

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[20]Exile to Africa had long been a popular method of ridding Portugal and her other colonies, especially Brazil, in the 19th century, of criminals and political subversives. In time, the descendants of these elements became the upper crust of white Portuguese society in these colonies. See Douglas Wheeler and Rene Pelessier, Angola (New York: Praeger, 1971), pp. 43-45, 103-104 and esp. 0. 145.

[21]"Angola Doente," 1 January 1932, pp. 102; "Angola e a Metrópole," 5 May 1932, pp. 102; "Dinheiro," 24 September 1932, p. 1.

[22]"Direcção de Negócios Indígenas," 14 July 1932, p. 2.

[23]"Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho," Última Hora, p. 5.

[24]"Sociedade," Última Hora, p. 2.

distrito."[25]

We may legitimately ask at this point why so much detail is being lavished on Soromenho's father's trips to and from Luanda while no mention is made of his son. The "Society" column carried nothing about the latter because apparently he wasn't going to, or coming from, anywhere. The Quadro Administrativo column, which documented all appointments, transfers, promotions and retirements of colonial service personnel, makes no references to Fernando de Castro Soromenho because his is not yet a member of that service! In other words, the absence of any reference to his comings and goings in the Society column is as significant in repudiating the mythology of his ten years spent in the Lunda bush, as any affirmative notices would be in confirming such contentions.

In Luanda in early 1933, the Salazar government was pushing for passage of its Corporative Constitution, which ushered in the Estado Novo. After the constitution was "approved" in "referendum"[26] on 19 March 1933, Última Hora ran a scathing front page editorial which said, in part:

> A Constituição Política da República Portuguesa, do Govêrno da ditadura está, já, oficialmente aprovada, não tendo para essa aprovação metido nem prego nem estopa o grande Império Colonial Português, visto que o plebiscito em todo êle ainda não teve lugar e o projecto já foi aprovado.[27]

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[25]"Sociedade," Última Hora, p. 1.

[26]See Kay, p. 49.

[27]"O Plebiscito de Angola," 12 April 1933, p. 1.

One may infer from the above the importance of the great Portuguese Colonial Empire on Salazar's eyes. When the plebiscite was finally held in Angola, ex post facto, Última Hora reported that the number of abstentions in the mandatory voting in Luanda alone reached 89.75%.[28]

As soon as Salazar's new constitution took effect, a massive purge of colonial administrators known for their republican sympathies began. Concurrently, censorship started to operate much more efficiently against periodicals considered to be anti-Salazar, which in the case of Angola probably accounted for at least 85% of them. On 7 June 1933, Última Hora carried two articles which directly affected Castro Soromenho's life. The first described the appointment of a Colonel to assume the functions of Encarregado of the government of the district of Lunda. The second speaks for itself.

> Com sua família, encontra-se em Luanda, afim de embarcar no Niassa, para a Metrópole, no goso [sic] de licença graciosa, o sr. Artur de Castro Seromenho [sic], governador do distrito da Lunda.[29]

(The term licença graciosa represented a free vacation given to colonial administrative personnel every four years.) Artur de Castro Soromenho, Governor of the district of Lunda, former Acting General Secretary of Angola, former Acting Provincial

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[28]"Os 'Novos' da República," 19 April 1933, p. 2.

[29]"Distrito da Lunda," and "Artur de Castro Seromenho", Ultima Hora, 7 June 1933, p. 1.

(i.e., Colonial) Secretary of Agriculture, former Governor of the districts of Congo, Huila, Bié and Moxico and attaché to the Provincial Secretary of Colonization,[30] would never see Africa again. It is not difficult to understand why Castro Soromenho's father was relieved of his position: he had been one of the Republic's most fervent supporters and, in the colonies, one of its most devoted and dedicated servants. The Salazar government was not, however, ungrateful.

> Por portaria do 7 do corrente foi louvado o Governador da Lunda, Artur de Castro Soromenho . . . pelas sobejas provas de muita honestidade, correcção e lealdade que deu, quer como administrador de Circunscrição Civil, quer como secretário provincial e Governador de distrito, durante a sua longa e assídua permanência nesta Colónia.[31]

Words came easy. Soromenho's father had to wait until his return to Lisbon for his tangible reward at the hands of the Salazar regime. Meanwhile, the purge continued. On 21 June 1933, another governor, of the district of Benguela, was dismissed and an Acting Governor appointed to replace him. Correlating purges and censorship, Última Hora transcribed a telegram from the newspaper Notícias da Huila:

> Protestamos contra facto ser impedida publicação notícia demissão governador Benguela e transcrições sem comentários outros jornais coloniais ponto solicitamos providências impeçam continuação semelhante critério estabelecido domínio lei neste

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[30] Those positions he had held in the colonial service were listed on the title page of his last official report as Governor of the Lunda district. This report, dated May 1933, was shown to the writer by Mercedes de Castro Soromenho in her home in São Paulo on 5 March 1972.

[31] "Informações Oficiais," Última Hora, 14 June 1933, p. 1.

distrito.[32]

The free press in Angola was being strangled to death and Castro Soromenho, along with all Portuguese of his generation, was about to enter the long night of the Salazar dictatorship. There must have been very few people at the time who could have predicted that the regime would endure for another forty-one years. Even fewer must have been those who could have imagined that Africa, the Africa that Soromenho loved so much, would rise up and bring sunshine and red carnations to all the oppressed peoples of the Portuguese domain.

In Angola, freedom died slowly and Última Hora continued its now futile battle against censorship. In the first of two editorials in mid-summer, the newspaper lashed out at the censors, complaining that they had exceeded their authority. The editorial expressed dismay at not having been permitted to call the attention of the government and public opinion to those who "put their whims and interests above the interests of the Colony."[33] Specifically, the editors were referring to the Benguela Railway Company (Companhia de Ferro de Benguela or CFB), "the monarch of Angola's railway system."[34] The CFB, like Diamang, was another privately-owned foreign-

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[32]"A Censura no Lubango," Última Hora, 1 July 1933, p. 1.

[33]"Nós e a Censura. O que a uns jornais é cortado e a outros é consentido a publicação--Diversidade de critérios na mesma pessoa," Última Hora, 26 July 1933, p. 1 and continued in the edition of 11 August 1933, p. 2.

[34]Frank Brandenburg, "Transport Systems and their External Ramifications," Portuguese Africa, ed. Abshire and Samuels, p. 323.

capitalized empire unto itself. It, too, was notorious for its use of forced labor in construction oeprations.[35] In this case, however, the company was accused of sending hundreds upon hundreds of colonists and their families back to Portugal. Última Hora's objections lay in its belief that Angola was thus being deprived of hard-working, honest Portuguese and their children, many of whom had been born in the colony. What was worse, in the paper's opinion, was that no one had said a word or raised a finger to prevent this exodus of precious Portuguese colonial blood. The editors asked, somewhat rhetorically, whether Angola had so many European colonists from Portugal that the government could permit the CFB to send hundreds of them back to the metropole. The editorial continued somewhat emotionally: "A Alemanha expulsou os judeus, um Hitler de pichisisbeque, um César de plaquet, fez sair centenas de Colonos na Colónia de Angola."[36] As if all thatwere not enough, to add insult to injury, Última Hora was prohibited from continuing the editorial on 5 August while the same censor permitted another newspaper, A Pátria, (whose political orientation may be inferred from its name) to publish an article on the same subject the very next day, 6 August 1933. To prove its point about capricious censorship, Última Hora was not impeded from transcribing the article in A Pátria. The point of view

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[35]See Kay, p. 246.

[36]"Nós e a Censura," 11 August 1933, p. 2.

of the latter on this issue, in spite of its politics, closely approximated that of Última Hora, as we can see:

> Tem de ficar registada esta simpatia do povo aos colonos que forçadamente obrigados, teem embarcado, descolonizando o Planalto, onde uma parte deles viviam, ali tinham seus haveres, e ali ficariam para sempre . . . .[37]

The disastrous effects of depopulation speak for themselves. Censorship continued, on the other hand, from its inception as capricious as ever. And the problem of censorship was not Angola's alone. Even in the metropole, Salazar apparently had his doubts if we can believe Mr. Ferro's words:

> Indigestion or a family squabble could lead to the bad-tempered cutting out of a bit of news or a part of an article. I myself have in my time been the victim of the censorship and I can assure you that it has stung me, infuriated me to the point of wanting to start a revolution.[38]

Salazar's sensitivity to the matter of capricious censorship was indeed touching. On the positive side, a goodly number of works did get published that would have never seen the light of day without the presence of just that kind of caprice, working in reverse. This is well illustrated in the case of Soromenho's novel Viragem.[39] The Salazar dictatorship however had other means at its disposal to punish those who opposed it in print. After the publication of Viragem specifically, the dictatorship, while not banning the book, deliberately deprived its author of his livelihood, as we shall document later.

Returning to Luanda, on 29 November 1933 Última Hora re-

As quoted in Kay, p. 76.

[39]Castro Soromenho, Viragem, Coleção Atlântida, 1 (Lisbon: Ulisséia, 1957).

ported that the owner-editor of the newspaper O Lobito had been expelled from Angola by the Governor-General, with the approval of the Minister for the Colonies.[40] Castro Soromenho lived all of this, since he apparently had not returned to Portugal with his family in June of 1933. However, if he had, in fact, gone to Lisbon with the rest of his family, there would have been some notice of his return to Luanda, as has already been established. Última Hora (3 March 1934) reported that Castro Soromenho had gone to Lunda.[41] He was also referred to in the dispatch as "our dear friend." In all probability, he had returned to Lunda to take care of shipping his family's belongings to Luanda for transshipment to Portugal. There was still no reference whatever to his belonging to the colonial service. Yet his father's departure did not leave him idle. In April 1934, he got a by-line in Última Hora, as has been mentioned with the publication of his first short story,"Aves do Além."[42]

Circumstances in Luanda were changing rapidly by this time. On 12 January 1935, Rogério Pereira Marques, owner and publisher of Última Hora, announced that he and the entire editorial staff were leaving the paper.[43] He had apparently been yet another victim of the Estado Novo and was probably

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[40]"Imprensa Republicana," p. 1.

[41]"Mundanismos - Partidas e chegadas," p. 2.

[42]"O Conto de hoje - Aves do além (Lendas das quedas de água do Dala)," 24 April 1934, p. 3. The Dala Falls are located on the Chiumbe River, a tributary of the Cassai, some one hundred fifty miles south of Saurimo, capital of the Lunda district. Soromenho was there in 1932 collecting ethnographic material.

[43]"O Nosso Jornal," p. 1.

compelled to sell out or close down. Undaunted, he went on to start a bi-weekly in Lisbon, Vida Colonial,[44] with an assimilado[45] mulatto from São Tomé, Viana de Almeida. The latter was to play an important role in Soromenho's life in the late 1930's.[46] Pereira Marques had not learned the errors of his ways because Vida Colonial doesn't last a year. It goes out in a blaze of glory, with what was to be its last issue, on 26 March 1936. The reason for its demise lay in the publisher's printed re-

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[44]Pereira Marques published his first issue on 2 May 1935. In the lead editorial also entitled "O Nosso Jornal" (p. 1), he defined the paper's raison d'être. After reviewing the unhappy fate of the few short-lived periodicals which had devoted themselves exclusively to colonial matters, he concluded: "jornalismo colonial quãsi não existe na metrópole." Because the colonists had no one to defend their interests in the metropolitan press, he asserted, "estamos intimamente convencidos de que é necessário, que existam neste país publicações que se consagrem exclusivamente ao estudo dos interesses e dos destinos das colónias portuguesas." The political ideology of the paper was Republican and the publisher promised to fight for justice and the free exchange of ideas. But in the typical fashion of colonial publications, the front page showed a picture of a semi-nude, large-breasted African woman. Whereas Republicanism, truth and justice might express the ideals of Vida Colonial, sales would depend on titillating the front page reader with a pair of big black breasts.

[45]A legal distinction in Portuguese colonial law which conferred full citizenship on the "native" after he proved that he could read, write and maintain gainful employment. The number of assimilados in Angola never exceeded one per-cent of the population.

[46]José Maria de Fonseca Viana de Almeida was a journalist and one-shot novelist who must have met Soromenho while writing for Pereira Marques' Última Hora. Viana de Almeida accompanied the latter to Lisbon and became editor of Vida Colonial. When it folded, he went on to another magazine, Humanidade. Soromenho would join him there in 1937.

buke of the omnipotent Bank of Angola. It seems that this bank would not take an advertisement in a special edition of Vida Colonial dedicated to "Colony Week."[47]

On 22 January 1935, the new ownership of Última Hora introduced itself to Angola in a lead editorial entitled, not inappropriately, "Obedecendo à praxe."[48] The editorial purports to eschew factionalism, to attack no one without good cause, to commend no one unpraiseworthy and to uphold and defend everything that is to the "benefit of the Nation and the Colony." (The former owner would probably have reworded that to read "for the benefit of the Colony and the Republic," which was why he was now the former owner.) In all likelihood, it was at this time that Castro Soromenho decided to enter the colonial service. According to Moser, Soromenho proceeded to the Escola Superior Artur de Paiva in Huila, to undergo preliminary train-

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[47]"Ambiente Colonial," p. 14. "Colony Week," or A semana das colónias, was an annual event sponsored by the Salazar government to remind the Portuguese that they really did have colonies. In response to Pereira Marques' solicitation for an advertisement, the Bank of Angola responded simply: "Temos de informar V. Exas. que sentimos não poder deferir o seu pedido." Marques transcribed the correspondence "sem comentários," but in his second, and last letter to the Bank, he bitterly reminds it and the public that

> "O Banco de Angola que nem sequer terá verba para ser assinante do nosso jornal, jornal exclusivamente colonial, concedeu ontem ainda, um anúncio ao Diário de Lisboa! . . . Que interesse e carinho demonstra o Banco emissor de Angola por todas as iniciativas e actividades coloniais! . . ."

[48]Última Hora, p. 1.

ing[49] That Soromenho did, in fact, become an aspirante (trainee) for Chief of post is documented in Última Hora and will be cited at the proper time. That in order to become an aspirante, Soromenho did in fact have to study at the colonial administration's Escola Superior is highly debatable. But it is much more likely that if he did enter this school it was in 1935, not in the late 1920's as others have implied. The reason for attempting to ascertain the actual chronology of events so deliberately is a quite simple one. The last three novels written by Soromenho, Terra Morta, Viragem and A Chaga,[50] are to greater or lesser degree semi-autobiographical, in that they recount many events which he experienced. But it is proposed that he did not experience most of these events as a chefe de posto, aspirante or aspirante provisório (provisional trainee), as everyone else contends and Soromenho himself would like us to believe. The facts will show that from the time Soromenho was commissioned a provisional trainee in the colonial service until the time he resigned--or was forced to resign--for reasons of health, he spent exactly six months of his life in postings other than Luanda or Lisbon. Of the remaining administration, the evidence is that all of that time was spent either in Luanda, Lisbon or in travel between these two cities.

Once these assertions are substantiated, we will then be able to ask, and probably answer, one of the all-important questions concerning Castro Soromenho's life and works. Given

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[49]Moser, p. 45.

[50]Castro Soromenho, A Chaga, Colecao Biblioteca do Leitor Moderno, 126 (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1970).

that Soromenho spent only six months of his career as a colonial administrator not in Lunda but in the districts of Benguela and Moxico, from where does his vast knowledge of Lunda, Diamang and all the related data come? The writer is firmly convinced that the same experiences which he drew upon to write Terra Morta, Viragem and A Chaga, which are centered in one or another administrative post in Lunda, he could have gotten, and in fact did get, during the years of his youth, as a recruiter of forced labor for Diamang. Castro Soromenho never sat behind a colonial officer's desk selling slaves to Diamang. He was buying slaves and he bought them not for just a few months, as his family and others have claimed but probaby for at least three years.

But where is this whole discussion leading us? What difference does it make, the reader might ask, whether Castro Soromenho sold Africans to, or bought Africans for, the "Diamond Company of Angola?" And what difference does it make if he recruited forced labor for six months or three years? The answers to those questions are not simple and we will have again to tread the path of conjecture. What we may gain is a larger understanding of some of the motives underlying Castro Soromenho's writing.

That he did buy black human beings to work forcibly in the diamond mines of Lunda is a fact. All biographical sources agree that he was, at least, a "recruiting agent of African labor" for Diamang.[51] As to the practice itself, even Hugh

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[51]Moser, p. 45.; Wald de C. S. and Mercedes de C. S., interviews; Fernando Mourão, "A sociedade angolana através da literatura: A Lunda na obra de Castro Soromenho" (Tese de Mestrado, University of São Paulo, 1969), p. 122.

Kay's Salazar, which treats the dictator in a mostly favorable tone, cannot escape the facts.

> The Diamond Mining Company had continued to recruit labour through government officials and tribal chiefs in a manner liable to constitute forced labour, but the practice had been changed by orders of the governor-general and the governor of the Lunda district in 1961.[52]

It must be pointed out that both Kay and Duffy[53] are talking about the situation as it existed in the late 1950's. How much worse must it have been when Soromenho bought black bodies thirty years earlier is best left to the reader's imagination. When we begin our analysis of Terra Morta, we will allow Soromenho himself to tell us exactly what it meant for the Africans and their families. And who would have been in a better position to describe all of that so vividly and realistically than the man who bought the Africans, took them away to the mines and forced the local colonial official to take punitive measures against the families of those who might escape from their bondage and flee into the Belgian Congo? That man, certainly, was Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho.

In early 1935, Soromenho's father, who had served the Republic's colonial service in a variety of high-level positions in Angola, was officially retired by the Salazar government in its continuing purge of Republican officials at home and overseas. And the Salazar government did not think so highly of Artur de Castro Soromenho as did the Republic, as his rank

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[52]Kay, p. 246.

[53]See Duffy, pp. 185-86.

at retirement described in the following article shows.

> O nosso presado [sic] amigo antigo administrador de C.C.C. [circunscrição civil colonial] que nesta cidade exerceu o cargo de Secretário Provincial de Colonisação [sic] e Agricultura, havia sido depois nomeado Governador de Distrito.
>
> Por virtude da Nova Reforma Administrativa regressou à Metropole no intuito de se reformar, o que não poude fazer porque não tinha classificação ou graduação dentro do quadro a que pertencia.
>
> O sr. Ministro das Colonias regularisou o assunto determinando que para efeito de reforma fosse classificado como administrador de 1ª classe.[54]

Soromenho's father, who had been governor of five different districts in the province of Angola (district governors were immediately below the Governor-General of the Province in the administrative hierarchy and reported directly to him[55]) and had held two staff positions on the provincial level, was retired at a lower rank, "Administrator 1st class," ostensibly because he had not had the proper qualifications for the positions he had held. That same year, Castro Soromenho entered the colonial service as an aspirante provisório.

The contention that 1935 marks the beginning of Soromenho's short-lived career in colonial administration and the documentation set out below to support this, may seem at first of little consequence to a comprehensive study of the man and his works. But if the contention is correct, then a more objective evaluation of Soromenho's early experiences as they relate to his

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[54]"Artur Soromenho - Foi regularisada a sua situação de funcionário," Última Hora, 6 April 1935, p. 2.

[55]For a detailed explanation of the administrative grades within the Portuguese colonial service, see Norman A. Bailey, "Government and Administration," Portuguese Africa, ed. Abshire and Samuels, p. 143, n. 18.

later works may be made and we can be more critically objective, too, about biographies from later sources.

The entire case for Soromenho's brief stint in the colonial administration (in direct contradiction to everyone else who speaks of his "long years of service") is based on an exhaustive study of all the issues of one of Luanda's most important newspapers, Última Hora.[56] This newspaper had followed the movements of Soromenho and his family rather closely as early as 1931 as we have seen, yet there is no mention of Soromenho's alleged administrative career prior to 28 October 1935. On the other hand, Soromenho is referred to as "nosso camarada na Imprensa metropolitana" as early as 1932.

The first press report which makes any mention of Soromenho as a member of the colonial service is revealing in and of itself.

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[56]Every single issue of this daily was consulted from vol. 1, no. 1, 11 November 1930 through vol. 2, no. 1623 of 31 December 1938, when Soromenho left Angola to begin his life-long exile. It will also be remembered that the newspaper had changed its name, after changing ownership, to Diário de Luanda as of vol. 2, no. 779 of 15 August 1936.

"Para Benguela, onde acaba de ser colocado, partiu hoje [28 October 1935] no Colonial: o aspirante do Quadro Administrativo, sr. Fernando de Castro Soromenho."[57]



The young aspirante a day after the publication of his first posting (The photograph is dated "27/Outubro/35.")

It is inconceivable that Soromenho could have served for many years as a 'chefe de posto' in various interior districts" as Moser alleges, and still be an aspirante definitivo a mere ten months after his posting to Benguela was reported in Última Hora. If he had been in the colonial service for many years, he could not

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[57]"Carteira," Última Hora, p. 3.

possibly have been merely an aspirante provisório in 1935. Further contradicting the "many years of service" hypothesis is the fact that if he had been promoted from provisório to definitivo in only ten months as reported in the press, after "many years" he would have at least risen to the next rank of chefe de pôsto if not secretário or even administrador de circunscrição.[58]

Furthermore, from the first mention in the press of Soromenho's new career to the last, Última Hora covers his postings thoroughly. Given this detailed record (October 1935 through April 1937), added to the coverage of the whole Soromenho family beginning in 1931, it would appear that the newspaper published the facts. All the other biographical sources cited, including his immediate family, appear to have been misled.

Before asking ourselves why Soromenho might have deliberately withheld certain details of his past from his wife, friends and others, let us take a look at his brief colonial career. Soromenho spent six months of his life in the colonial administration in posts other than Luanda or Lisbon. The remaining thirteen months were spent in Luanda, Lisbon or in travel between the two cities. On 26 December 1935, less than two months after his posting to Benguela (the large Atlantic port city which is the terminal of the trans-Angolan railway, the Caminho de Ferro de Benguela, and no small post in the back-

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[58]The colonial administration of Angola at the time divided the colony into districts, circumscriptions and posts.

lands), the following article appeared in Ultima Hora (p. 3) in the column Boletim Oficial:

> 2ª serie . . . Portaria autorizando o regresso à Metrópole, por opinião da Junta Central de Inspecção, do aspirante provisório do quadro dos serviços administrativos, Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho.

Soromenho had always suffered from acute asthma and while it might not have hindered the terms of his employment as a recruiter of contract labor for Diamang while his father was governor of the Lunda district, it might have impeded his duties as an aspirante provisório in Benguela. Therefore he was granted a medical leave to Lisbon.

Soromenho then spent eight months in Lisbon, returning to Luanda on 5 September 1936.[59] These are the months that mark the beginning of Soromenho's career as a writer, for he seems to have made the decision that even if he were to stay in the colonial service, his first call would be writing. His theme would be the peoples of Angola. Everything else he did thereafter became secondary.

Two of the factors which may have soured him on civil service, aside from his health problem, were the treatment accorded his father upon retirement and the starvation-level wages

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[59]"Fernando Soromenho," Diário de Luanda (formerly Última Hora), 5 September 1936, p. 4.

paid lower-ranking civil servants.[60] This latter problem will surface explicitly in his novel Terra Morta.

During his eight months in Lisbon, he devoted much of his energy to establishing contacts with that small nucleus of writers and publishers whose main purpose was the dissemination of information about Angola and the other colonies to the inhabitants of the mother country. With this purpose already in mind, Soromenho brought to Lisbon much of the material he had been gathering for publication at least as early as 1932. At the same time, he was not blind to the fact that no one ever made a living as a writer of "colonial" literature and he continued to pursue his administrative career. Soromenho seems to have been successful in both realms. Not only was he promoted from aspirante provisório to aspirante definitivo[61] while still in Lisbon but, in May of 1936, his first collection of short

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[60]General Norton de Matos, who had been Governor-General of the Colony during the Republic, wrote a four-part series for Diário de Luanda under the title "Vencimentos dos funcionários de Angola," complaining bitterly about colonial administrators' low salaries. See Diário de Luanda, 19 September 1936, pp. 1, 4; 21 September 1936, p. 1; 22 September 1936, p. 1 and 23 September 1936, p. 1.

[61]"Quadro Administrativo," Diário de Luanda, 20 August 1936, p. 3.

stories, Lendas Negras, was published.[62] In the preface the author tells us what legends represent to the Africans and how he went about gathering them:

> A lenda encerra princípios de verdade, -uma verdade envolvida na plumagem de fantasia . . .
> Ouvir lendas de um povo é escutar muito de sua alma.
> Por isso, eu entrei na chota, sentei-me junto do fogo, e vivi um pouco da alma da gente negra, -genta mística, sonhante, dolente . . .
> Ouvi o ciciar de seus pensamentos calmos, envolvidos numa ânsia de bem; escutei suas palavras amargas, reprovando todo mal, e ficou-me, prisioneiro na lembrança, o alevantado instinto de justiça que

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[62] Castro Soromenho, Lendas Negras, Colecção Cadernos Coloniais, no. 20 (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 1936). This collection of "pamphlets" totalled seventy in number from the first (1935) to the last (1941). Its publication was privately financed and each caderno sold at one and one-half escudos apiece, which the publishers believed would make them easily accessible. Accessibility would increase interest and finally generate love of the colonies by the Portuguese. The interest and love lasted all of five years. The editor's note in the final pamphlet informs the readership, such as it may have been, of the collection's demise. He attributes it to the enormous rise in printing costs coupled with the growing disinterest on the part of the public. (See Com. Jaime do Inso, Cenas da Vida de Macau, Collecção Cadernos Colonieis, no. 70 [Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 1941], p. 38.)

The fate of this series was merely symptomatic of the much greater problem, Portugal's total disinterest in its colonies. The only "official" interest in the colonies came from the cultural arm of Colonial Ministry, the Agência-Geral das Colónias. And the only colonial publications that did survive in Portugal were those underwritten by that agency. Naturally, editorial policy followed financing. Portugal's ignorance and indifference to its colonies had a monumental bearing on Soromenho's life and works, as we shall see.

alimenta esta raça descuidosa.[63]

Although the style is florid and emotional, understandable in the young writer prefacing his first work, it was indicative of a tone that would underlie much of his Africa-before-the-white-man period. Soromenho's feelings for the African were evident, even if based on somewhat immature judgments as shown in the adjectives sonhante, dolente and descuidosa. His interest in the Africans' culture, as related orally by them, was born of his early acceptance of their humanity, a quality which became more and more apparent as he wrote and which evolved into the underlying theme of all his later fiction. His ability to sit down with the Africans, on their own ground, was indicative of an extraordinary empathy which transcended the racist attitudes of most of his white contemporaries.

Soromenho was aware of the importance of visual, as well as verbal, descriptions of his African world and many of his

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[63] Lendas Negras, ibid., p. 3. In a footnote referring to the italicized chota, the author defines it as a small hut in the form of a sun helmet. His first "publication" in Lisbon was noted in "Novidades Literárias" section of O Diabo, 24 May 1936, p. 6. Back home in Luanda, it was also mentioned in a brief note entitled "Editorial Cosmos,' in Última Hora, 2 June 1936, p. 2. Five of his seven "legends," those from Angola, were later incorporated into his first anthology of short stories, Nhárí: O Drama da Gente Negra (Luanda: Livraria Civilização, 1938).

articles were accompanied by photographs he himself had taken.[64] Lendas Negras, for instance, carried a photograph of a Quico (Cokwe) warrior on the cover (a picture which the author would re-use in later articles). More importantly, there was also a daring photograph of the author himself, a white man, seated in front of a hut, with his translator standing behind him, "ouvindo na Lunda as curiosas lendas do gentio."[65] Further, the importance of this photograph from a literary viewpoint would become clearer with its anecdotal inclusion in Terra Morta

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[64]The use of photographs has already been mentioned in reference to the ill-fated Vida Colonial. It was by no means the first nor the last to employ pictures. They were very common in almost every article concerning the colonies, whether in a daily, weekly, monthly or other publication. For example, every single issue of Cadernos Coloniais was "properly" illustrated. The favorite photograph was always one of some "native" woman or other (whether from Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Macau, Timor, etc.) bare-breasted but well-endowed. Not even Soromenho was immune from titillation as a commercial device. As late as 1967, his Brazilian edition of Viragem (São Paulo: Edições Arquimedes) shows a pair of black breasts on roughly four-fifths of the cover; no head, no body, just breasts.

[65]Lendas Negras, p. 9, caption under photo. Moser properly observed that words such as gentio were substituted by more objective terms such as selvícola in later editions of other works and that such changes "reflect an evolution from an attitude of sympathetic, benevolent paternalism to a humanistic socialism that has abandoned all unscientific feelings of superiority." Moser, p. 57. For this writer, the key to the above are the adjectives "sympathetic," "benevolent" and "humanistic." One need not be a socialist to be humanistic. Whether Soromenho succeeds in abandoning "all unscientific feelings of superiority" will be examined when we analyze Terra Morta, Viragem and A Chaga, the author's fictionalization of the clash of cultures in the Angolan bush. We make no judgments of Moser's implied validity of scientific "feelings of superiority."

(1949).[66] Following is a picture of the author as he looked on one of his ethnographic forays into the Angolan bush. The author's dress is as noteworthy as the African huts in the background.



Castro Soromenho circa 1932

[66]Moser illustrates this particular anecdote of Soromenho (called Monteiro in the novel, his mother's maiden name) sitting with the Africans in their village and listening to their stories as an example of the author's "sly humor." Moser, pp. 47-48. It will be more carefully scrutinized as much for sly humor as for its racial implications in chapter 10 of this study.

In June 1936, O Mundo Português, Revista de Cultura e Propaganda, Arte e Literatura Colonial, published by the Colonial Ministry and the Ministry of Information, carried a two-page article by Soromenho entitled "Ilha do Príncipe."[67] It is his first travelogue, based on impressions of this island gathered as a passenger on Portuguese ships which made port at Príncipe on the Lisbon-Luanda run. Stylistically, it is replete with the exotic imagery and tropical prose common to colonial literature of the times. Before departing Lisbon, the author left two

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[67]"Ilha do Príncipe," O Mundo Português, 30 (June 1936) 249-250. This periodical was published monthly from January 1934 through December 1945 and quarterly from January 1946 through June 1947, when its one and only director, the fascist Augusto Cunha, died. It was one of the new "colonial" publications which could survive for thirteen years because it was jointly financed and controlled by the Colonial and Information Ministries. It was a unique magazine in that it chronicled Portuguese colonial administration, in broad terms, during its existence. It also gave young and upcoming colonial writers a vehicle for publication of their material as well as a means of partial economic support. Castro Soromenho contributed to no less than thirty-four different issues, between June 1936 and November 1945. Most curiously, the only biography of the author to mention that fact is the only contained in the self-styled fascist Amandio Cesar's anthology, Contos Portugueses do Ultramar 2 vols. Colecção Ultramar, 2 (Porto: Portucalense Editora, 1969), 2, 447. César points out that Soromenho had been an "assiduous contributor" to the magazine for the same reason that everyone else covered it up: the political implications of having been on the payroll of Salazar's Colonial and Information Ministries for nine years. Putting those implications aside for the moment, O Mundo Português was Soromenho's primary vehicle for getting his name into print in Portugal as a writer of fiction, enthnography, history and travelogues. Much of the material that first appeared there would surface again, interpolated into the author's fiction. In these footnotes, the monthly will be listed as O M.P.

very short stories, "Gando--O feiticeiro" and "O vento do Norte: Lenda de um povo da Zambézia" with the editors of this monthly. They were published in August and October of 1936.[68] He was also asked to write a review of a book on Guiné for the Lisbon periodical Humanidade,[69] Nor was his review missed in Luanda,

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[68] O M. P., 32-33 (August-September 1936) 361-366; 34 (October 1936) 419-425.

[69] Castro Soromenho, "Critica Literária," rev. of África by João Augusto in Humanidade, 30 June 1936, p. 4. Humanidade is the most important periodical in Lisbon concerned completely with colonial affairs during the troubled and uncertain years 1935-1939. It was dedicated, as the large block letters below the masthead proclaimed, to the Defesa e Propaganda do Ultramar Português. It was privately owned, had an erratic beginning and relatively short life span. Ninety-six issues were published between Volume 1, Number 1 of 30 October 1935 and Volume 4, Number 96 of 5 February 1939.

Those years were portentous for the world but Portugal's main fear seemed to have been the possibility of losing her colonies, especially Angola, to the Germans. The former German South-West Africa (now Namibia) borders southern Angola and Portuguese newspapers in Lisbon and Luanda sold very well by reporting on, and even inventing, rumors about renewed German interest in Africa. Salazar probably had a large hand in playing up this threat so as to distract the Portuguese from what was really going on at home. In Luanda, editorials such as "Não há Fumo sem Fogo," (Última Hora, 24 July 1935, p. 1) were commonplace. Portugal's fear for her colonies, coupled with a tacit understanding that she was not able to defend them militarily, reawakened her interest in Africa. This concern waxed and waned, depending on which power was threatening which colony, until the end of World War II, when it lapsed into total dormancy. Before and during the war years however, Soromenho rode to fame on the crest of Portugal's all too brief African awakening.

Humanidade's role during this period was explained in its statement of purpose thusly:

> "Este jornal é um órgão que se destina ao exame cuidadoso de todas as questões que interessem ao continente africano. Mas . . . a sua atenção mais fortemente se concentrará sôbre a África portuguesa, sôbre as suas relações com a Mãe Pátria: Portugal."

"Afirmação de Princípios," Humanidade, 20 October 1935, p. 1.

where Humanidade already had a large readership.[70]

With the resolution of his medical problem, at least for the time being, the earning of a promotion to aspirante definitivo and the beginnings of a writing career staked out in Lisbon, Soromenho returned to Angola on 5 September 1936.[71] The reporting of his return was noteworthy as it referred to him as a "respected colonial publicist of sophisticated merits,"[72] which showed the importance in the colonies of having published in the metropole. A review of Lendas Negras

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The editor-in-chief was Soromenho's old friend from Última Hora, Viana de Almeida. Humanidade and the author were made for each other as they were both dedicated to raising Portugal's consciousness about her colonies, the Ultramar. Soromenho's association with this weekly in the late 1930's was the high point of his journalistic career in Lisbon. It offered him secure employment (so he thought) upon his departure from the colonial service, while giving him a forum for his own brand of "defense and dissemination of the Portuguese Overseas empire."

[70]"Imprensa - Humanidade," Última Hora, 27 July 1936, p. 3.

[71]While Soromenho was in Lisbon, the Angolan village of Caungula, historically the residence of a powerful Lunda chief, became the permanent administrative seat of the circumscription of Camaxilo. His last three novels all take place within that administrative region. From the Luanda press we learn that "Foi instalada, definitivamente, na povoação de Caungula a circunscrição Civil de Camaxilo," see "Circunscrição de Camaxilo," Última Hora, 9 May 1936, p. 4.

[72]"Fernando Soromenho," Diário de Luanda, 5 September 1936, p. 4.

> "No vapor 'Cuanza' regressou hoje a este cidade, vindo da Metrópole, o nosso prezado amigo e antigo colega na imprensa, snr. Fernando de Castro Soromenho, apreciado publicista colonial de requintados méritos. Reiteramos-lhe os laços da nossa amizade e camaradagem."

in the Diário de Luanda[73] mentions that the author is a member of the staff of that newspaper ("our colleague and friend") but the anonymous reviewer seems skeptical about Soromenho's claims of first-hand experience with the Africans. "Naquela obra o autor, segundo afirma, procurou ouvir as lendas de um povo nas regiões distantes da Lunda." (Italics added.) The fact that the reviewer found it necessary to add the words "according to him" (i.e., to Soromenho) probably bespeaks the difficulty he had in believing that any white man could really sit down with black tribesmen and listen to their legends and tales. This was the first indication that Soromenho's racial attitudes were markedly different from those of his white contemporaries in Africa. Furthermore, it was obvious that Soromenho's views on race had taken root in spite of his upbringing, education and environment.

The author spent a month in Luanda preparing for his next posting.

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[73]"Cadernos Coloniaias: Lendas Negras," 18 September 1936, p. 3.



Castro Soromenho and friends, circa 1935.

During this time, he wrote a review of a short booklet by Jaime Brasil,[74] a journalist who would later become a well-known literary critic for the daily O Primeira de Janeiro in Porto. It also marked the first time the author showed a specific interest

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[74]Castro Soromenho, "Cadernos de Cultura," rev. of O Japão Actual by Jaime Brasil in Diário de Luanda, 2 October 1936, p. 4 and continued on, 3 October 1936, p. 2. This was the first of the Cadernos de Cultura series by Edições Cosmos and analagous to their Cadernos Coloniais. Needless to say, the review was highly favorable as Cosmos had just published the reviewer's Lendas Negras.

in Japan. Twelve years later he wrote an article[75] on a fellow Portuguese whose works about "exotic" Japan had as restricted a readership in Portugal as did Soromenho's about Angola. That man, of course, was Wenceslau de Morais, "o grande orientalista da literatura portuguesa moderna."[76]

Soromenho finally got his second line posting, his first real assignment in the bush, on 25 October 1936,[77] when sent to Moxico, a district in the extreme southeastern part of Angola bordering present-day Zambia. We may recall that his father had also been governor of this district so his posting there may not have been purely accidental. Nevertheless, he appeared to get sick again because the press reported his return to Luanda less than four monchs after his departure.

> A-fim de se presentar á Junta Central da Inspecção, veio a Luanda o nosso amigo e presado colaborador, snr. Fernando de Castro Soromenho, funcionário do Quadro Administrativo, actualmente colocado na circunscrição dos Bundas, distrito de Moxico.[78]

Soromenho returned from the bush in February 1937 because of his asthma and, recognizing that his days in the colonial ser-

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[75]Castro Soromenho, "Wenceslau de Morais," Perspectivas da Literatura Portuguesa do Secúlo XIX, 2 vols., ed. João Gaspar Simões (Lisbon: Atica, 1948), II, 313-327.

[76]Urbano Tavares Rodrigues, "Wenceslau de Morais," Dicionário de Literatura, ed. Prado Coelho, I, 666.

[77]"Fernando Soromenho," Diário de Luanda, 24 October 1936, p. 4. "Segue amanhã no vapor 'Colonial,' para o sul, o nosso presado amigo e colaborador snr. Fernando de Castro Soromenho, publicista de mérito e functionário no Quadro Administrativo."

[78]"Fernando Soromenho," Diário de Luanda, 3 February 1937, p. 4.

vice were numbered, dedicated himself feverishly to writing. In February and March, his byline appeared in thirteen different issues of the Diário de Luanda. His writing included lead editorials on colonial literature and the black African, book reviews and articles on colonial and Portuguese literature, a two-part article on the importance of the Catholic missions in Africa and his second short story, Nhárí, which appeared in serialized form in four successive issues.

His first article was "Duas literaturas--A literatura como factor na mentalidade colonial."[79] In it, the author maintained that the European's exotic view of Africa led to a false understanding of the land and its peoples. He complained that the literature at hand was shabby, cheap and ordinary (pelintra e reles) for two reasons. First, because of the general ignorance and disinterest in Portugal for anything African and second, because of the slim monetary prizes awarded for African literature by the Colonial Ministry through its cultural and information office, the Agência-Geral

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[79] Diário de Luanda, 14 February 1937, pp. 1-2.

das Colónias.[80] The writers who competed for these prizes, he

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[80]There was another period in the 20th century when Portugal's interest in her colonies was rekindled: during and after World War I. During the war, Portugal had contracted a huge debt from her allies. While they were busy dividing up the colonial spoils of their defeated enemies after 1918, there was talk of making a clean sweep in Africa by taking Portugal's colonies as well, in partial repayment of her war debts. In 1924 the Republican government, to arouse popular interest in the colonies, created the Agência-Geral das Colónias as an information and propaganda arm of the Colonial Ministry. The Agência-Geral, to help disseminate knowledge about, and arouse interest in, the colonies, launched a yearly literary contest. Initial public response was large and the prizes were even funded by private sources in the sums of 5,000 and 2,500 escudos respectively. (See António da Silva Rêgo, "A Agência-Geral do Ultramar e os Concursos de Literatura Ultramarina," Estudos Ultramarinos, no. 3 [Lisbon, 1959], pp. 195-203.) In 1932, the Salazar government took complete control of the funding and distribution of prizes as part of a general reform in the Colonial Ministry. Private funds had already been withdrawn, a symptom of the public's waning interest. The new contest was divided into three categories: "1) Concurso de romance, novela, conto, narrativa, relato de adventuras; 2) Concurso de história, viagens, biografia e etnografia; 3) Concurso de literature científica." Silva Rêgo, p. 197. (It is worth noting that in the second category, History and Ethnography were equal, for purposes of the contest.) In each category, the prizes were now 7,000 and 3,500 escudos for first and second place, no small sums for the 1930's. Of the few who actually submitted "colonial literature," many would win more than once. In Silva Rêgo's words, "os autores concorreram mais do que uma vez, atenta possivelmente à falta de novos valores literários." It wasn't the lack of literary values but the lack of capable writers in the field which encouraged the same restricted group of people to submit the same kind of literature year in and year out. Soromenho himself won three times (for Nhári in 1939, Homens sem Caminho in 1942 and Rajada in 1943). This writer believes that all his works on Africa, barring only his last three novels, were written with at least one eye on Salazar's prize money.

Literary contests were not new in Portugal by any means but they were used by the Salazar government to reward its friends and punish, even if indirectly, its enemies. António Ferro, who became Salazar's Minister of Information (Director do Servico de Propaganda Nacional, often referred to by its acronym, S. P. N.), even instituted a contest for Portuguese literature at home. Prizes were awarded from 1934 onward in six categories: 1) Prémio Alexandre Herculano for revisionist

maintained, pretended expertise after a quick trip through Africa, if they left Portugal at all. In fact, few of them actually were able to capture anything about the "real" Africa. The author took particular issue with the recurring themes of the Sun, drumbeats, blacks without souls[81] and tropical sunsets, asking rhetorically, "Se a África fosse isto."

His next byline was a book review of another of the Cadernos Coloniais series written by Paulo Braga, the journalist and later literary critic who had spent some time in Timor and environs. Braga wrote about his experiences in four of these pamphlets and Soromenho's review was of the last.[82] (Braga and Soromenho would meet the next year in Lisbon writing for Humanidade.)

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historical analyses written within "firm patriotic criteria," (8,000 escudos); 2) Prémio Antero de Quental for poetry containing "a strong feeling of nationalist exaltation," (5,000 escudos); 3) Prémio Gil Vicente for "constructive drama," (5,000 escudos); 4) Prémio Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho for children's literature "in harmony with the pedagogical principles of the 'New State,'" (3,000 escudos) and two others for "Doctrine" or "Polemics" and Journalism (2,000 escudos each).

Since Soromenho submitted his works to the contests of the Agência-Geral, there is no reason to doubt that he also wrote for the contests sponsored by the S. P. N. He certainly would have qualified in the History and Journalism categories. What we know with certainty is that he did write for António Ferro and his Information (Propaganda) Ministry in 1941 and 1943, as will be documented.

[81]The actual title of a novel by "colonial" writer and public official Fausto Duarte: O Negro Sem Alma (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica, 1935). In 1934 Duarte had won first prize in the Agência-Geral's literary contest for his novel Auá: Novela Negra (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica, 1934). That novel was highly controversial because of its sexual allusions. A similar controversy arose later in reference to Soromenho's Homens sem Caminho, as we shall see.

[82]Castro Soromenho, "Paulo Braga e o Oriente," rev. of A Ilha dos Homens Nus by Paulo Braga, in Diário de Luanda, 21 February 1937 p. 1.

The author's next lead editorial was: "O Estado, a Arte e os artistas."[83] In it, he cited part of a speech by Júlio Dantas, then President of the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa" (although in the article Soromenho listed him as "o ilustre Presidente da Academia das Letras de Portugal"). In the citation quoted by Soromenho, Dantas complained about "o colapso actual das artes--manifestação de uma 'doença' da sociedade contemporânea em carência de espiritualidade." Soromenho uses that idea and connects it to the current financial straits of a particular Angolan painter to remonstrate against the present state of the arts in Angola and Portugal. (The painter, one Roberto Silva, had risen to fame meteorically in late 1935 but was reduced to destitution and ignominy just two years later.) There was no place for art in Angola, said Soromenho, because "as flôres do espîrito só encontram seu verdadeiro clima na inteligência e sentido dos homens de horizonte mental que não tenha por barreira montanha de fuba ou coconote, agarrado e esperanças, encharcado de ilusões . . . ." A harsh judgment of his fellow Angolans, yet he continues: "É difícil, é tarefa ingrata, é fôrça insana e inútil que morre como um grito de angústia na solidão, fazer sentir, para melhor se poder compreender, a necessidade da Arte, a quem não foi fadado para contemplar o que é belo." One more reason, then, for him to finally abandon Angola. He went on to suggest the creation of

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[83] Diário de Luanda, 28 February 1937, p. 1.

a museum of colonial art, preferably in Lisbon, "para que o indígena da Metrópole tivesse a precisa noção das realidades da nossa Africa." His use of the word indígena above was particularly sarcastic as it was a somewhat pejorative Portuguese word used to classify all non-white peoples in the colonies.

Soromenho's next article, also a lead editorial, reflected his preoccupation with making the black African, the male in particular, useful and productive in terms of European social values of the times. Its title, appropriately enough, was "A valorização do homem negro: A mulher perante a lei do africano bárbaro."[84] The author complained about the practice in which black African men made their women do all the agricultural work. He told how various government agencies had tried, and failed, to modify in the "savages" their "primitiva e bárbara instituição de trabalho que obriga a mulher a amanhar a terra." He continued by describing how many European bush traders, comerciantes sertanejos, further impeded the process of teaching the black man how to cultivate land by their own actions. These traders were invariably "debruçados sobre o balcão da lojeca à espera que o negro deixasse lazeres e fôsse permutar seus géneros por panos e bugigangas, sòmente exigindo dinheiro para liquidar ao Estado sua contribuição annual."[85] Soromenho's solution to increasing the black man's value to society and him-

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[84] Diário de Luanda, 6 March 1937, p. 1.

[85] Soromenho reworked this material into fiction in all three of his last novels, Terra Morta, Viragem and A Chaga.

self was to have the white man get more directly involved in agriculture so that

> . . . o indígena a pouco e pouco, encontraria em seu exemplo, devidamente orientado e tutelado por práticos ao serviço dos governos coloniais, a lição de que carece para se valorizar, e essa valorização viria ao encontro de . . . modificar a sua primitiva instituição de trabalho, chamando ao seu braco forte o cultivo da terra e aprendendo, na mira de obter maior rendimento, novos processos agrícolas.[86]

Further on he asserts that such a solution "afigura-se-nos contrária, por morosa e pouco lucrativa, ao bem estar social que pretendemos, em nome da nossa missão civilizadora, dar ao homem selvagem."

The author then attacks the International Labor Organization of the League of Nations because it had again recommended the abolition of all forms of forced labor. Soromenho accuses the I.L.O. of "false humanitarianism" while he suggests, not without sarcasm, that

> Mais avisados e humanizados andariam os humanitaristas da Conferência Internacional do Trabalho, se houvessem determinado, como condição primeira, que o homem negro fôsse levado a trabalhar, embora contra sua vontade, porque não lhe anda no jeito trabalhar, . . .
>
> Mas, como ninguém anda iludido, depois dos chacais terem surgido de dente afiado, se ao bárbaro fôsse imposta a obrigação de trabalhar para se integrar na condição de ser socialmente prestável, pelo mundo se levantaria alarido para se acusar os povos que têm a nobre missão de civilizar o negro, ainda a viver em lamentável infância social e a ela obrigado a ficar amarrado pelo humanitarismo dos homens que defendem o trabalho livre para quem nunca teve nem tem hábitos de trabalho! . . .[87]

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[86] Castro Soromenho, "A valorização, p. 1.

[87] Ibid.

At first glance, the author's views appear to be a mindless regurgitation of the keystone of Portuguese native labor policy from António Enes, the principal philosopher of modern Portuguese colonial theory and the first Portuguese High Commissioner for Mozambique,[88] through Marcello Caetano. In 1943, then Portuguese Colonial Minister Viera Machado synthesized his government's labor policies, though applying equally to blacks and whites, as follows:

> Temos de incutir no prêto a idéia de trabalhar, abandonando a ociocidade e o vício, se queremos exercer uma acção colonizadora e protegê-lo.
>
> Se a vadiagem e o crime são punidos nos brancos, não podemos achá-los legítimos nos pretos. Se ao branco que viva à custa do trabalho da mulher damos um nome tão depreciativo que o vamos buscar à língua alheia, não devemos tolerar que o prêto assim proceda.
>
> Se queremos civilizar o indígena, temos de fazer adoptar, como elementar preceito moral, que não há o direito de viver sem trabalhar.
>
> A sociedade que na dor se está gerando baseia-se no trabalho, que para os vadios será obrigatório, e não é admissível qualquer excepção fundada em motivo racial.
>
> A política de assimilação que preconizo--tem de ser integral. Por isso, há que estabelecer a regra de conduta para o prêto como a que existe para o branco, fazendo-o adquirir a noção das responsabilidades. É ser negrófilo menos esclarecido não incutir no prêto a idéia da absoluta necessidade de trabalhar.[89]

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[88] See James Duffy, Portuguese Africa (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 238-239 and Portugal in Africa, pp. 120-122.

[89] Quoted in "A estadia do Sr. Ministro das Colónias nas terras africanas do Império," O Mundo Português, 109 (1943) 554. Duffy (Portuguese Africa, p. 318) cites this quote repeatedly but edits it in such a fashion as to badly distort its original context. In the above-cited text, he omits Machado's direct reference to the white man as pimp and indirect reference to the Portuguese term, alcoviteiro, which had come from Arabic. In Portugal in Africa (pp. 182-183) he omits the entire paragraph beginning with: "Se a vadiagem e o crime . . .," where Machado had stated that vagrancy and crime among both whites and blacks were intolerable to the Portuguese.

Ten years later, in 1953, the same thoughts were stated more directly by Colonial Minister Marcello Caetano but now they were meant only for blacks. He said, "The natives of Africa must be directed and organized by Europeans . . . . The blacks must be seen as productive elements organized, . . . by whites."[90] We shall see shortly that Soromenho does not hold with this view because he tells us that he speaks only of forcing the black man to learn to cultivate the land for his own well-being and material enrichment. That this coincided with Portugal's "civilizing mission," was not, however, accidental.

Soromenho's second short story, "Nhárí," first sees the light of day in 1937, in four successive editions of the

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Elsewhere, Duffy so apocopated Machado's statement that it became totally devoid of any references whatsoever to the white man as pimp, vagrant or criminal. What remains is a seemingly intense white racist attitude wherein only the black man must abandon "his laziness and depravity" and "adopt as an elementary moral precept the notion that he had no right to live without working." See James Duffy, "Portuguese Africa, 1930-1960," Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960, 2 vols., ed. L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), II, 183.

There is little doubt that the social crimes outlined by Machado in his 1943 statement were used as a pretext to justify the system of forced labor. However, that such justification was predicated on the assumption of equal treatment for blacks and whites, appears to get lost somewhere in Duffy's successive translations.

[90]Quoted in Basil Davidson, In the Eye of the Storm (New York: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 69-70.

Diário de Luanda.[91] It is later combined with five "legends" from Lendas Negras into his first book, Nharí: O Drama da Gente Negra (1938).[92]

Continuing his preoccupation with the work ethic, the author wrote the first of a two-part article on the Catholic Church in Angola, "As missões católicas e a sua missão em África: Os missionários ao serviço do Império - I."[93] This article reiterated the theme of valorização of the black man. In it, the author faulted the Church for putting the cart before the horse by attempting first to "Christianize" the indígena, then attempting to "civilize" him. He implicitly differentiates the two, interpreting the former as seeking the spiritual well-being of the African and the latter as seeking his material welfare. He argues that "É demasiado transcendente para a capacidade mental dos selvagens, dentro do método seguido, ministrar a êstes grandes fetichistas princípios de povos civilizados, sem que primeiramente se procure . . . modificar-lhes a vida material." This should be done, according to the author's views cited above, by forcing the "native" to learn agriculture. However, even though he believed that work was the primary "civilizing"

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[91] 7 March 1937, pp. 102; 8 March 1937, p. 3; 9 March 1937, p. 3 and 10 March 1937, p. 3.

[92] The discussion of Soromenho's individual works begins in Part Two of this study.

[93] Diário de Luanda, 10 March 1937, p. 1.

vehicle in "savage" Africa, his attitude was in no way based on racial supremacy, but rather on historical perspective.

> Não conhecemos tarefa mais árdua e nobre, profundamente humana, que a de civilizar uma raça, como a negra, lamentàvelmente atrasada e para alguns, não para nós, desamparada de condições de ordem geral que a leve a evolução digna de se abeirar do nível moral e intelectual das chamadas raças superiores, por nós não consideradas como tal, mas tão sòmente previlegiadas [sic] por séculos de civilização.[94]

In other words, the white European merely has an historical head start on the black African. Inculcating the work ethic in the latter is all that is needed to bring him up to the level (abeirar) of the European. The author further asserts that his opinion is shared by all men "que não têm preconceitos rácios," and has been proven correct in the civilizing of the Americas and other parts of Africa. Finally, he offers as proof of his contentions that lay missions have succeeded, albeit on an experimental basis, in bringing religion to the Africans only after first teaching them how to raise their standards of living. Soromenho congratulates the Catholic missionaries for their continuing efforts in the cause "que directamente nos interessa, por mais proveitosa ao bem estar do indígena."

The second part of this article, "As missões católicas . . .: O trabalho como factor da civilização - II,"[95] gives the author's solutions to the problem of civilizing the bárbaro. He reiterates that "é impossível actuar no sentido de levar o homem negro, em estado selvagíneo, a, por si só valorizar-se."

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[94] Ibid. Italics added.

[95] Diário de Luanda, 12 March 1937, p. 1.

Because this is impossible, all efforts must be directed at educating the young.

> A evolução da raça negra levada a efeito pela educação das crianças, homens de amanhã, é a alfa da nossa missão civilizadora . . . .
> Ensinem-se, . . . as crianças negras a ter amor pelo trabalho, para que quando homens possam compreender que o trabalho foi em todos os tempos, a há-de ser sempre, a base de tôdo o conforto e civilização, de todo o progresso, a base enfim de tudo quanto existe."[96]

The only institutions capable of carrying out this educational mission are the Catholic Church and the Government. The former, highly esteemed by the African because it collects no taxes and takes care of his children, is best equipped for the job. The latter, on the other hand, is poorly regarded because it forces him to obey the laws, "e a lei, no capítulo da tributação, foi sempre, em todos os países, dura para brancos e negros, porque todos julgam que devem pagar menos do que são obrigados a desembolsar."[97]

In his praise of missionaries, Soromenho goes out of his way to stress that he is referring to Catholic missionaries only. "Nunca nos referimos ao missionário protestante porque sua obra é sempre desnacionalizadora."[98] This view, of

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[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid. One wonders, when reading this article, how Soromenho could have equated whites and blacks in the matter of taxes. The white man never had to pay a "hut tax" (imposto de palhota) nor was he forced to work on public works by the local colonial authorities. We shall see in Terra Morta, by way of illustration, that public works could and did extend to building a new house for the administrador of the circumscription. One other stark difference separated the races: the white man could never be forced into contract labor by the government for the benefit of private enterprise.

[98]As missões católicas . . . II," p. 1.

course, was not at all uncommon to the Portuguese colonial mentality, as Henrique Galvão and Carlos Selvagem tell us:

> Regista-se no entanto que a superioridade material das Missões Protestantes, contra as quais se formulam acusações, nem sempres injustas, como agentes desnacionalizadores, . . .[99]

Since many Protestant missionaries were English,[100] it was not unnatural that they were suspect as political subversives. Portuguese distrust of England increased greatly after the "Ultimatum of 1890" and subsequent discussions at Versailles about taking over Angola and Mozambique in lieu of Portugal's repayment (or non-payment as the case was) of large debts contracted during World War I. However, there were some Portuguese who defended the Protestants:

> In the Protestant missions . . . a meritorious hospital work goes on, directed by doctors of great competence . . . . The Protestant missions have been, and are still today, accused of practising denationalization among the natives over whom they exert religious influence. If this danger existed, . . . there are no present reasons to suspect that it has continued.[101]

What Soromenho, along with the majority of Portuguese of the time, failed to perceive was that the Catholic Church preached

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[99]Henrique Galvão and Carlos Selvagem, Império Ultramarino Português, 4 vols., (Lisbon: Empresa Nacional de Publicidade, 1952), III, 223. Italics added.

[100]Galvão and Selvagem, pp. 260-261. According to the authors, there were twenty-five English Protestant missions in Angola in 1950. That figure represents fifty-three per cent of all Protestant missions in the colony at that time.

[101]Afonso Costa dos Santos, as quoted in Duffy, Portuguese Africa, pp. 311-312.

subordination to the Portuguese authorities and was consequently perceived as an indirect oppressor.[102] The Protestants, to the contrary, sought to educate the African and inculcate in him an appreciation for individualism and materialism. In Duffy's words "with certain Protestant missions in Africa it is sometimes difficult to say whether the social or religious aspect of their program is more important."[103] Duffy then goes on to make a more acute distinction:

> As opposed to most Portuguese Catholic missionaries in Africa who tend to view the African as a child, . . . most Protestant missionaries in Angola approach him as an adult citizen of his own world. He is treated with equal respect, not good-natured tolerance.[104]

Soromenho extolls the Catholic missionaries who dedicate themselves to civilizing, through work, the black who con-

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[102] As late as 1962, a Baptist missionary who had spent nineteen years in Angola said, while praising individual priests and certain members of the Church hierarchy in Angola, "the Church in its highest leadership has chosen not to jeopardize its privileged position by that clear-cut unequivocal denunciation of injustice and repression that would have made its stand so salutary." Clifford Parsons, "The Makings of a Revolt," Angola: Views of a Revolt (London: Institute of Race Relations, 1962), p. 70.

[103] Portuguese Africa, p. 104.

[104] Ibid. For further discussion of Catholic and Protestant missionaries and missions in Angola, see David M. Abshire, "From the Scramble for Africa to the 'New State,'" Portuguese Africa, ed. Abshire and Samuels, pp. 78-81; C. G. Baeta, "Missionary and Humanitarian Interests, 1914 to 1916," Colonialism in Africa, ed. Gann and Duignan, II, 442-448; Davidson, In the Eye, pp. 194-199; Duffy, Portuguese Africa, pp. 103-129; Sid Gilchrist, Angola Awake (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968), pp. 68-89; Kay, Salazar, p. 226; Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, pp. 51-55, 110-112, 147-153 and 321-332; George Martelli, "Conflict in Portuguese Africa," Portuguese Africa ed. Abshire, pp. 408-409 and A. H. de Oliveira Marques, História de Portugal, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Edições Ágora, 1973), II, 359-360.

tinues to be "todo e sempre entregue á costumada indolência, abraçado a inúmeros vícios que a ociosidade provoca."[105] There are no religious doctrines which the black will absorb and come to believe unless the work ethic is first inculcated no sangue bárbaro. In conclusion, the author reiterates the need for educating the young African and thereby tearing him away from the jungle before he is overcome by the superstitions which "stigmatize the black race."

The principal civilizing goals of the young journalist-as he expresses himself in this particular article on Catholic missions, are twofold. First, the Church must inculcate the work ethic into the lazy, shiftless and therefore socially useless African. Simultaneously, it must educate the children of Africa before traditional patterns of culture take hold and ruin them forever. This overview is shared by most white colonialists not unsympathetic to the African as a human being so long as he conforms to their definition of "civilization."

Soromenho's interests were wide-ranging, as we shall see, and not confined to the problems of the African vis-à-vis the European. His next newspaper article, "'O Diabo' e o seu novo director,"[106] was occasioned by the resignation of Rodrigues

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[105]"As missoes catolicas. . . II," p. 1.

[106]Diário de Luanda, 15 March 1937, p. 2. The full title of the article was "'O Diabo" e o seu novo director--O semanário 'O Diabo' e os seus directores--Um jornal para tôda a gente--A Arte e o Teatro e uma revisão de valores."

Lapa as editor of that Lisbon literary weekly. The author not only reviewed the history of O Diabo through its first three editors but intertwined that history with some observations on Portuguese literature from World War I through the present. He lashed out at the "Jazz-Band" mentality of the futurists associated with the short-lived literary review Orpheu. He noted that this mentality had failed because of its own declared impotence. Following Orpheu however, the standard of "the real literature of modern times" had been set by Ferreira de Castro's A Selva. In Soromenho's opinion, "E, desta arte, hoje verificamos haver-se encontrado a verdadeira orientação a imprimir à vida literária."[107] His critical appreciation of A Selva is of no small importance, nor is it coincidental that the Portuguese literary critic João Pedro de Andrade, writing 18 years later, would call Soromenho's own Terra Morta "after A Selva, the most meaningful message of Portuguese letters."[108] One can only wonder if the author had any inkling that, within twenty years, he himself would be ranked side by side with one of the greatest Portuguese novelists of the 20th century by one of the most important Portuguese literary critics.

The article on O Diabo seems at first glance to be merely the typical literary back-slapping so common in Portuguese letters (common, that is, when the literati were not publicly

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[107] Ibid.

[108] João Pedro de Andrade, "Ambições e limítes . . .," Tetracórnio, p. 59.

knifing one another in the back). Nevertheless, its importance for what it tells us about Soromenho cannot be underestimated. He was, at twenty-seven, widely read in Angola and apparently very aware of current Portuguese literary movements. He was also an avid reader of O Diabo, one of Portugal's most important literary magazines of the times.[109] This article then, firmly establishes his early interest in Portuguese literature as well as it demonstrates a critical attitude almost avant la lettre.

His next two articles were book reviews on colonial literature.[110] His objective in these reviews, as ever, was

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[109]See Gregory R. McNab, Jr., "The Neo-Realist Novel in Portugal: Literature as a Political Weapon," (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1973), pp. 15-17. O Diabo's coverage of new literary trends, already mentioned by Soromenho as "a revision of values," began as early as 1934. Articles such as Ferreira de Castro's "Literatura social brasileira," 10 (2 October 1934) 5; Amorim de Carvalho's "O carácter social da Arte," 61(25 August 1935)2-3; Mário Dionísio's "A propósito de Jorge Amado," 164(14 NOvember 1937)3, 165(21 November 1937)7 and 167(5 December 1973)6 and João Pedro de Andrade's "A próposito dum conceito de romance," 170(26 December 1937)3 all support McNab's contention that by 1937, the weekly had evolved into one of the leading forums for the Neo-Realist movement in Portuguese letters. Soromenho's ties to O Diabo will be discussed later when we examine his literary positions vis-a-vis the Neo-Realists.

[110]Castro Soromenho, "Luis Teixeira--Repórter Internacional," rev. of Categoria Literária das Cidades by Luis Teixeira, in Diário de Luanda, 21 March 1937, p. 3. Two years later this same Teixeira won first prize for his essay, Perfil de Salazar, in the literary contest sponsored by Ferro's S. P. N. (as reported in "De Lisboa: Prémios Literários," Humanidade 96 [5 February 1939]2). Soromenho's second article was, "Hugo Rocha--Escritor Colonial," revs. of Além-Mar and Primavera nas Ilhas by Hugo Rocha, in Diário de Luanda, 28 March 1937, p. 3.

to disseminate information to the Angolan public (the Europeans, of course) on the existence of such "colonial" works. These were, however, the last articles he wrote in Angola, for on 2 April 1937 he departed for Lisbon on medical leave.[111] He never saw Angola again.

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[111]"F. Castro Soromenho," Diário de Luanda, 2 April 1937, p. 4. The full text reads: "No vapor 'Moçambique' seguiu hoje para a Metrópole, por opinião da Junta Médica, o nosso presado camarada, Fernando de Castro Soromenho."

CHAPTER 2

EXILED IN LISBON

Soromenho arrived in Lisbon towards the end of April, 1937, to resolve his health problems with the Colonial Ministry, one way or the other. We have already seen that he had not served long as a colonial officer and we have now followed him back to Lisbon twice on medical leave. His widow, Mercedes, confirmed that he suffered terribly from asthma while in the bush and had no medication to alleviate this condition.[1] Whether he resigned from colonial service or was discharged for medical reasons is not known. What we do know is that he did leave the service and took up journalism as his full-time career. The Diário de Luanda reported the following on 25 June 1937:

> Fernando Soromenho - Este nosso amigo e presado colaborador, actualmente em Lisboa, entrou ao serviço de jornal colonial Humanidade, que se publica naquela cidade, tendo assumido as funções de chefe da redacção.[2]

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[1] Mercedes de C.S., interview, 5 April 1972.

[2] "Fernando Soromenho," Diário de Luanda, p. 4. Chefe da redacção, as best this writer could determine, was more an equivalent of "chief editor" than Editor-in-Chief. We may recall that Viana de Almeida held the latter title. Curiously, Humanidade itself makes no mention of its new chief editor until a month after the notice has been picked up in Luanda (25 July 1937). Stranger still is the fact that this news was buried on page 16 of that issue. Even then, it was an afterthought as the thrust of the article was the fact that one of Soromenho's stories was being translated into French. This was the first time that France and the French language would lift Soromenho out of obscurity. It was certainly not the last. See "Castro Soromenho: Um seu trabalho traduzido para francês," Humanidade, 25 July 1937, p. 16.

Shortly after his arrival in Lisbon, he met Mercedes,[3] the daughter of an Argentinian diplomat posted in Lisbon. They ultimately married twelve years later.

Now permanently settled in Lisbon, Soromenho began writing for Humanidade almost immediately, even before he became chief editor. The magazine's 5 June 1937 issue carried two of his articles. One of them was a reprint of a broadcast he made for Humanidade over the national radio network, Emissôra Nacional. It is entitled "Humanidade na Emissôra Nacional, a nossa palestra de ondas medias, no. 2. Portugal no Mundo Africano: Ligeiras referências acêra de Mocambique."[4] The magazine, not content with the printed word, went to the radio to spread its gospel. The article begins with a brief physical description of Mozambique. Then the author becomes more subjective in his discussion of the Portuguese in Africa. They have gone Africa, he claims, either to pluck "as imaginárias fôlhas de oiro da árvore das patacas," or "explorar o homem negro--o homem negro que é o sólido alicerce do Mundo Novo." He states further that

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[3]Mercedes' accounts to this writer of the circumstances under which she and Soromenho met are enlightening as they reflect some of the ideological clashes of the times. These clashes affected even their courtship. Mercedes' recollections of their first meetings are also much more reliable than her descriptions of Soromenho's life before they met (i.e., prior to 1937) and before they finally married (i.e., between 1939 and 1949).

[4]Humanidade, 5 June 1937, p. 9.

> A Africa já não recebe aventurerios que possam crer que lhes será fácil triunfar abandonando a enxada, seu ganha pão em terras continentais para se arrimarem, no país de gente negra a mester mais lucrativo e para o qual nao têm condições de adaptação.[5]

What Mozambique, like Angola, needed were white Portuguese colonists who would till the vast, virgin land, not only for profit but also "em benefício da nossa acção civilizadora e colonizadora." It was incumbent upon the government, said Soromenho to take the lead in promoting and facilitating Portuguese emigration to the colonies.[6] His final exhortation is worthy of note:

> Moçambique, terra sagrada que os portugueses de várias raças molharam com sangue e suor, terra abençoada que o grande Mousinho tornou verdadeiramente portuguesa,--é caminho aberto para a mocidade da nossa pátria poder ir colocar mais uma pedra no grandioso monumento que há de ser a Africa Branca,--a Africa que é o grande destino de Portugal.[7]

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Henrique Galvão, colonial administrator, writer and hijacker of the Portuguese liner Santa Maria in 1961, was to echo that same theme 10 years later while Deputy for Angola in the Portuguese National Assembly. See Henrique Galvão, Por Angola (Lisbon: Author's Edition, n.d. [1950?]), pp. 115-118. João Pereira Neto, writing twenty-seven years after Soromenho's article, gives facts, figures and his opinion on the reasons that prohibited the Portuguese government from mounting a coherent emigration policy until the early 1960's. See João Pereiro Neto, Angola: Meio Século de Integração (Lisbon: Companhia Nacional Editora, 1964), pp. 43-68, 187-190 and esp. 304.

[7]Humanidade, 5 June 1937, p. 9. The fact that Soromenho could have even made such a broadcast on government-owned radio speaks for itself. His ability to intelligently discourse on Mozambique reflects the scope of his knowledge of Portuguese Africa even in 1937.

How the author of this article could be the same man who, just eight years later, would write the most scathing denunciation of colonialism (i.e., Terra Morta) ever written by a white man in the Portuguese language, will be examined in detail in the following chapter. But let us not lose sight of the fact that, given the tenor of the times, if Soromenho was a white colonialist, his humanitarianism still placed him far and above the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries, and his love for Africa and all its peoples cannot be questioned.

In the preceding chapter, we have sought to fix Soromenho's presence in Angola and make some reasonable speculations, based on facts at hand, concerning his early careers.

Using biographical data from Moser[8] and Mourão[9] and lacking any further information to the contrary, we may accept their assertions that Soromenho did interrupt his high school studies in Lisbon and return to Angola at the age of fifteen (i.e., circa 1925). Neither biographer gives any other chronology of the author's stay in the colony except to affirm that he remained there until he was twenty-seven (1937). Neither source knew, because neither was told, that the author had returned to Lisbon to work as a journalist sometime in 1932.

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[8]Mercedes de C.S. informed this writer that she was the source of the biographical information contained in Moser's Essays in Portuguese African Literature.

[9]Fernando Mourão, "A Sociedade Angolana," p. 122.

The facts, as we have been able to deduce, lead to the following probable conclusions: Soromenho returned to Angola in 1927. Sometime around 1927 or 1928, his father got him a job with Diamang as a recruiter of contract labor. He stayed with the Diamond Mining Company for about three years. Mercedes, Moser and Mourao state that Soromenho did in fact recruit contract labor, that that was his first job, and that he only did it for a "short time." According to them, he spent the remaining nine or ten years in the colonial service, However, Soromenho's intimate familiarity with the policies, methods and practices of Diamang, so realistically described in Terra Morta as we shall see, makes it highly improbable that he worked for that company less than two years. He could not possibly have learned so much about the company's contract labor operations second-hand or while living in his father's house. We must remember that his father, as District Governor, lived in the colonial capital of Lunda, Suarimo. Diamang's headquarters are at Dundo, tucked away in the far northeastern corner of Lunda, 175 air miles from Suarimo. It is highly improbable that Soromenho would have recruited contract labor from any base but the company's headquarters.

Soromenho probably went to Lisbon in 1930 or 1931, returning to Angola in the middle of 1932. The notice of his return, as we have seen, refers to him as "nosso camarada na Imprensa metropolitana." Late in 1932, he took a trip to the south of Lunda to gather ethnographic materials, as was previously noted. In the middle of 1933, his father was

relieved of his position as District Governor of Lunda and the son probably spent the rest of that year helping his family, forcibly uprooted by the totalitarian regime in Lisbon, to make preparations for the return to Portugal. In early 1934, Soromenho was back in Lunda, this writer believes, disposing of his family's affairs there. In April of that same year, his first short story, Aves do Além, was published in Luanda's Ultima Hora. We are unable to account for his whereabouts from April 1933 through October 1935, when Ultima Hora first mentions Soromenho's appointment to the colonial service. Even then, as we have seen, he was only a trainee, and a provisional one, at that. From October 1935 until his final departure from Angola in April 1937, exactly sixteen months have elapsed. His movements and postings, as aspirante provisório and later aspirante definitivo, were given scrupulous coverage in the press.

We have shown how the author was already published in the Lisbon press, even before he arrived there to take up residence. We have documented the beginnings of his literary and journalistic career, calling specific attention to his colonial mentality as reflected in his writings on the Portuguese African and the black African. We have shown him to be well-read and critically oriented, albeit his formal education ended at fifteen. We have shown him to be an avid reader of the Lisbon literary weekly, O Diabo, but we point out here that his interest in this periodical was not, in the first instance, that of a young literary theoretician.

We concur in McNab's studied opinion that O Diabo had a rather moderate and sometimes muddled critical realist tendency[10] from 1934 to 1937. Soromenho's primary interest in it was due to the fact that O Diabo was one of the only Lisbon periodicals not directly concerned with the colonies (as were, for example, the short-lived Voz das Colónias [1933-1935] and Vida Colonial [1935-1936]) which paid any critical attention whatsoever to them and their literature.[11] We must also remember that Ferreira de Castro (whom Soromenho praised so highly in his farewell article to Rodriques Lapa in Ultima Hora) had preceded Lapa as director of O Diabo. As familiar as Soromenho was with Ferreira de Castro's works, he also followed his stewardship of O Diabo.

In 1937, Soromenho went to Lisbon. He began writing for Humanidade almost immediately upon his arrival and could not help but get caught up in the political, ideological and cultural issues of the times. Mankind was at war with

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[10]Gregory McNab, private correspondence with the writer, 9 January 1975.

[11]Some of the articles on colonial literature and the colonies published in O Diabo were: "Fausto Duarte fala-nos," 21 June 1934, p. 7; "Maiá Poçón," rev. of Maiá Poçón by Viana de Almeida, 14 April 1935, pp. 2-3; Campos Lima, "Crítica de Livros," rev. of O Segredo da Morta, by António de Assis Junior, 9 February 1936, p. 2; Campos Lima, "Crítica de Livros," rev. of Feitiços by Guilhermina de Azeredo and Aventura de Caça by António de Aguilar (her husband), 26 April 1936, p. 4; "Novidades Literarias," which mentions Soromenho's Lendas Negras, 24 June 1936, p. 6; Braz Burity, "Impressões de Teatro--'O Velo d'Oiro' no Nacional," rev. of O Velo d'Oiro by Henrique Galvão, 9 August 1936, p. 5; Geraldo Bessa Vítor [sic], "O preto e a musa popular," 27 December 1936, p. 3; "'O Diabo' no 'Diário de Luanda,'" 16 May 1937, p. 4; etc.

itself once again in Spain, Ethiopia and China. Fascism, Communism and "Democracy" rolled inexorably towards the confrontation that began officially on 1 September 1939 but had been well underway since the 1920's. In Portugal, "'Neo-Realism' was a reaction to Salazar's regime."[12] It was also an attempt to deal, through literature, with the everyday problems of men. It was, furthermore, a reaction to the literary movement Presença, led by writers and critics like Joao Gaspar Simões and Adolfo Casais Monteiro. (Both of these men were to have an enormous influence on Soromenho's literary development.) Even though the Presença movement vehemently defended Arte pela Arte and "maintained that artists were not in the world to reform it,"[13] its adherents, along with the Neo-Realists, shared a common opposition to fascism.

As early as 1927, Gaspar Simões noted that a pattern of mental servility and abjection, common to fascist and totalitarian societies, was taking hold in Portugal. In 1932 he wrote of the "guided character of national culture," and in 1936 he saw the formation of a "mentality nourished by discipline and servitude."[14] Both groups also stood by, inwardly enraged yet outwardly helpless, while Republican Spain was being crushed under the boot of the "new order."

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[12]McNab, p. 2.

[13]Ibid., p. 18

[14]Quoted in McNab, p. 5.

The polemic (arte pura-arte social) which raged between the two literary currents concerning how best to improve the human condition continued into the 1960's. It reached its apex, however, in the late 1930's and early 1940's[15] when fascism was militarily victorious everywhere and it appeared that the Franco, Hitler and Salazar regimes would all last for a thousand years. (Sadly for the Iberian Peninsula, the Franco and Salazar regimes lasted the life span of most of the intellectuals of that generation.)

This, then, was the intellectual ambiance of Lisbon when Soromenho arrived. And, although he went to work for a magazine dedicated to the propaganda do Ultramar Português, he could not escape the battle being waged about him in the literature and literary criticism of the times. By an odd quirk of fate, the interests of the Neo-Realists, seeking inspiration in social literature in Portuguese, and the interests of the magazine Humanidade, seeking national unity through communion with the entire Portuguese-speaking world, coalesced around their views of Brazil.

For the Neo-Realists, who denounced critical realism "in favor of an heroic sense of struggle in which the present

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[15]See for example, João Pedro de Andrade, "A propósito de um conceito de romance," O Diabo, 26 December 1937, p. 3. In that article, this Neo-Realist attacks Gaspar Simões for his subjective intuition, psicologismo and esteticismo.

should be shown as it is alongside the future as it ought to be,"[16] their search for works in Portuguese reflecting this ideology led them, naturally, to the novelists of the Brazilian northeast.[17] For Humanidade, the very existence of such a literature, regardless of theme, was justification enough to expand its horizons to encompass the Brazil "that the Portuguese had made." This concern with the creation of a Luso-Brazilian community of interests in a world of ever-increasing nordic and slavic ascendency, became a primary goal of intellectuals as well as politicians on both sides of the Atlantic. Soromenho was to ride the crest of this wave, as we shall see, for a decade. It was not by accident, either, that his final refuge from Portuguese political persecution was Brazil.

In the first issue of Humanidade that carried Soromenho's by-line after his arrival in Lisbon (15 June 1937), the magazine sent a "Mensagem. . . . à federação das associações portuguesas no Brasil."[18] This "message" reiterated the

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[16]McNab, p. 22.

[17]For further discussions of these novelists and the social nature of their works, see Maria Isabel Abreu, "O Protesto Social na Obra de Graciliano Ramos," Hispania, XLVIII, 4(December 1965)850-855; Adonias Filho, O Romance Brasileiro de 30 (Rio: Edições Bloch, 1969); Alfredo Bosi, Historia Concisa da Literatura Brasileira (São Paulo: Editôra Cultrix, 1970), pp. 436-474; Fábio Lucas, O Caráter Social da Literatura Brasileira, Série Rumos da Cultura Moderna, 26 (Rio: Editôra Paz e Terra, 1970); and Miécio Táti, Jorge Amado: Vida e Obra, Coleção O Homem e a Obra, 1 (Belo Horizonte: Editôra Itatiáia, 1961).

[18]"'Humanidade' no Brasil," Humanidade, 15 June 1937, p. 6.

goals of Humanidade[19] and affirmed that these would be achieved by establishing a permanent "cultural-economic communion" of the Portuguese-speaking world. That same issue also carried another of Soromenho's articles, "A instituição do trabalho indígena."[20] This was merely a reworking of his "Valorização do homem negro" which he had written for the Diário de Luanda just two months before. In it, he reiterated his complaint that the black woman was still tilling the land while the black man should be doing it. Nothing has changed even though the black man is "Enquadrado nos sistemas de trabalho forçado, compelido e obrigatório."[21] He repeats his praise for the "head tax" because it has resulted in "o progresso económico-social dos povos africanos, em estado selvagíneo."[22] The article is the first of the author's rewrites but it will not be the last, as we shall see, either in his journalism or his prose.

The next issue of Humanidade (20 June 1937) carried a short story and another rewrite originally published in the

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[19]"Defender a unidade Portuguesa é levar os Portugueses a tomarem posse de si mesmos. E consagrá-los em redor do símbolo da Pátria. E chamá-los à consciência das responsabilidades do seu destino histórico. . . E torná-los conscientes da existência espiritual e material da grande realidade do Império Português." Ibid.

[20]Ibid., p. 10.

[21]Ibid., p. 10.

[22]Ibid.

Diário de Luanda. By this time, Soromenho was certainly chefe da redacção[23] (chief editor), although curiously his name never appeared on Humanidade's masthead. The short story, "Tragédia negra,"[24] was to be rewritten for his first book, Nhárí[25] under the title "Angústia." There is a photograph of the author accompanying this story in Humanidade but it is not new to us. It is the same one which appeared in Lendas Negras showing Soromenho seated in front of an African hut, with his African translator standing behind him, "ouvindo os homens da selva." In Lendas Negras, the caption was slightly different, "ouvindo na Lunda as curiosas lendas do gentio."[26]

The article he wrote, "As missões ao serviço do Império,"[27] was another rewrite of his "As missões católicas e a sua missão em África," published originally in the Diário de Luanda two months earlier. Not only did he rewrite and republish articles and short stories wherever he could, but

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[23]On 25 June 1937, as we have already noted, the Diario de Lunda carried a short notice of Soromenho's new job. The sea voyage from Lisbon to Luanda, on which all mails were sent, took at least ten days. Therefore, the latest date that news of the author's new position could have left Lisbon would be 15 June.

[24]Humanidade, 20 June 1937, p. 7

[25]Castro Soromenho, Nhárí [sic]: O Drama da Gente Negra (Porto: Livraria Civilização, 1938), pp. 55-65.

[26]Lendas Negras, between pages 8 and 9.

[27]Humanidade, 20 June 1937, p. 15.

his photographs constantly reappeared with captions changed to suit the publication. For some reason, perhaps fear or apprehension that someone might have read his original "Missions" articles in the Luanda newspaper, Soromenho wrote this particular article under a pseudonym, Fernando Annaya. For whatever reason he chose anonymity, he lost it when a "horrified" priest wrote a letter to the editor complaining that the article's basic premise (teach work first, catechise later) was exactly what he and other missionaries had been doing in Angola for years. The editor's response[28] put the onus squarely on the author "Fernando Annaya (Castro Soromenho)," thereby exposing his true identity to the public.

Soromenho, who did not forget his former colleagues in the Diário de Luanda, sent them a review of his new employer's short stories, Maiá Poçón.[29] This collection of short stories, the only prose that Viana de Almeida (director of Humanidade) was ever to publish, was widely reviewed, as we have already seen, and well-received. A recent study of Afro-Portuguese literature, Voices From An Empire, comments that Viana de Almeida's short stories signified

> an early effort by a black or mestiço filho da terra to fictionalize some of his views on the question of race and class. Almeida's. . .short stories shed some light on how the colonized could come to grips,

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[28]Humanidade, 25 July 1937, p. 15.

[29]Castro Soromenho, "Maiá Poçón," rev. of Maiá Poçón by Viana de Almeida, in Diário de Luanda, 27 June 1937, p. 1.

psychologically, with the problems of racism,. . .[30]

Soromenho's review of the same work first attacked colonial literature for limiting itself to the two themes of "glorification of Portugal in Africa" and superficial descriptions "da vida sem vida do homem negro e da natureza." Once again, though, as we analyze Soromenho's works, we note that he does not easily escape the pitfalls of this kind of writing for which he was so quick to blame his contemporaries. In this vein, he says:

> Das dezenas de livros que se publicaram acêrca do nosso mundo africano, conclui-se que o colono é sempre um herói!, e os batuques, sob palmeiras, são gritos vibrantes e bárbaros da sensualidade negra![31]

All one has to do is put these works in the windows of bookstores after dressing them up with flashy covers and they will be gobbled up by a largely ignorant public. "'Que estranha terra e que belas mulheres!"[32] Such is Africa in the eyes of the Lisbon "native." But once one awakens from that "African dream," woven by colonial writers with their "excessive fantasy," one is overwhelmed with a curiosity. This must lead to the inevitable question: "What is the black man really like?" According to Soromenho, "logo entramos de cogitar que para

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[30]Russell G. Hamilton, Voices From an Empire: A History of Afro-Portuguese Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), pp. 375-376.

[31]"Maiá Poçón," p. 1.

[32]Ibid.

além do homem que dança e trabalha vive o Homem."[33] The necessity of learning about the "son of savage Africa" falls to the writers who are opening up new vistas in order to uncover o drama da gente negra. These last words were to become the second half of the title of Soromenho's first short story collection, Nhárí. The very use of the word drama limited the scope of the author's vistas just as it prejudged the nature of African life. Yet the author's principal theme, to get to know African man qua Man, is evident. For Soromenho, Maiá Poçón, by its very nature and because it was written by a black man, was an honest attempt to penetrate the soul of the African. The reviewer's own words however about the black's "alma irrequieta, sempre tocada por um estranho fatalismo--que é toda a beleza dolorosa da raça negra,"[34] show him to be almost as enthralled by African exoticism as were the contemporaries whom he continually disparaged. To Soromenho, the greatest value of Maiá Poçón, while it was not a definitive work, lay in Viana de Almeida's insistence on the "communion of the two races--white and black."

In Humanidade of 25 July 1937, aside from the priest's letter correcting "Fernando Annaya's" assertions on the true role of the Church in Angola, we read of the first translation of one of Soromenho's stories "Os Embaixadores à Côrte do Além."[35]

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[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

[35]From Lendas Negras, pp. 41-45.

Because this story has been translated into French (which has always been considered by the Portuguese as the language of Western Civilization in the "important French journal 'Jeunesse-Magazine,'"[36] Humanidade could now tell its readership that Soromenho was not only a "dear colleague," but also chefe da redaccao. He still did not get his name on the masthead but now he had status. Fame had its rewards and Soromenho's next contribution was nothing less than the lead editorial on page one of the 15 August 1937 issue of Humanidade. This editorial entitled "Dois Caminhos," was a paean to the Latin, and especially Portuguese, right to "command the sons of Africa." That right was based on the fact that only Latins had successfully colonized Africa becuase of their unique lack of racist feelings and their ideal of fraternization with the blacks. In contrast,

> Os povos nordicos jamais [sic] poderiam ter feito um Brasil e Argentina.
> Eles erguem cidades e enchemnas de civilizacao materialista--mas nao constroem almas.[37]

According to the author, as long as Africa had to be under the protection of civilizing peoples "por direito humano," that prerogative belonged to the Latins. Of all European peoples, only they could raise "o grito de libertacao, grito

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[36]"Castro Soromenho: Um seu trabalho traduzido para frances," Humanidade, 25 July 1937, p. 16. The text reads: "A importante revista francesa 'Jeunesse-Magasine' publicou num dos seus ultimos numerous o conto do nosso querido camarada de trabalho Castro Soromenho, Une ambassade Quioco a la cour de l'Au-Dela. O trabalho do nosso camarada foi brilhantemente traduzido pelo Barao Cristian de Catiers . . . ."

[37]"Dois Caminhos," Humanidade, 15 August 1937, p. 1.

de humanidade: - o negro é um homem!"

The "Brazilian connection" came immediately to Soromenho as he said, to prove his point,

> . . .basta lançarmos um rápido olhar sôbre a terra brasileira para que, mais uma vez, os factos passem ante nossos olhos para vermos a nossa jornada espiritual--fôrça que ergueu o mundo brasileiro.[38]

Even in times of war, the author affirmed that the Latins' expeditions overseas had always been guided by "uma grande simpatia humana." He continued "A voz do Brasil é a voz dos portugueses." South Africa, on the other hand, spoke through the "stone mouth" of Cecil Rhodes' statue. For the Latins, their heroes were Albuquerque, Liautey and Sá da Bandeira.[39]

This same issue of Humanidade also carried an interview by that unparalleled Luso-tropicologist and apologist for Portuguese colonialism, Gilberto Freyre.[40] The unsigned interview sings Freyre's praises and likens him to those great 20th century giants of creativity, Stevan Zeeig and Emil Ludwig. The next issue of Humanidade carried

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[38]Ibid.

[39]Since the author mentions Albuquerque, thereby not confining himself to Africa, and Liautey, thereby not confining himself to Portugal, one can only wonder why he fails to mention any Spanish explorers by name. There is the glaring omission of Pizarro, Cortéz, de León, Balboa, etc. This writer hazards the guess that even though Soromenho never wrote anything even remotely bearing on Spain during or after its civil war, his omission of a Spanish colonial figure was a deliberate protest against Franco. In our opinion, the drivel expressed in this editorial would almost be humorous if it had not brought such tragic consequences to Africa, Portugal and France.

[40]"Gilberto Freire [sic]," Humanidade, 15 August 1937, pp. 8-9.

an unsigned abstract of an article written by Paulo Braga for Seara Nova entitled "Grandeza e humilhação da literatura colonial."[41] Braga criticized the writers of colonial literature for lacking imagination, sensitivity, culture, grammar and talent. The abstract continues thusly:

> Esta literatura, além disto, não existe como arte ou como função social, mais unicamente como concepção política. Daqui a falta de imaginação e a servidão intelectual dos que a ela se dedicam com o pensamento na efémera consagração dos prémios literários. Os autores lêem as condições de um concurso e nada mais conseguem fazer do que exercícios á [sic] volta de uma única finalidade.[42]

Even the better writers, those who do not seek to conform to the rules of literary contests, wind up writing for the prizes offered and either "create" nothing or create negligible art. Braga's words are not only reminiscent of Gaspar Simoes' description of literature in a totalitarian society but they point up the basic defect of literary contests: the inherent restrictions these contests place on artistic creativity. We shall see whether or not Soromenho's early works fall into Braga's net.

For the reader to understand the cultural milieu in which Soromenho wrote, it is necessary to continually keep in mind Portugal's views of her colonies. A lead editorial, "A vida das Colónias na imprensa metropolitana," in the Diário de Luanda[43] exemplifies these views. The author, Afonso Correia,

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[41] Humanidade, 5 September 1937, p. 21.

[42] Ibid.

[43] 7 September 1937, p. 1.

like Viana de Almeida a journalist and one-shot colonial "novelist," complains that the Portuguese press does not follow, as it should, "o desenrolar da vida colonial, nos seus aspectos económico, social, moral e intelectual." The newspapers in all of the colonies make repeated reference to this "lamentable" fact. The key question becomes: Is the Portuguese press, in fact, interested in what goes on in the Portuguese colonies? Correia believed that it was but that there were "painful causes" (bringing to mind the forças ocultas of another Lusitanian in Brazil seventeen years later) which prevented the Portuguese press from paying more attention to the colonies. The best journalists in the metropole knew little or nothing at all about the colonies. Worse still was the fact the distance between colonies and mother country was so great as to discourage travel and cultural exchange. Correia suggests that the newspaper owners in Portugal, who have so much at stake financially in the colonies, should dedicate some space to colonial matters. He concludes that if they haven't yet done so, it is primarily because they are not convinced of the profitability of such action. In fact he tells us that many journalists, well-versed in colonial issues and capable of writing brilliantly for the Portuguese press, have offered their services in this field and have been rebuffed because, they are told, "o assunto não nos interessa, por enquanto." This writer has every reason to believe that Soromenho was one of those journalists who tried and tried but failed completely. The editorial is just another piece of evidence which facilitiates our understanding of why,

and for whom, Soromenho wrote as he did.

Other problems faced by the young writer, further evidence of the cultural abyss separating Portugal from her colonies, are explained in one of a series of unsigned lead editorials in the Diário de Luanda entitled "A crise do livro Português e a sua expansão em África."[44] In the 1930's and 1940's, there were serious problems in the publishing business in Portugal. Costs were very high and the almost non-existence of disposable income, coupled with an unusually high illiteracy rate, created a very small market for books. This "crisis" not only affected Soromenho the writer from 1937 to 1945, (i.e., choice of material, choice of publisher, etc.) but also affected Soromenho the editor and publisher from 1946 through 1957, especially in the choice of material published. Given the restricted market for any kind of books published in Portugal, the share of that market held by colonial literature was almost nil. As we have already seen, this situation compelled colonial writers to submit their material only to those government-owned or sponsored journals which held out the promise of possible publication. It goes without saying that the material had to meet the political and ideological standards of the periodical in question. The problem of a very limited market in Portugal was not the only one facing a colonial writer. He had also to look forward to the bleak prospect of never being read in the colony about which he

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[44] 26 September 1937, p. 1.

had written, a situation based in the continuing economic subservience in which Portugal kept her colonies.

Like any other item manufactured in the mother country, books were subject to inordinately high transportation charges and import tariffs in the colonies. The editorial cited above points out that while a book might sell for eight or ten escudos in Lisbon or Porto, its selling price in Luanda was the equivalent of fifteen or twenty. (Portugal did not allow Angola to use Portuguese currency but forced the colony to use angolares which were always discounted for the benefit of the mother country in exchange transactions.) If one wanted to buy a book in Luanda, in other words, he would have to pay twice what he paid for the same book in Lisbon. Because of this artificial price disparity, few colonists were able to buy any books at all. This situation had a twofold effect. Firstly, the expansion of Portuguese culture in the colonies was severely restricted. Secondly, the colonies, which represented a large potential market for books published in Portugal, could do nothing to alleviate the "book crisis" in the mother country. The editorial recommends that tariffs be lowered and colonists be allowed to purchase books from Portugal through the mails on a C.O.D. basis. This proposal would result in the expansion of a reader's market, ameliorating the crisis in Portugal, at the same time that it contributed to the cultural enrichment and solidified the cultural ties of the thousands of Portuguese settled throughout the Empire.

> Trata de função educativa exercida pelo livro e da divulgação da literatura nacional entre as gentes do Império. Trata-se do intercâmbio espiritual com a Mãe-Pátria . . . .[45]

Tariffs were not lowered and the crise do livro continued in Portugal, as we shall see, through the 1950's. Obviously, such a situation would severely limit Soromenho's options and this judgment will be confirmed as we examine his early works.

In the realm of Luso-Brazilian cultural cooperation, Humanidade again shows its bias by taking note of the reappearance of a magazine published by the Sociedade Luso-Africana do Rio de Janeiro.[46] The objective of this Society, according to the article, was the "propaganda e defesa do Ultramar Português no Brasil." Given those objectives, the journal seems little more than an extension of Humanidade in Brazil.[47] Its importance to us lies in the fact that the Lisbon periodical and its chefe da redacção, dedicated to the defesa e propaganda do Ultramar, kept in close touch with similar groups in Brazil.

Beginning with the issue of 20 October 1937, Humanidade

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[45]"A crise do livro," Diário de Luanda, 26 September 1937, p. 1.

[46]"Sociedade Luso-Africana do Rio de Janeiro: O reaparecimento do seu 'Boletim,'" Humanidade, 25 September 1937, p. 4.

[47]Among the contributors to this particular issue of the Boletim in Rio was the Brazilian Sociologist, Arthur Ramos. Soromenho probably became familiar with Ramos' works around this time, if he had not read them earlier. Ramos' works were listed in an editor's note prefacing an article he wrote for Humanidade entitled, "'Mythos' Africanos," (31 October 1937, p. 1.) When Soromenho went to Brazil for Humanidade in 1939, he met Ramos personally. So impressed was he with the Brazilian that he quoted him in the preface to his last pre-colonial work of fiction, Calenga.

became a weekly. (It had been a bi-monthly prior to that date.) Humanidade had made its mark in Lisbon and its importance on the Portuguese cultural and literary scene was enhanced when it hired João Gaspar Simões as its literary critic. It was probably at this time that Soromenho and Gaspar Simoes began their long association, which would develop into a close working relationship at least through 1956. Their relationship would also have an important effect on Soromenho's writing.

Humanidade continued to break new ground when it inaugurated a "Women's page" on 7 November 1937, with two articles written by and about women.[48] The editorial note explaining the reason for this; "Women's page" states:

> 'Humanidade' que fez do universo seu campo de expansao, quer atrair a si a alma de todas as mulheres da nossa Patria, das que em Lisboa e provincias trabalham nos escritorios e nas oficinas, das que correm a terra viajando, das que emigram para os paises longinquos, das que colonizam o Imperio.[49]

If Soromenho, as chefe da redacção didn't write that himself, he assuredly played a part in the decision to create such a forum.

This same issue, on page 9, transcribed an article by António Correia de Freitas, editor of the Província de Angola.[50] The piece was mostly a transcription of Paulo Braga's "Grandeza

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[48]Maria Archer, "Carta a uma africanista," and Graciete Branco, "A mulher portuguesa," Humanidade, 7 November 1937, p. 6. (Maria Archer was a well-known and widely-read colonial writer.)

[49]Ibid., p. 6.

[50]A newspaper founded in Luanda in 1923 as a weekly, it became an important morning daily ten years later, equal in stature to the afternoon Diário de Luanda.

e humilhação da literatura colonial" as published originally in Seara Nova, and reprinted in part in Humanidade of 5 September 1937, p. 21. Freitas, however, makes a significant change in the title, for his work is called: "Literatura colonial, a rara grandeza e a sua humilhacao." This article is important not only because it contains some parts omitted in Humanidade's original transcription but also because it carried behind it the weight of one of Angola's most important dailies. Humanidade reprinted Correia de Freitas' article even after having done its own abstract of the original, to drive home the message to its readership. One of the sections omitted in Humanidade's abstract but reprinted from Freitas' transcription reads as follows:

> As realidades são por demais evidentes: indivíduos incapazes de escrever um artigo de jornal ou uma crónica de revista literária, aparecem-nos com facilidade inaudita autores de literatura colonial. Quando se procura realizar uma grande manifestação cultural glorificadora da história e da vida coloniais, pagam-se a três mil escudos as conferências de pessoas que não fazem a mínima idea [sic] do que é o Ultramar na paisagem e na vida e só dizem banalidades com a usual repetição de lugares comuns.
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> Quando um senhor qualquer visita duas ou três colónias numa viagem de quinze dias, o País fica a possuir mais um intelectual saturado de ciência para escrever tratados sobre as mais complexas questões de colonização, onde todos nós iremos, pouco depois, encontrar aquele estilo de sebenta e de copia de coisas estranjeiras [sic] que as nossas universidades cultivam carinhosamente.
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> As mais tristes conseqüências de tudo isto são a superficialidade e a banalidade de uma literatura já extensa, mas uma superficialidade e uma banalidade consagradas pelos prémios literários . . . .[51]

The value of literary prizes as stimuli for superficial and banal

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[51]António Correia de Freitas, "Literatura Colonial, Humanidade, 7 November 1937, p. 9.

literature was again brought to the attention of the public. Soromenho, as chefe da redacção, thought the article important enough to reprint it in its entirety. Yet Braga's warnings, reprinted twice now in Humanidade, did not deter Soromenho in his own quest for those same literary prizes. We have already seen what they meant to an author in terms of remuneration, recognition and publication. What remains to be determined is whether Soromenho's works qualitatively overcame the pitfalls enumerated by Braga and others, or were merely repetitions of warn-out themes and plots of exotic Africa.

The cultural deficits engendered by literary prizes were of lesser concern to Humanidade than the economic and human problems facing the colonies. The issue of 14 November 1937 points out in bold, page-one headlines, that from 1 January 1931 to 31 December 1936, the colonies bought 1,340,000,000 escudos worth of goods and services from Portugal. The editorial argues that the balance of trade deficit for the colonies implicit in such figures must be redressed by massive national economic mobilization. It cries out against the emigration from Portugal to everywhere but the colonies and asks, somewhat rhetorically, "Porque continuamos, entretanto, a assistir à partida de emigrantes para o estranjeiro, [sic] emquanto [sic] no Ultramar há nações a criar?" This social and human problem would never be resolved in favor of Portugal's colonies, because they offered little hope for economic success. Humanidade called for a national emigration policy directed towards populating the colonies with more Portuguese, such a policy to be coordinated with a national

economic plan which would bring the colonies into full partnership with Portugal. (The Portuguese government and people cared little about the colonies, however. Not until the outbreak of the wars of liberation in the late 1960's would those attitudes begin to change. By that time, the winds of history had shifted decisively against the last European "empire" in Africa. The liberation movements would bring down Portuguese totalitarianism because it had become nothing more than a house of cards.)

The problem of the meager quality of colonial literature continued to occupy many key journalists and writers. Afonso Correia, of the Diário de Luanda, went on with his public discussion of the issue.[52] His focus, however, shifted suddenly to the writers in Portugal, as he chided them for failing to write colonial literature themselves. He concluded that their literary criticism of existing colonial literature must therefore be suspect.

> Se os astros de primeira grandesa [sic] lançam à margem a rigueza dos temas coloniais, não se me afigura justo ou razoável deprimir os de segunda ou terceira que honestamente os tentam.[53]

Correia's editorial gives us yet another insight into the problems facing colonial literature and the colonial writer in Portugal.

In Lisbon, Humanidade continued its Luso-Brazilian ex-

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[52]"Literatura Colonial," Diário de Luanda, 5 December 1937, p. 1.

[53]Ibid.

change campaign with a long article on the visit to Portugal of the editor of a Rio de Janeiro daily, A Noite. This man had come to Lisbon "com a nobre missão de estabelecer uma melhor permuta entre os escritores e jornalistas portugueses e os seus colegas brasileiros."[54] A meeting between the editor of this carioca newspaper and the publisher of Humanidade probaby laid the groundwork for the latter to set up offices in Brazil. More important, the man chosen for that task was none other than Humanidade's chief editor, Castro Soromenho.

The announcement was officially made on page two of the 18 December 1937 issue of Humanidade. It said, in part,

> Prosseguindo no seu programa de alargar, agitar e defender os valores e interêsses portugueses, em tôdas as regiões do mundo, 'Humanidade' vai enviar ao Brasil um dos seus mais categorizados redactores, ...
> Num jornal como o nosso, a vida do Brasil deve ter, por todas as razões, a maior largueza, no que foi, no que é e no que pretende ser, e, ainda mais, por ser a casa da nossa maior colónia.
> O Enviado especial . . . é o nosso chefe de redacção, sr. Castro Soromenho . . . . Ninguém mais indicado para tão difícil missão do que êste nosso ilustre camarada. Pela sua cultura e experiência, pelo seu aprumo, pela sua inteligência, Castro Soromenho oferece tôdas as garantias para levar a bom têrmo o trabalho que lhe vai ser confiado.[55]

Aside from setting up two offices in Brazil, the magazine charged Soromenho with the task of reporting on life there, paying special attention to Brasil's Portuguese immigrants.

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[54]"Intercâmbio Luso-Brasileiro," Humanidade, 21 November 1937, p. 16.

[55]"'Humanidade' no Brasil," Humanidade, 18 December 1937, p. 2. Italics added.

Soromenho's departure for Brazil, Portugal's "largest colony," was reported in the very next issue of Humanidade. The article reiterated the qualities for which he had been chosen:

> . . . a sua cultura e a sua intuição jornalística--de que tem dado inúmeras provas--ajudado por uma inteligencia e por um espirito de observacao admiravel, ...[56]

Humanidade appears to have had great hopes for Soromenho's mission but preferred to make an ex post facto judgment as to its success. "Entretanto, . . .-julgamos preferível esperar o cumprimento da sua missão para então revelarmos realidades desejadas."[57] We do not know whether or not Soromenho had been gently eased out as chief editor. Whatever hopes the publishers may have had for him and Humanidade were never realized. What we do know is that one Carlos Costa, Soromenho's replacement as chefe da redacção, immediately was named on the masthead above his new title. Soromenho's name, it may be remembered, had never appeared in print except in a byline. We also know that from the time of his departure, in December of 1937, to the last issue of Humanidade in February 1939, his byline appeared only twice more. But Soromenho had not left Portugal a minute too soon.

On 8 January 1938, Lisbon's Diário da Manhã, a daily controlled by the Salazar dictatorship through Antonio Ferro,

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[56]"Castro Soromenho," Humanidade, 25 December 1937, p. 12.

[57]Ibid.

the man who had publicly called Salazar the Portuguese duce,[58] bitterly attacked Humanidade. It was accused of only rarely quoting from Salazar's speeches while giving complete coverage to "filósofos, literatos, humoristas e políticos que nunca morreram de amores pelo Estado Novo."[59] The article further charged that some of these people were best known for their violent opposition to the government. Moreover, the books recommended in its bibliography section, which called for the creation of an "imperial consciousness," were nothing more than a "belo florilégio do mais puro reviralhismo!" The attack continues,

> Podiam os comanditários, mentores ou editores do semanário desejar fazer uma publicação ecléctica, humanitária, pacifista, nacionalista, etc. Nada tínhamos com isso, embora nos pareça que êsses 'embroglios' não são para a nossa época.
>
> Nenhum reparo faríamos no género do que estamos fazendo se não soubéssemos que os seus dirigentes procuram afanosamente o beneplácito e a protecção de alguns organismos do Estado para assim melhor poderem passar a candonga.
>
> Quem intentam êles ludibriar?[60]

Naturally, Humanidade wrote a letter to the editors of the Diario denying the allegations and insinuations of the article and calling once more for Nacionalismo Português! and Nacionalismo Humano!"[61]

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[58]Quoted in McNab, p. 3.

[59]"Humanidade," Diário da Manhã, 8 January 1938, n.p.

[60]Ibid.

[61]"'Humanidade' e o 'Diário de Manhã,'" Humanidade, 22 January 1938, pp. 1, 6. In the naive belief that God and justice were on their side, the publishers of Humanidade reprinted Diário da Manhã's original article in its entirety in the above issue as well as their letter to that daily's editor and even the latter's response.

The response of the Diário da Manhã is worth noting:

> A direcção e a redacção do 'Diário da Manhã' receberam ontem duas cartas . . ., assinadas por três directores da 'Sociedade Pro-Unificação Imperial . . . .
>
> Pretendem êsses cavalheiros fazer a defesa, e muito naturalmente o reclamo, do semanário 'Humanidade', a que nos referimos no dia 8.
>
> Esqueceram-se, porém, de quem pretende entrar na casa alheia não entra de chapéu na cabeça e a vociferar. Isso nem no sertão . . .
>
> Por isso não abrimos a porta e continuamos a avisar os incautos de que é preciso considerar como muito suspeito o tal semanário.[62]

This entire episode augured very poorly for Humanidade, in spite of the fact that the publishers and editor-in-chief paid a visit to General Carmona, then Portuguese Chief of State (as opposed to Salazar who was Prime Minister and wielded the true power of the government). As if to convince the public of their true loyalties, a large picture of them standing with Carmona in the President's palace appeared on page one of the following issue (29 January 1938). Carmona's influence came to naught however when Humanidade was ordered suspended in March of 1938 and threatened with extinction unless the owners thoroughly cleaned out the subversive editorial staff.

In the light of Soromenho's subsequent ties to the Agência-Geral das Colónias, it is unlikely that he was one of the enemies of the government referred to by the Diário da Manhã. At the same time, he was probably not unaware of the

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[62] As reprinted in "'Humanidade' e o 'Diário da Manhã,'" p. 6. Italics added. This reference to "Not even in the jungle . . ." was a very thinly-veiled racial slur against Humanidade's black editor-in-chief, Viana de Almeida. So much for Portuguese racial tolerance.

brewing storm and possibly accepted his Brazilian assignment with some sense of relief. As we have already noted, he could not have become actively involved with the opposition if he ever expected to submit his works to government-sponsored literary contests or write for government-controlled periodicals.

The same issue of Humanidade which printed the polemic with the Diário da Manhã also carried yet another lead article on colonial literature by Paulo Braga.[63] That critic again attacks the literary contests because they reward "mil coisas menos a literatura em si (a literatura-estilo e a literatura-pensamento)." The result is total public indifference to this genre of literature. Popular unconcern is the number one enemy of the colonial literature contests, which is reflected in the Portuguese press as "um espelho fiel da inconsciência colectiva." Colonial literature is poor in quality because it lacks "emotividade, alidada a uma ausência reconhecida de poder observador." This finding is not the result of intellectual bankruptcy on the part of the writers themselves but rather

> . . . um espírito de unilateralidade nas consagrações, uma tendência exclusivista--ou egoísta,--nos intúitos de um determinado sector da crítica, e, principalmente, um artificialismo doentio na criação intelectual. Restos de Gongorismo, de preciocismo, de nefelibatismo, de tudo que na história literária tem arrancado das almas o gôsto pela naturalidade, poderíamos dizer: pela visão humana dos sêres [sic], das coisas, do tempo e do espaço.
>
> E êste artificialismo que origina . . . a inferioridade das realizações, por mais sinceras que sejam nos intúitos.[64]

Braga's criticism of the critics who judged colonial literature did

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[63]"Literatura Colonial," 22 January 1938, p. 1.

[64]Ibid.

not endear him, or Humanidade, to the Agência-Geral das Colónias or the government. Yet his views had the support of his publishers and he would continue to be one of the principal literary critics for Humanidade.

The weekly's continuing campaign to strengthen the ties between Portugal and Brazil led to an editorial entitled: "Revolução nacional: Portugal, o Brasil e os interêsses espirituais do Império Português,"[65] whose purpose was to reaffirm the goals of the publishers:

> Defende-se a política dos intercâmbios intelectuais. Declara-se ser imprescindível que o livro português apareça no Brasil, acessível a tôda a gente, e que, em igualdade de circunstâncias, em Portugal, o livro brasileiro seja o melhor processo de nos levar a conhecer, a admirar e a amar conscientemente o Brasil. Repete-se a afirmação de que tudo exige que intelectuais dos dois países atravessem o Atlântico como embaixadores de cultura, que um intercâmbio de professores se realize, que tudo se faca para que a amisade [sic] intuitiva, a amisade racica, se junte a amisade que deriva do mutuo conhecimento e da admiracao . . . .[66]

In the same issue, Humanidade also announced the establishment of its own colonial geography contests because "é necessário que todos os portugueses conheçam a geografia do Ultramar."[67] The prizes to be awarded to the winners of this contest were 5,000, 1,000 and 500 escudos respectively. The need for this type of contest, and the sums offered to the winners, reflected

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[65] Humanidade, 29 January 1938, pp. 1, 3.

[66] Ibid., p. 3.

[67] "Concurso 'Humanidade,'" 29 January 1938, p. 9.

once again Portugal's obvious ignorance of its colonies as well as Humanidade's ceaseless efforts to overcome that barrier.

There was good reason for wanting to raise Portugal's colonial consciousness. Nazi Germany was declaring its right to reclaim the colonies and territories that had been stripped from Imperial Germany at Versailles. One of those territories, German South-West Africa, had been the staging ground for German Imperial expansion into Southern Angola. The revival of German designs in southwestern Africa did not sit well with those few Portuguese dedicated to the integrity of Portugal's Ultramar. The lead editorial in the Diário de Luanda of 14 February 1938 entitled "As reivindicações germânicas," reflected those concerns when it asked, somewhat rhetorically,

> . . . que sorte seria a das nossas Colónias se, porventura, os gigantescos exércitos germânicos tivessem triunfado sôbre os planos do comando único aliado?[68]

The answer was clear. Portugal had entered the war on the side of the allies principally because of German incursions into southern Angola. Portugal had already been witness to the results of fascist imperialism in Ethiopia, and Portuguese colonialists sought to awaken their countrymen to the dangers inherent in attempted German repossession of her former African colony. The German threats were ever-present in the minds of this beleaguered group and Humanidade was its principal spokesman. Officially, Portugal continued to remain indifferent to the overall plight of its colonies.

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[68]Diário de Luanda, 14 February 1938, p. 1

A short article in Humanidade entitled "Aspectos de colonizacao"[69] revealed the difficulties encountered by Portuguese wishing to emigrate to the colonies. This piece, a reprint from the newspaper Notícias of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo), described the problems confronting a colonist who wanted to bring his wife and children to Mozambique. The individual was required to put up a deposit co-signed by two businessmen in which they, and not the prospective colonist himself, pledged to support the man's family. In the event the emigrants chose to return to Portugal, the co-signers were obligated to pay for the family's return voyage. The article begins: "Enquanto o Brasil facilita e protege a emigração de portugueses que queiram fixar-sem no seu território . . . ." To fight this kind of totally irrational bureaucracy, Humanidade had issued repeated calls for a national emigration policy. As stated earlier, no such policy was to be instituted until after the beginnings of the wars of liberation in the early 1960's.

In keeping with Humanidade's Luso-Brazilian cultural exchange policy, the first review of Brazilian literature appeared under the title "Imagens do Brasil."[70] Soromenho, as we have seen, had already written some book reviews but it was not as a literary critic that he had been sent to Brazil. Literary criticism for Humanidade was the province of Paulo Braga and Joao Gaspar Simoes writing from Lisbon. As a matter of record, Soromenho, Humanidade's "ambassador" to Brazil, was not mentioned

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[69] 12 February 1938, p. 10.

[70] Paulo Braga, rev. of Aleluia by Ivan Ribeiro, in Humanidade, 5 March 1938, p. 5.

at all until 13 March 1938. Even then, his name appears only in a very small note in the "Press" section of the magazine.

> A imprensa brasileira aproveitou a estada do nosso camarada Castro Soromenho no Rio de Janeiro para o entrevistar sôbre a gente e as coisas de Portugal. Entre outros, publicam longas entrevistas os diários fluminenses Gazeta de Noticias, Correio da Noite, A Nação e O Globo.[71]

However, another of Braga's "Imagens do Brasil" was published in this same issue under the subtitle: "O intercâmbio cultural luso-brasileiro." It was an appeal for cultural exchange based on "new realities" and "new ideas," and the critic cited the editor of one of Rio's literary weeklies, Dom Casmurro,[72] to support his position.

> Apelemos para os generosos colegas da imprensa portuguesa, dos grandes diários, dessas admiráveis revistas de cultura como Presença, Humanidade, O Diabo, Seara Nova, Sol Nascente, etc., para que divulguem o mais possível os autores e escritores brasileiros em Portugal.[73]

Braga's last words were "'Humanidade' regista as palavras . . . [of Dom Casmurro's editor] . . . interpretendo-as como a indicação de um rumo a seguir."

Prior to this essay, Humanidade had been careful not to

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[71] "Imprensa," Humanidade, 13 March 1938, p. 5.

[72] "Imagens da Brasil," p. 6. Dom Casmurro hired Soromenho to be its Lisbon correspondent upon his return to Portugal in late 1938. Moser, Mourão and other biographical sources make the claim based, evidently, on information given them by the author himself. This writer was unable to verify their assertions from Lisbon but is inclined to give them credence since most of Soromenho's bio-bibliographical lacunae stem from deliberate omissions rather than deliberate prevarication.

[73] Ibid.

take a public political position on internal matters. Braga's article, reprinting a Brazilian editorial praising such "admirable cultural magazines" as Presença, O Diabo, Seara Nova and Sol Nascente, was proof positive to Salazar's fascists that Humanidade was truly an enemy of the Estado Novo. Why else would it publish a commentary extolling two adamently Republican and anti-Salazar literary journals (Presença and Seara Nova) and two Neo-Realist (in this particular instance, quasi-Marxist), anti-fascist literary journals (O Diabo and Sol Nascente)?[74] The government's reaction to such blatant opposition was swift. Publication of Humanidade was immediately suspended by order of the censors. The magazine did not reappear for a month and a half, and when next published on 17 April 1938, the lead editorial entitled "Aleluia," would tell the public what had happened.

The owners of the magazine, the Sociedade Pró-Unificação Imperial, blamed the suspension on the "former" editor and director, Viana de Almeida.[75] During the suspension, the owners

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[74] See McNab, pp. 8-9, 17.

[75] "Aleluia," Humanidade, 17 April 1938, p. 1. Viana de Almeida's dismissal was probably due as much to his zeal in exposing Portugal's inequitable treatment of her colonies as allowing direct reference to O Diabo, Sol Nascente, etc., in Braga's article. The self-revilement of the owners, contained in "Aleluia" was reminiscent of the autos-da-fé of the Portuguese Inquisition. This was their explanation:

> Ao findar o inverno, o nosso jornal foi suspenso por razões que só visavam particularmente o seu primeiro editor e director.
>
> Durante um mes se manteve a suspensao de Humanidade o tempo necessario para a Sociedade . . . sua exclusiva proprietária provar às entidades competentes a isenção, . . . que anima toda a nossa acção jornalistica, ...
>
> Mas neste lapso de tempo, pudemos analisar, a amizade desinteressada da maior parte dos nossos colaboradores, ...

were able to prove to the authorities that the magazine was possessed only of "a isenção, o patriotismo, o desejo de colaboração sincera, com o Estado Novo . . . ." They had repented their sins and,

> . . . alma ajoelhada no genuflexório solene da Pátria imortal, fé robustecida pela justiça que agora nos foi feita, prometemos lutar . . ., pelo bem estar dos povos portugueses.

One cannot ignore such a public display of self-debasement. However, as Salazar's god was the Fatherland, Humanidade bent the knee obediently before going to the stake. Because Soromenho was in Brazil, he evidently survived the purge and satisfactorily proved his "impartial friendship." Nevertheless, he learned a very important lesson from the owners of Humanidade. Their "Aleluia" editorial convinced him that if he were ever to be permitted to write anything whatsoever about the Ultramar, he would have to do so within the confines of censorship. Further, he would have to collaborate actively with the Salazar dictatorship if he ever wanted to see his name in print. He understood the options available to him and did just that for the next six years.[76] Although Soromenho personally survived the purge, the damage to Humanidade was irreparable and it ceased publication the next year.[77]

> A defesa da Paz social que o País vive, . . . enfim, . . . todos os problemas do espírito . . . do jornalismo, serão as preocupações dominantes da nossa orientação.

[76]This writer leaves to others to judge whether or not, given the situation in Portugal at the time, compounded by Soromenho's severe financial difficulties, he could or should have chosen to do otherwise.

[77]The last issue was published on 5 February 1939.

Soromenho's work for Humanidade in Brazil seems shrouded in mystery. His first article was published a full six months after his arrival in Rio and is merely an interview with the President of the Portuguese Chamber of Commerce in that city.[78] The entire interview, devoted to the economic hardships suffered by Portuguese importers in Rio as a result of newly-created Brazilian tariffs, gives us some insight into the true nature of Soromenho's assignment in Brazil.

In Portugal, the Salazar goaernment decided it was time to "show the flag" in its colonies in order to ward off the covetous glances of other European powers. Salazer dispatched the Portuguese President, Carmona, to São Tomé and Angola. It is the first time that any Portuguese head of State had ever visited any of the colonies. Humanidade complained that none of its reporters were invited to accompany the President while other journals and newspapers, which had never evinced the slightest interest in the colonies, were invited to cover this "momentous" occasion. In a plaintive article it argued, not unjustly, that it was the only magazine with widespread readership throughout the "Empire."[79] Of course, the Salazar government had many subtle

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[78]"Intercâmbio comercial luso-brasileiro; O comércio português no Brasil," Humanidade, 18 June 1938, p. 6.

[79]Frei Tomas, "Questão de criterio," Humanidade, 2 July 1938, p. 1. "Nem há outro jornal que aos problemas e interêsses imperiais--nomeadamente às noções de grandeza moral e material do Império e à sua unidade territorial--haja consagrado mais dedicada atenção."

measures with which to harass its enemies, real or imagined, and this deliberate snub of Humanidade was representative.

The "problem" of colonial literature continued to occupy the editors of Humanidade and an article in 6 August 1938 asks: "Existe ou não uma literatura colonial portuguesa?"[80] After polling a variety of writers and critics, including Aquilino Ribeiro, Luiz Forjaz Trigueiros and João Ameal, the article asserts that:

> os nossos criticos e os nossos melhores escritores nao aceitam como expressao definitiva dum genero aquilo que classificamos sob a designacao de literatura colonial.

This conclusion, it must be remembered, came after the Colonial Ministry had been sponsoring colonial literature contests for twelve consecutive years. The author of this particular article sought a colonial literature which would impose itself not only on Portugal but on the world "pela sua fôrça, pela sua vibração, pela sua nobreza--e pela sua unidade. Uma literatura, enfim que faça por nós o que Kipling fez pelos ingleses . . . ." This tendency to imitate foreign examples had been a major undercurrent in Portuguese letters since before Os Lusiadas. Even in the search for a colonial literature, it continued unabated. The article concludes by stating that Portugal has the wherewithal to produce

> uma literatura de tipo 'kiplinguiano'--exaltadora, rejuvenescedora, dignificadora do homem e da nação, do homem em face da natureza, da nação em face do

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[80]Dutra Faria, "Existe ou nao uma literatura colonial portuguesa?" Humanidade, 6 August 1938, p. 6.

universo. Unicamente nos falta um Kipling . . . .[81]

Unfortunately for Portugal, the status, or rather non-status of its colonies at home, not to mention the implied lack of talent, would forever preclude the creation of "Kiplingesque" literature. Even if there had been a Portuguese writer of Kipling's stature, for whom would he have written? If he lived in Portugal and depended on writing colonial literature for his livelihood, such a man would have died of starvation. For Soromenho, just beginning his career as a colonial writer, this lesson had yet to be learned.

Soromenho returned to Lisbon in the latter part of 1938 and published his first book of short stories, Nhárí [sic]: O Drama da Gente Negra.[82] This collection of eleven short stories was a consolidation of seven which had already appeared elsewhere in print ("Áves do Álem," Ultima Hora, 24 April 1938, p. 3; "Gando--O Feiticeiro," O Mundo Portugues, 32-33 (August-September 1938) 361-366; "Os Embaixadores à Côrte do Além," "Terra de Amizade," "Para Além da Vida," "Áves do Além," and "A Lagoa Maldita," Lendas Negras, Cadernos Coloniais, no. 20, 1936 and "Nhárí" which had first been published in serialized form in the Diário de Luanda during March, 1937). Only three new stories had been added to this collection.

Surprisingly, there is no mention in Humanidade of Soromenho's return to Lisbon, in sharp contrast to the lavish praise heaped upon him at his departure. He had probably

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[81]Ibid.

[82]Porto: Livraria Civilização, 1938.

fallen from grace with the owners of the magazine after Viana de Almeida had been dismissed. Nevertheless, he did write one last piece of fiction, "Lendas Africanas," which fatefully appeared in the final issue of Humanidade. He sub-titled the story, "A Velha que Lançou a Maldição Sôbre o Lago Dilôlo."[83] It was nothing more than a reworked version of his original "A Lagoa Maldita," which had already been published twice before, in Lendas Negras and Nhárí.

Soromenho was not a prolific writer and most of his articles and stories were to be rewritten or reprinted in different magazines as well as in his own short story collections and novels throughout the 1940's. Four of his five novels were published in subsequent editions.[84] And it is not

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[83]Castro Soromenho, "Lendas Africanas: A Velha," Humanidade, 5 February 1939, p. 6.

[84]Noite de Angustia, (Porto: Livraria Civilizacao, 1939); 2nd ed. revised (Lisbon: Inquerito, 1943); 3rd ed. revised in Historias da Terra Negra, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Editorial Gleba, 1960) II, 9-106; 4th ed., Coleccao Atlantida No. 13 (Lisbon: Editora Ulisseia, 1965). Homems sem Caminho (Lisbon: Portugalia, 1942); 2nd ed. revised (Lisbon: Inquerito, 1946); 3rd ed. revised in Historias da Terra Negra, II, 107-229; 4th ed., Coleccao Atlantida, No. 18 (Lisbon: Editora Ulisseia, 1966). Terra Morta, Coleccao Gaivota, No. 1 (Rio: Livraria-Editora da Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1949); 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Editora Arcadia, 1961); 3rd ed. posthumous, Coleccao Vozes do Mundo, 3 (Lisbon: Sa da Costa, [1974]). Viragem, Coleccao Atlantida, 1. (Lisbon: Editora Ulisseia, 1957); 2nd ed., (Sao Paulo: Arquimedes Edicoes, 1967). Three editions of the author's fictive history of the 19th century Portuguese explorers were also published. They are: A Maravilhosa Viagem dos Exploradores Portugueses (Lisbon: Terra Editora, 1946 [i.e., 1948]); 2nd ed. revised (Lisbon: Editorial Sul, [1956]); 3rd ed. (Lisbon: Editora Arcadia, 1961).

difficult to understand how this came about. The author's interest in, and knowledge about, Angola was focused on that remote frontier region in the Northeast where he had lived with his father and had worked for the diamond mining company, Diamang. During his years in that region, the Lunda district, Soromenho had amassed a wealth of ethnographic and historical data for future publication. His fascination with Lunda and its inhabitants "was transformed into a fierce desire to bring "his" Africa to his countrymen, no matter how often he repeated themes. Once in Lisbon, he wrote essays, articles, history and fiction whenever he could, however he could. His great motivating force seems to have been to awaken in Portugal a productive interest in the Angola he knew best.

With Nhárí now on the market, Soromenho wrote another pamphlet for the Cadernos Colonials collection Imagens da Cidade de São Paulo de Luanda[85] and took up journalism full-time. According to most sources,[86] he wrote for the Lisbon dailies A Noite, Jornal da Tarde and O Seculo.

Beginning in 1939, certain contradictions in Soromenho's words and actions begin to arise. After all that he had written about the negative effects of literary contests on

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[85]Castro Soromenho, Imagens da Cidade de São Paulo de Luanda, Cadernos Colonials, no. 55 (Lisbon: Editorial Cosmos, [1939]).

[86]Moser, Mourão, etc. See also "Soromenho, Fernando Monteiro de Castro," Grande Enciclopedia Portuguesa e Brasileira (Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro: Editorial Enciclopedia Limitida, n.d.) and "Castro Soromenho," Dicionário Bibliográfico Luso-Brasileiro (Rio, Lisbon: Editôra Fundo de Cultura Brasil-Portugal, 1965).

colonial writers, he submitted Nhárí to the XIII Colonial Literature Contest of the Agência-Geral das Colónias. In a year when no first prize was awarded for a novel, short story, etc. (1939), he won second prize. The prize was worth 3,500 escudos, no small sum to this man whose sole means of support at the time came from writing and having published occasional newspaper articles. Soromenho had now become an accepted colonial writer and this status led to increased recognition and expanded career opportunities.

His first novel, Noite de Angústia, was also published in 1939 by Livraria Civilização. This was the same firm which had published Nhárí. No doubt they wished to capitalize on the author's new found fame. At the same time, he began to write frequently for the colonial monthly published jointly by the Agência-Geral das Colónias and the Secretariat for National Propaganda, O Mundo Português. It was in this "Revista de cultura e propaganda/arte e literatura coloniais" that the bulk of his articles, some later published verbatim in other magazines and others reworked into fiction, were first to appear. Soromenho's association with O Mundo Português was a long one, spanning six years (1939-1945). His name appears at the head of thirty-one articles, some of them serialized in three or four issues, yet no biography based on data supplied by Soromenho ever mentions O Mundo Português! In fact it is only Amândio César, the self-styled fascist, who makes mention of it in a brief bio-bibliography of Soromenho. César says that Soromenho "foi colaborador assíduo da revista da

Agência-Geral das Colónias O Mundo Português e do Atlântico do S.N.I., alem de colaborador de A Esfera, revista de marcada posição nazista."[87] Soromenho did in fact write steadily for O Mundo Português, although he wrote only one article for Atlântico and five for A Esfera. One must inevitably wonder why Soromenho totally obliterated his connection with all of these publications by never mentioning them to his family and friends and never including them in his biographies. It must also be asked why Amândio César goes out of his way, not only to mention the publications themselves but also to include their political affiliations.

In the case of O Mundo Português and after the publication of Terra Morta, which resulted in Soromenho's putative association with the Neo-Realists, this writer believes that he found it embarrassing, at the very least, to admit to ever having written for an official publication of the Colonial Ministry. By the early 1950's, when the Neo-Realists had incorporated him into their movement for their own purposes and he had begun to associate with the young Angolans of the Vamos Descobrir Angola movement, (Agostinho Neto, Mário Pinto de Andrade, Viriato da Cruz, and others), Soromenho found it necessary to erase his former collaboration with the government in order to gain acceptance by these two groups. In attempting

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[87] Contos Portugueses do Ultramar, ed. Amandio Cesar, 2 vols., Coleccao Ultramar, 2 (Porto: Portucalense Editora, 1969), II, 447.

to break with his past, he could not obliterate his successes in the literary contests of the Agência-Geral (two second prizes and one first prize) but he could excuse them on the grounds that they served the cause of Angolan literature. He made no mention of O Mundo Português, secure in the knowledge that only the most hard-line, white colonialists and other dedicated to the glories of the Portugues Imperial past would have read that magazine anyway. Since almost all of his articles were to find their way into his later works, perhaps he preferred that the public not know that the works were merely compendiums of previously published material. On the other hand, the process of first publishing articles which are later incorporated into books is common to authors throughout the world, leading this writer to conclude that purely political considerations led Soromenho to cover up his six years of association with O Mundo Português. Reference to his one short story in Atlântico and his five historical articles on Lunda in A Esfera (which will be cited in their proper chronological order) was most probably suppressed by Soromenho for the same reason. The same equally political motives, but in reverse, led Amândio César to reveal all this information. Where Soromenho sought to hide the facts from his new-found friends on the left, César, an admitted reactionary, moved to discredit Soromenho with these same people by calling specific attention to the right-wing political affiliations of the publications in question. Unfortunately for Soromenho, he never had the chance to respond to César's accusations; he died the year before they were published.

In defense of Soromenho, this writer must reiterate

that the restricted nature of the author's thematic material forced him to write for any publication that would accept and pay for his labors. The limited market for colonial literature, a true reflection of the complete indifference to the colonies on the part of most Portuguese, gave Soromenho very little latitude in picking and choosing publishers. In the specific case of O Mundo Português, the one magazine of any duration concerned directly with the Ultramar, it was the only intelligent choice open to Soromenho. Going one step further, it is quite possible that without the financial support of the Agência-Geral das Colónias, Soromenho might never have been able to write his singularly great novel, the work for which he is known throughout the world, Terra Morta.

Returning now to 1939, when Soromenho first strode onto the literary stage with Nhárí and his first novel, Noite de Angústia, two of his articles appear in O Mundo Português.[88]

The next year, he continued his journalistic career and published three more articles in O Mundo Português.[89] By 1941 he had begun to expand his journalistic horizons both quantitatively and qualitatively. Some of his articles.

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[88]"Calunga--O Mar," O M. P., 66(June 1939)245-250 and "De um diário colonial: 'O direito da posse,'" O M. P., 70(October 1939)379-385.

[89]"A Lunda negra--A queda do sobado Caungula," O M. P., 74(February 1940)59-65; "Mucanda," O M. P., 77(May 1940)225-233 and continued in 78(June 1940)273-281, 79(July 1940) 315-323, 81(September 1940)393-397, 85(January 1941)31-38 and 86(February 1941)107-111; "Música Negra: Instrumentos da Musica Africana," O M. P., 81(September 1940)407-411, with photos.

appeared in Panorama,[90] a monthly tourist publication of António Ferro's Secretariat for National Propaganda, and in Ocidente,[91] an exceedingly right-wing monthly edited by the long-time "nationalist," Manuel Múrias. We gain a small insight into Soromenho's daily life through an interview with him entitled "Como os nossos escritores passam as tardes de verão," in the pro-Salazar Lisbon weekly, Vida Mundial Ilustrada.[92] The interviewer finds Soromenho seated at a table with another author in the Café Brasileiro, in the Chiado section of Lisbon, a cafe which was a renowned gathering place for many writers of the time. The article states: "Castro Soromenho. . . descreve-nos a maneira como trabalha. De noite, pensa. De manhã, escreve. À tarde, repousa, na medida que lhe é possível. . . ." Soromenho then speaks for himself.

> -Agora estou escrevendo um romance, a que dei o título de 'Homens Sem Caminho' e preparo duas biografias, uma sôbre Ferreira de Castro e outra, romanceada, acêrca de Silva Pôrto.[93]

Homens sem Caminho, his second novel, was to be published the following year (1942) and won first prize in the annual colonial literature contest. His fictionalized biography of the Portuguese

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[90]"Angola--Legenda da paisagem africana," Panorama, I, 1(June 1941)30-32, with photos; "Estrada Marginal," Panorama I 2(July 1941)1-3, with photos; and "Guiné--Visão do país distante," Panorama, I, 3(August 1941)30-32, with photos.

[91]"Paisagem humana da Africa: A mulher negra," Ocidente, XV, 42(October 1941)92-92.

[92]Gentil Marques, "Como os nossos escritores passam as tardes de verão," Vida Mundial Ilustrada, 7 August 1941, p. 16.

[93]Ibid.

explorer of the Angolan hinterlands, Silva Pôrto, came out the next year (1943), under the title A Aventura e a Morte no Sertão: Silva Pôrto e a Viagem de Angola a Mocambique.[94] Soromenho, if he wrote one, never published a biography of Ferreira de Castro.[95]

The interview in Vida Mundial Ilustrada, which placed Soromenho before the Portuguese public as one of "our writers," led to a series of interviews for the magazine conducted by Soromenho himself. In Lisbon of the times there is, among the literati, much fanfare about a possible Luso-Brazilian cultural accord. Four of Soromenho's five interviews published towards the end of the year carried the general heading: "Política do Atlântico."[96] He had long been committed to that goal since

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[94]Castro Soromenho, A Aventura e a Morte no Sertão: Silva Pôrto e a Viagem de Angola a Moçambique, Colecção Gládio, no. 11 (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1943).

[95]His own statement that he was preparing such a biography on Ferreira de Castro implies that he was close to the novelist. When this writer interviewed Ferreira de Castro in Lisbon (11 December 1972), he had nothing to add to the data already acquired other than to say, "Of course A Selva had a large impact on Soromenho's novels."

[96]"Teixera Gomes--Aspectos inéditos da vida do artista, diplomata e homem do Estado," Vida Mundial Ilustrada, 30 October 1941, pp. 5, 8; "Política do Atlântico: As relações culturaes [sic] luso-brasileiras evocadas por João de Barros," Vida, 30 November 1941, p. 2; "Política do Atlântico--Carlos Queiróz, Casais Monteiro, Gaspar Simões e Forjaz Trigueiros perante o Brasil literário," Vida, 4 December 1941, pp. 2, 3; "Política do Atlântico--Um depoimento de José Osório de Oliveira sôbre as relações culturais luso-brasileiras," Vida, 25 December 1941, p. 13 and "Política do Atlântico" (interview with Álvaro Pinto, editor of Ocidente); Vida, 15 January 1942, p. 12.

his days in Brazil and took advantage of the tenor of the times to help bring that cause before the Portuguese public. Soromenho began with Joao de Barros, whom he considered the motivating force behind the movement. His next subjects were his friends Carlos Queiróz, Casais Monteiro, Gaspar Simões and Luiz Forjaz Trigueiros. To Soromenho, they represented "os vários sectores da nossa crítica literária." Carlos Queiróz, Casais Monteiro and Gaspar Simões were three leading theoreticians of the Presença movement, dedicated to the concept of "pure" art. In McNab's words,

> José Régio, João Gaspar Simões and their friends maintained that artists were not in the world to reform it, and that if art did serve humanity, it was through the 'espiritualização do homem.'[97]

In claiming that these men represented "the various sectors of our literary criticism," Soromenho implied his agreement with their ideologies as much as he denied the existence of any others, Neo-Realism, which placed literature at the service of mankind through the "edification of the proletariat,"[98] is noticeably unrepresented. In the text of the interview with the presencistas,[99] Soromenho subtly leads Gaspar Simões into an indirect attack on the Neo-Realists when he asks: "Que me diz acêrca de uma possível influência da literatura brasileira

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[97]McNab, pp. 18-19

[98]Ibid., p. 21

[99]Castro Soromenho, "Política do Atlântico--Carlos Queiróz, Vida, 4 December 1941, p. 2.

nas letras portuguesas?"[100] To which Gaspar Simões responds somewhat cryptically "Parece-me que há hoje uma certa corrente de jovens escritores portugueses voltado de corpo e alma aos autores do Brasil. Lins do Rêgo, Jorge Amado. . . ."[101] Soromenho then solicits his subject's opinion about the nature of such influence: "Mas considera essa influência benéfica?" Simões, now aware of the forum that has been created for him, picks up gently on the question saying,

> -A Resposta é delicada: não sei. Isto é: eu próprio ja defendi o ponto de vista segundo o qual o lirismo de certo romance brasileiro poderia apontar um caminho ao nosso desorientado romance. Receio porém, que a influência de certos romancistas brasileiros modernos seja demasiado absorvente. Como sabe, confunde-se muitas vezes imitação com influência. A influência pode ser benéfica. A imitação é sempre prejudicial. Afigura-se-me que, por emquanto [sic], entre nós os autores brasileiros são mais imitados do que seguidos.[102]

At this point the reader may well ask what exactly was the relationship between these Brazilian novelists and the Neo-Realists? McNab tells us that the "Portuguese radicals," [the early Neo-Realists], "found a ready source of models and inspiration" in the novelists of Brazil's northeast. The latter "brought to their readers direct representations of life without the frills of literature."[103] To Fábio Lucas, the Brazilian critic, this was not a difficult task because

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] McNab, p. 23.

> Já o romance nordestino associa muito bem a herança da cultura brasileira, latifundiária e patriarcal, ao espírito terrìvelmente cumulativo do capitalismo, gerador de miséria e desemprêgo,. . .
>
> Talvez o conjunto de romances do Nordeste constitua o documento mais enfático da disparidade social do país. A situação geográfica e histórica da região, de uma pobreza heróica e dependente, gerou mais vivamente o sentimento de protesto. Ali funcionam simultâneamente as fôrças telúricas e as instituições humanas para o esmagamento do homem e para tornar mais pronunciado o desnível entre pobres e ricos.[104]

The relationship of the literature of the Brazilian Northeast to Neo-Realism is easily understood if we remember that in Portugal this movement developed from a definite philosophical base defined within the parameters of specific political aspirations. The themes of social injustice and disparities between rich and poor were as valid in Portugal as in Brazil in disseminating social theories through literature. The Portuguese critic Joel Serrão explains it thusly:

> A teorização filosófica e crítica é, sobretudo, directa ou indirectamente, de matriz marxista, e as aspirações políticas implícitas e explicitas cifram-se numa arremetida contra o fascismo (cuja virulência só diminuirá após a derrota militar de 45), e ao desejo de transformar e afeicoar as coisas, como condição de dada justiça social,. . .[105]

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[104]Fabio Lucas, O Caráter Social da Literatura Brasileira, p. 78. For further discussions of the regional Brazilian novel of this period see also Maria Isabel Abreu, "O Protesto Social," Hispania; Adonias Filho, O Romance; Alfredo Bosi, Historia Concisa, esp. chap. 8 "Tendências Contemporâneas;" Antônio Cândido, Ficção e Confissão (Rio: José Olympio, 1956); Rui Mourão, Estruturas: Ensaio Sôbre o Romance de Graciliano, 2nd ed. (Rio: Arquivo Editora, 1971) and Miécio Táti, Jorge Amado.

[105]Joel Serrão, "A novelística social na década de 40--esboço de problematização," Colóquio--Letras, 9 (September 1972)28.

In these terms, the Neo-Realists had but one purpose:

> . . .to denounce the Estado Novo as an enemy of the masses and to discredit the socio-economic structure it fostered, in any way they could. It did not matter how as long as they did their duty in the struggle against Portuguese fascism.[106]

To Gaspar Simões and the other Presencistas, the use of literature in the social struggle was anathema. Under Soromenho's deft questioning, Gaspar Simoes could attack the Neo-Realists by charging that their works were the products of imitation rather than influence.

In light of the above, among other things (i.e., O Mundo Português, António Ferro, etc.), it is difficult to understand how Soromenho could be called a Neo-Realist, as so many later critics claim. His personal ties to the Presencistas were very strong, and their influence upon him will be detailed further on. Certainly his early novels approximated the Art for Art's sake concept and, until Terra Morta, there is little evidence of Social Art. There is also little doubt that he sought the approval of his mentors, Casais Monteiro and Gaspar Simões, as they were the first well-established Portuguese literary critics to pay any attention to his writing. On the other hand, the Neo-Realists did not "discover" him until the early 1950's, as we shall see, and by that time other factors had begun to change his Weltanschauung.

Soromenho ends his "Política do Atlântico" series for Vida Mundial Ilustrada with an interview of Álvaro Pinto,

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[106] McNab, p. 26.

director of the monthly Ocidente. This magazine was notoriously pro-fascist and we can only speculate as to why Soromenho cultivated its director. He had already published one article in Ocidente and would publish another in 1942.

1941 was a productive year for Soromenho. He continued as a journalist, and, although he published no books that year (he had already mentioned that he was working on his second novel, Homens sem Caminho), he did write two more articles for O Mundo Português.[107] Late in the same year, the long-awaited Luso-Brazilian cultural alliance was finally consummated. On 4 September 1941, an agreement was signed in Rio de Janeiro between the Portuguese and Brazilian governments "a fim de promover uma íntima colaboração cultural entre o Brasil e Portugal."[108] By the terms of this agreement, the directors of the two governments' information ministries (Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional in Portugal and the Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda in Brazil) agreed to exchange permanent representatives, promote the exchange and publication of relevant

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[107]Castro Soromenho, rev. of Tatuagem: Poesia d'Africa, by Tomáz Vieira da Cruz, in O M. P., 92-93(August-September 1941)387-388 and "Apontamentos etnográficos: Lundas sua vida no sertao, O M. P., 95-96(November-December 1941)493-502, with photos. Tomas Vieira da Cruz, a white Portuguese who spent most of his life in Angola, is almost universally considered the greatest poet of African "colonial" literature. Some equate his position in Angolan poetry to Soromenho's position in Angolan prose. Unlike Soromenho however, Vieira da Cruz showed a sycophantic love of fascism which can be found in a booklet of his verse.

[108]The text of the agreement was taken from Portucale, XIV, 82-83(July-October 1941)182-183.

articles in the Brazilian and Portuguese press, exchange photographs and establish a reciprocal telegraphic news service, send Portuguese writers and journalists to Brazil and vice versa, establish a monthly literary and cultural magazine, Atlântico, with contributions from Portuguese and Brazilian writers, exchange tourist and informational publications, encourage wider readership of Brazilian books in Portugal and vice versa, establish an annual cash prize to be awarded by the two countries jointly, for the best literary, artistic, historical or scientific work published in either country but of interest to both, and other such measures.

The necessity for closer ties between the Portuguese cultures of the old and the new worlds was by now obvious to the governments of both countries. Europe was at war, and shortly the United States would enter. Salazar evidently wished to keep all options open, and closer ties to Brazil were a cornerstone of his foreign policy. For the anti-Salazar, democratic forces in Portugal, whether grouped around the seareiros (of Seara Nova), the presencistas (of the long-defunct Presença) or the Neo-Realists, such a policy was equally beneficial. It raised the possibility that United States influence over Brazil might find its way into Portugal and force internal changes that these forces were incapable of effecting themselves. The right and the left both sought closer ties with Brazil but for very different reasons. Both groups, too, benefitted directly from this new relationship.

In 1942, as if totally indifferent to the international intrigues swirling about him, Soromenho continues to contribute to O Mundo Português.[109] Then, in what must have been the most bizarre of circumstances, he published the five articles in A Esfera mentioned earlier.

This bi-monthly, funded by the Nazi government in Berlin, was devoted solely and completely to German propaganda and the glories of the Reich. The tenor of its articles, with accompanying photographs of smiling German soldiers giving candy to carefree French children, could only have come from Goebbel's Propaganda Ministry. Other photographs of captured "Jewish Bolsheviks," the untermenschen of the East, were similar in their rationalization of Hitler's invasion of Russia. The magazine was also replete with advertisement for German goods as well as daily short-wave broadcast schedules from Germany. Notwithstanding A Esfera's politics, Soromenho submitted his articles for publication under the general title "Singularidades do mundo africano."[110] These deal specifically with history

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[109]"Apontamentos etnográficos: O significado dos penteados africanos," O M. P., 99(March 1942)127-130, with photos.

[110]"Singularidades do mundo africano: A paisagem e o homem, I," A Esfera, 45(5 April 1942)19-29; "Singularidades do mundo africano, II: A origem do Estado do Muatiânvua no país de Lunda," A Esfera, 43(20 April 1942)19; "Singularidades do mundo africano, III: A Lunda e os seus estados," A Esfera, "Organizacao social do poyo Lunda," A Esfera, 45(20 May 1942)19 and "Singularidades do mundo africano, V: Os deuses da Lunda," A Esfera, 46(5 June 1942) 20-21.

and ethnography of the Lunda peoples and already had been published, under other titles, in O Mundo Português. This writer believes that there definite political reasons for Esfera's sudden interest in articles on the Portuguese colonies. What cannot be explained is why Soromenho would have anything at all to do with this magazine. Nevertheless, he was probably well-remunerated for his efforts.

A Esfera's (i.e., Nazi Germany's) sudden interest in Portugal's overseas possessions was not accidental. In the Pacific war, the Dutch and Australians had occupied the Portuguese colony of Timor to check Japanese advances. In the Atlantic war, German U-boats were wreaking havoc on American convoys to England. To protect these convoys in the mid-Atlantic, the two allies were actively considering a joint occupation of the Azores from whence they could extend air and sea coverage to protect the vital life-line to England. The Germans, for their part, did everything they could to encourage the Portuguese to assert their territorial integrity, so as to prevent the allies from gaining access to any base of operation under Portuguese sovereignty. A Esfera was a key to the manipulation of Portuguese public opinion in this game, and Soromenho a willing, if unknowing, tool of Nazi propaganda.

Soromenho's last article for Vida Mundial Ilustrada[111] is the only article on Africa he ever wrote for that magazine. Finally, literary lightning struck. Having completed Homens

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[111] "Os músicos negros e a literatura oral do sertão," 25 June 1942, pp. 20-21, with photos.

sem Caminho, he submitted it to the Agência-Geral's annual Colonial Literature contest (1942) and won first prize. The value of such acclaim, however, is highly questionable because historically literary prizes were awarded as much for personal contacts as literary content. Many times the former was more important than the latter, as Soromenho himself was to point out five years later. It is quite probable, therefore, that Soromenho's articles for A Esfera found favor with the Colonial Ministry and were a factor in his receiving first prize for his latest novel. For the Salazar government, Soromenho's ideological position was unassailable as was proven by his contributions to Ocidente, Panorama, Vida Mundial Ilustrada, O Mundo Português, and especially A Esfera. We firmly believe that Soromenho's association with these periodicals was not overlooked by the Agência-Geral das Colónias when they awarded him their literary prize not only in 1942 but also again in 1943.

Because of his "success" with Homems sem Caminho, Soromenho had become definitively established as one of the leading writers of colonial fiction. During 1942, he published two more articles on Angola in O Mundo Português,[112] and

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[112] "A origem das tribos Lunda e Quioca," O M. P., 103 (July 1942) 315-317, with photos and "Silva Pôrto," O M. P., 108 (December 1942) 511-514.

one in Mozambique in Ocidente.[113] The latter is the second of the only two articles he ever wrote about that Portuguese colony, his birthplace. It was occasioned, like so many of his other short journalistic pieces, by the history of the times.

The next year, 1943, is Soromenho's most productive from a quantitative viewpoint. Now an established colonial author, he abandoned journalism and, with the prize money from Homens sem Caminho, was able to dedicate himself mostly to his fiction. He published one short story in the now prestigious Atlântico,[114] which had been created by the Luso-Brazilian cultural accord of 1941, six historical articles for O Mundo Portugues under the general title, "A Literatura

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[113]"Manica e Sofala na lenda e na historia," Ocidente, 53(September 1942)185-191. Manica and Sofala were two districts in Mozambique which had been leased by the Portuguese Monarchy to a large, foreign-financed corporation, the Mozambique Company, in 1891. The original charter gave this company all rights of economic development for fifty years. This was not an uncommon practice among colonial powers in the later 19th century and was based on a model established by Cecil Rhodes. The lease for Manica and Sofala expired on 19 July 1942 and these territories reverted to Portuguese sovereignty on 31 December 1942.

[114]"A Árvore Sagrada," Atlântico, 3(15 March 1943)150-154. This story reappeared in his second short story collection, Rajada, published that same year.

dos Exploradores Portugueses,"[115] an historical novella, A Aventura e a Morte no Sertão[116] and a romanticized history of the itinerant traders who opened up Angola to Portuguese colonization, Sertanejos de Angola.[117] He also collaborated on a Portuguese translation of the French edition of Tolstoy's Sebastopol.[118] His second collection of short stories, Rajada,[119] won second prize in the 1943 Colonial Literature contest of the Agência-Geral das Colónias.

In 1944, he wrote five more articles for O Mundo

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[115]"A literatura dos exploradores portugueses, I--Lacerta e Almeida, explorador do Cazembe, O Mundo Portugues, 115(July 1943)775-777; "A literatura. . ., II--Silva Porto, o descobridor do Zambese [sic], O M. P., 116(August 1943)831-834; "A literatura. . ., III--Henrique de Carvalho--Historiador do povo lunda," O M. P., 117(September 1943)865-868; "A literatura. . ., IV--O Major Gamito na Africa Austral," O M. P., 118(October 1943)907-909; "A literatura. . ., V--O explorador Serpa Pinto, O M. P., 119(November 1943)945-948 and "A literatura. . ., VI--Capelo e Ivens e a viagem a contra costa," O M. P., 120(December 1943)987-990.

[116]Castro Soromenho, A Aventura e a Morte no Sertão, Colecção Gládio," (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1943).

[117]Castro Soromenho, Sertanejos de Angola, Colecção Pelo Império, no. 98 (Lisbon: Agência-Geral das Colónias, 1943).

[118]Leo Tolstoi, Sebastopol, trans. Castro Soromenho and Helder Pires (Lisbon: Portugalia Editora, 1943).

[119]Castro Soromenho, Rajada e Outras Historias (Lisbon: Portugalia Editora, 1943).

Português[120] and published two more books. The first was the culmination of his research on the attempt by the 18th century Portuguese explorer Lacerda e Almeida to traverse Southern Africa from Mozambique to Angola, A Expedição ao País do Oiro Branco.[121] The second, a monograph on circumcision in Lunda, Misterios da Terra (Mucanda-Cangongo).[122]

Having won three Colonial Literature contests (Nhari, 1938, Homens sem Caminho, 1942 and Rajada, 1943), Soromenho was one of the "darlings" of the Agência-Geral and those publishing companies friendly to the fascists. That the Salazar government did everything possible to encourage this successful literary prodigy was not surprising. Both Sertanejos de Angola and Mistérios da Terra were published by government-owned companies. Collaboration with the Salazar government's Agência-Geral das Colónias was a price Soromenho willingly paid to ensure publication of his works. It was probably the only way he could ever have been published. Nevertheless, it is not

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[120]"A literatura dos exploradores portugueses, VII-Anchieta, explorador zoológico," O Mundo Português, 121(January 1944)21-24; "A literatura. . ., VIII--Pereira de Nascimento, explorador naturalista," O M. P., 122(February 1944)51-53; "Os deuses dos negros africanos," O M. P., 128-129(August-September 1944)309-311; "Os negros da senzala," O M. P., 130 (October 1944)385-390; and "Instrumentos de música dos bantus," O M. P., 131-132(November-December 1944)411-417.

[121]Castro Soromenho, A Expedição ao País do Oiro Branco, Coleccao As Grandes Epopéias, XV (Lisbon: Livraria Classica Editora, 1944).

[122]Castro Soromenho, Mistérios da Terra (Mucanda-Cangongo), Colecção Forum, Estudos Colonials, No. 1 (Pôrto: Editôra Educação Nacional, 1944).

difficult to understand why the Neo-Realists, politically committed to unrelenting opposition to the regime, totally disregarded this man and his works. In the center of the political spectrum but also unalterably opposed to the Salazar dictatorship, the Seara Nova group also shunned Soromenho. There have been many efforts by contemporary biographers to place Soromenho within the intellectual opposition to the Salazar regime by asserting that he wrote for O Diabo and Seara Nova. This writer never found any articles attributable to him in the former and only one, an excerpt from a forthcoming book, written for the latter late in 1946.[123] Indeed, a careful study of the "Bibliography" section of the highly-respected Portucale, which published monthly the names of the most important and influential periodicals of the times and listed article titles with names of authors for each issue noted, reveals Soromenho's name only in connection with O Mundo Português and Panorama. Neither Portucale nor Vértice, another highly-respected literary monthly opposed to the Salazar regime, ever even mention Soromenho's fiction of this period in their "Bibliography" sections. Prizes from the Agência-Geral were understood for what they were by the intellectual opposition and became, for Soromenho, a "kiss of death" to his pretensions,

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[123]Castro Soromenho, "A maravilhosa viagem dos exploradores portugueses," Seara Nova, "Número comemorativo do vigésimo quinto aniversario," 1000-1007(26 October 1946) 109-113.

if he had any before 1945, of joining these groups.

In 1945, Soromenho wrote four more articles for O Mundo Português[124] and an article for Informação Literaria.[125] He also published his last collection of short stories, Calenga,[126] dedicated to the Brazilian anthropologist Arthur Ramos. In the latter part of the year, he went to live with a sister in the Azores. It is during this period in the Azores that Soromenho wrote his best and most famous novel, Terra Morta.

1945 also marks the turning point in Soromenho's life and works. It is a year of intensive political activity in Portugal because of the end of the war in Europe. The allied victory had raised the hopes of the Portuguese opposition. They willingly believed that they or the allies, or both together, might force changes in Salazar's "New State" if not bring it down altogether. At the very least, the opposition hoped for elections, at most an allied military intervention in both Portugal and Spain to topple the last vestiges of European fascism. However, Soviet and American interests rapidly diverged and relations between them quickly deteriorated. Thus,

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[124]"Tahí, o adivinho do sertão dos bantus," O Mundo Português 133(January 1945)35-38; "O fogo puro dos Lundas," O M. P., 137(May 1945)219-221; "Imagens da ilha de S. Miguel dos Açores," O M. P., 142(October 1945)449-458, cont'd in 143(November 1945)497-504.

[125]Castro Soromenho, "Os novos escritores, I--Miguel Torga," Informação Literária (Revista mensal do movimento do livro português) I, 2(november 1945)17.

[126]Castro Soromenho, Calenga (Lisbon: Inquérito, 1945).

the likelihood of any kind of Anglo-American intervention not directed against Communism became more and more remote. In response to external political pressures, however, Salazar was shrewd enough to call for presidential elections. He even went so far as to allow the opposition to form a political coalition which called itself the Movimento da União Democratica, (M.U.D.). According to the Portuguese historian Oliveira Marques,

> A vitória aliada na Europa. . . foi pretexto para manifestações pro-democráticas e pro-socialistas em todo o País. . . . em Setembro de 1945, a Assembleia Nacional era dissolvida, anunciando o Governo eleições livres para Novembro. . . .Dezenas de milhar de pessoas aderiram ao recem-criado M.U.D. . . ., especie de Frente Popular contra o 'Estado Novo.'[127]

Soromenho joined this movement and participated actively. But the M.U.D. quickly withdrew from the electoral campaign charging the Salazar government with harassing its supporters, impeding the process and rigging the prospective results.[128] It was not the first time in an electoral campaign, nor the last, that similar charges were levelled against Salazar.

Soromenho was now to reap the bitter fruits of having defected to the opposition. The government-owned or sponsored periodicals which had nurtured his career in the early 1940's now closed their doors to him. Terra Morta, as much for the

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[127]Oliveira Marques, História de Portugal, II, 343.

[128]For documents relating to this period, see Eleições Legislativas, (Lisbon: Edições Delfos, 1975), pp. 9-60. Included is a section entitled "Opiniões de portugueses" quoting from Aquilino Ribeiro, Miguel Torga, Ferreira de Castro, etc., concerning the 1945 electoral campaign.

author's newly-tainted politics as its explicitly anti-colonial themes, could find a publisher nowhere in Portugal. In fact, the novel was not published until 1949, four years after it was written, and then only in Brazil. Soromenho the writer and journalist was being slowly strangled to death. The opposition had little to do with him because he had glorified the colonies and, in so doing, had furthered the colonial policies of the Salazar government. More unfortunately, this opposition was as disinterested in colonial matters as was the vast majority of Portuguese themselves. The Salazarists, on the other hand, would have nothing to do with Soromenho because he had gone over to the enemy. Ignored by the left, as ever, and rejected by the right, Soromenho quickly became a true exile in Portugal.

To eke out a living, the author's only alternatives were writing very occasional articles for whomever would print them, trying to re-edit his earlier works (the second edition of Homens sem Caminho was published in 1946) and attempting to go into publishing for himself with the express intent of printing and disseminating his own works.

In 1946, as has been mentioned previously, the twenty-fifth commemorative edition of Seara Nova published an excerpt from Soromenho's forthcoming historical epic of the exploration and occupation of Angola and Mozambique,

A Maravilhosa Viagem dos Exploradores Portugueses.[129] The fact that he submitted an article, "De um capítulo inédito," from the work he had already started publishing in fascicles is proof of his keen awareness of literary marketing techniques. A Maravilhosa Viagem had started coming out in July of that year and the special issue of Seara Nova was published in October. This capítulo inédito is only half of what will be Chapter II of Part Two of the final version so the Seara Nova reader was thus tempted to buy the completed collection and even the entire work.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of Seara Nova is more important to Soromenho's biography than is its commemorative issue, to which he only contributed a short piece destined for publication elsewhere. That anniversary was celebrated with a huge dinner held on 26 October 1946 in a Lisbon restaurant. The very next issue of the periodical not only listed the names of the one hundred and nine people who attended but also those of seventy-nine others who could not attend but sent their congratulations. Among the "colonial" writers at the dinner were Julião Quintinha, Augusto Casimiro and Paulo Braga. Among other writers and critics in attendance were José Bacelar, Joel Serrão, José Gomes Ferreira, Armando Ventura Ferreira, Rodriques Lapa, David Mourão Ferreira, Hernâni

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[129]Castro Soromenho, A Maravilhosa Viagem dos Exploradores Portugueses, (Lisbon: Terra Editora, 1946 [i.e., 1948]). The title page gives 1946 as the date while the last page indicates 1948. The work was originally published in fascicles beginning in 1946 which might account for this discrepancy.

Cidade, Casais Monteiro, João José Cochofel, Joaquim Namorado, João Pedro de Andrade, Mário Dionísio, Ferreira de Castro and Álvaro Salema.[130] All of these writers and critics were members of the political opposition to Salazar whether as seareiros, presencistas or neo-realistas. Soromenho's name was as conspicuous for its absence from the group that attended the dinner as it was from those who could not come but sent their best wishes. His total absence from these festivities takes on even greater meaning in view of the fact that he had published an article in Seara Nova's anniversary issue and could not have been ignorant of the celebration. Furthermore, some of those in attendance were his close friends and associates (e.g. Paulo Braga, Julião Quintinha, Casais Monteiro, Álvaro Salema, etc.). His conspicuous absence, however, appears to reinforce this writer's conclusion that he just didn't "belong" and was consequently excluded.

Soromenho's literary and personal isolation must have become acute because he managed to publish only a few more fascicles of A Maravilhosa Viagem before returning to his sister's home in the Azores. We know him to once again have gone to these craggy, Portuguese islands in the mid-Atlantic through an article he wrote for the politically and literarily independent monthly, Portucale, which is dated "Ponta Delgada,

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[130]"A festa dos amigos do 'Seara Nova'", Seara Nova, 1008(16 November 1946)226-228.

Dezembro de 1947."[131] The piece is merely an interview with the poet Armando Costa-Rodrigues of the Orfeu school of the 1920's. Soromenho says: "Conversámos várias vezes, no decorrer das minhas quatro visitas a S. Miguel dos Açores."[132] More important than placing the author in time and space, this interview gives us an insight into the man, both as a writer and a political being. Speaking of literary criticism, Soromenho shows us his literary preferences: "Mas o grande movimento da crítica literária foi iniciado. . . por um grupo de jovens de Coimbra, que hoje ocupam destacadas posições nos vários sectores da vida literária."[133] It is clear that he is referring to the Presença group, which started in Coimbra, for he goes on to mention Gaspar Simões and Casais Monteiro by name. But the political fate of these men disturbs him, for he continues: "Alguns desses críticos colaborarem na chamada grande Imprensa, de que ùltimamente foram afastados, não se sabe por que desígnios. . . ."[134] The operative word here is desígnios and the implication is clearly political. More importantly, in the last month of 1947 Soromenho goes out of his way to name the critics

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[131] Castro Soromenho, "Encontro com um poeta do "Orfeu,'" Portucale, III, 16-17(July-October 1948)208-211.

[132] Ibid., p. 208. Italics added.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

of the Presença movement while refraining from any mention whatsoever of the Neo-Realists, who had been writing, painting and polemicizing in opposition to the presencistas since the late 1930's. The absence of any mention of the Neo-Realists seems to be Soromenho's quid pro quo for their failure to have given him any recognition. On the other hand, he hadn't yet written anything worthy of their criticism since none of his pre-colonial fiction was socially oriented, much less tendentious. The author continues in this interview by reminding us about the infamous literary contest for which Fernando Pessoa submitted his now-heralded Mensagem and lost to a "livrico de um poetastro que não ganhou nome nem fama no próprio meio literário que o aplaudiu. . . ."[135] Having presented the problem of literary prizes, the author goes on to make what at first glance appears to be an outstanding assertion:

> . . .nem os prémios fazem escritores nem se obtem reputação literária com habilidades e compadrios. Dessa sorte ganham-se, quando muito, premios literários, demasiado desacreditados entre nós, sem outro valor do que os cobres que representam."[136]

Is this the same Soromenho of 1937 who railed against the evils of the literary prizes in the Diário de Luanda? Is it the Soromenho of the early 1940's who wrote for the literary prizes then being awarded by the Agência-Geral das Colónias, winning three of them in five years? Or is it a now-repentant

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[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., p. 209

Soromenho who, after perceiving that government sponsored literary prizes do not make a writer, is trying to disavow his own prizes and by extension, his identification with the Salazar government for the sake of an imminent change in ideologies? In our opinion, it is probably a combination of all three--facets of a man who, in the face of a rapidly changing world, is attempting to reassess his past and adjust to the future. Whatever the cause of this sudden disdain for literary contests, one thing is certain: Soromenho never returned any prize monies to the Agência-Geral!

The remaining fascicles of A Maravilhosa Viagem were published in Lisbon during Soromenho's sojourn in the Azores. Although the last of these is dated "Lisboa 1947," the first complete edition of this monumental work was not published until late in 1948. It is a deluxe edition which carried the date 1946 on the title page (the year the first fascicle was published), is dated 1947 by the author at the end of the last chapter (p. 377) and includes the following notice under the heading Corrigenda on p. 379:

> Foi esta obra publicada em doze tomos, lançados no mercado de julho de 1946 a outubro de 1948.
> Na sua maioria, estes tomos foram compostos e impressos na ausência do Autor, o que originou inúmeras gralhas a erros de maior monta.

Soromenho's "absence" during the printing was probably due to his waning interest in the glorification of Portugal in Africa. In the early 1940's, as has been documented, he had thoroughly researched and published books and articles on the 19th century Portuguese explorers. A Maravilhosa Viagem was the final com-

pendium of all his previous historical writings.[137] It was also another form of re-editing relatively limited material. A Maravilhose Viagem was also published in time for the great celebrations in Portugal of the third centenary of the liberation of Angola from the Dutch (1648). This writer believes it was of greater commercial than literary value to its author. There is one more word about this edition worthy of note. On the frontispiece under the heading "Principais obras do Autor," Terra Morta is also listed followed parenthetically by: "não pode entrar no mercado." Soromenho had finished that novel in 1945 but no one in Portugal dared to publish it. By stating that it couldn't "enter the market," the author was telling us that his efforts in publishing a Portuguese edition had failed.

Later in 1948, the Salazar government announced new presidential elections. The opposition united again and backed the candidacy of General Norton de Matos, former High Commissioner for Angola under the Republic and a man most well-known for his

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[137] The author planted the seeds for A Maravilhosa Viagem in his "A literatura dos exploradores portugueses" series written for O Mundo Portugues. He prefaced the first of these by saying: "A literatura dos exploradores portugueses nos sertões africanos anda esquecida nas fôlhas dos velhos relatórios e nos livros de viagens que poucas pessoas folheiam. E as raras que o fazem, não procuram na sua leitura outro fim que não seja de consulta para estudos ou simples escritos de divulgação histórica, dessa história colonial que está por fazer, que é tão mal conhecida, pior interpretada, mas de que se fala tanto! A leitura dêsses relatórios . . . e enfadonha . . . . Todavia apesar dêssa seu tom, tão particular aos 'diários' e memórias does antigos viajantes coloniais, encontram-se por vezes passagens de apreciável valor literário, que seria de manifesta utilidade de reunir numa antologia, ou fazer-se, . . . extractos com que se formaria uma pequena biblioteca da Viagem dos Portugueses no Mundo." See Castro Soromenho "A literatura dos exploradores portugueses - I. Lacerda e Almeida: Explorador do Casembe," O Mundo Portugues, 115(July 1943)775-776. Three years after this prophetic statement, the first fascicles of Soromenho's "extracts" found their way into print.

ardent beliefs in white supremacy and benevolent colonialism. The elections were scheduled for 13 February 1949 and the government "opened up" the political process for the two months immediately preceding. Soromenho, whose father had served under Norton in Angola, returned to Portugal from the Azores to work for the General's election. In fact, the political process had only been opened up for o inglés ver, as the Portuguese say when they refer to how things should look in the eyes of other countries. Inside Portugal, Norton's supporters underwent the same harassment suffered by the old M.U.D. during the aborted presidential campaign of 1945. Rallies were cancelled, the press was heavily censored and radio broadcasts favoring Norton's candidacy were prohibited at the last minute. Soromenho personally was victimized by just such political chicanery. With Antônio Pedro and Casais Monteiro, he was in charge of radio campaigns for Norton. The group had bought thirty minutes of time on a radio station and at the very last moment was told that the broadcast would have to be cancelled.[138] By this time Norton had become totally exasperated with Salazar's "dirty tricks" that he withdrew his candidacy on the very day before the elections.[139]

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[138]"Ficaram sem efeito as emissões da Oposição no Rádio S. Mamede." Diário de Lisboa, 8 January 1949, p. 11. "Assinado pelos srs. Antônio Pedro, Casais Monteiro, Castro Soromenho e França Borges, que haviam sido encarregados da propaganda radiofónica do General Norton de Matos, recebemos o seguinte comunicado sobre as razões que levaram a não se concretizer o programa que chegou a ser anunciado para as emissões de Rádio S. Mamede: . . . .

[139]See "A desistência da candidatura," Diário de Lisboa, 12 February 1949, p. 7.

That was the last straw for Soromenho. He had been raised in the home of a high-level civil servant, had served the Salazar government for a short time in a minor administrative position and had tacitly supported the Salazar government's African policies for many years by writing for its colonial periodicals and literary contests. He had tried to change the system from within by joining the recognized opposition and actively supporting the presidential bid of Salazar's opponent, Norton de Matos. Now, all options were closed. The situation could not be changed from within, if at all. Adding insult to injury, the allied boycott of Spain was not extended to Portugal and she was admitted to N.A.T.O. on 4 April 1949, less than one month after the one-party presidential elections. With the inevitable post-election arrests and detentions of Salazar's opponents by the secret police, Soromenho decided it was time to go to Brazil, at least until the purge died down. He also had other reasons for going to South America at this time.

Soromenho had been carrying on a decade-long correspondence with the young Argentinian woman, Mercedes, whom he had first met in April 1937.[140] He also wanted to get Terra Morta published in Brazil, having given up all hope of ever having it published in Portugal. To finance his trip, he got a job with the Lisbon daily, Diário Popular as a travelling correspondent. His benefactor was the editor-in-chief, his old friend and sometime

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[140]Mercedes De C. S., interview with this writer on 5 April 1972, in São Paulo.

literary critic, Luiz Forjaz Trigueiros. Nor was Soromenho the only one to flee Portugal. The repression was much greater against the leaders of the opposition. For example, Hernâni Cidade left for a year and Casais Monteiro prepared to emigrate to Brazil.

Within Portugal and a year before the election fiasco, Capt. Henrique Galvão had begun his fateful attack in the National Assembly on Portuguese colonial policies towards Angola. He had been elected a deputy for Angola to that body in 1945 and he had been a most loyal colonial officer in the Salazar government for years. Nevertheless, he decided, for many and varied reasons which do not merit discussion in this work, that the political climate in Portugal and Europe was such that the time had come to tell the "truth" about Angola. His position as an elected deputy made him immune from arrest during the tenure of his mandate and he took advantage of that fact to begin his blistering attacks on the colonial administration.[141] Many of his charges would be echoed in Soromenho's fiction beginning with Terra Morta.

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[141]See Henrique Galvão, Por Angola (Lisbon: Author's Edition, 1950 ?). Galvão's book is a depressing compendium of his speeches in the National Assembly from 1945 through 1949. He charged the Colonial administration with permitting corruption, forced labor, bribery and extortion. The official records from which he quotes are also replete with the parliamentary maneuvers used against him by Salazar's flunkies to debunk his charges and curtail debate. According to Kay, Galvão's

> "speech in the National Assembly in 1948 . . . attacked the retarded development in Angola and Mozambique, the absence of health services, forced labour and undernourishment, the migration of 2,000,000 African workers

Soromenho probably arrived in Brazil in March of 1949, for his first words were published in Lisbon's Diário Popular under the title "Carta do Rio de Janeiro" in April. He wrote five of these cartas and they appeared in Lisbon from 6 April 1949 through 21 June 1949.[142] Soromenho's second mission to South America was to get to Buenos Aires to marry Mercedes. Although her correspondence with Soromenho had been irregular during the 1940's, she had decided to marry him sometime in the latter part of that decade.[143] Her family was violently opposed to the prospective marriage. When António Ferro, ("O Goebbels português," in Mercedes' words) made a visit to Buenos Aires around that time, Mercedes' mother, who had been the wife of the Argentine Consul in Lisbon, got hold of him to ask about Soromenho. According to Mercedes,

> Esse Ferro, embora fosse o Goebbels português, namorava muito a oposição portuguesa. Tinha qualidades intelectuaais e tinha uma grande aspiração que era atrair os homens da esquerda de talento para a posição dele. Claro, nunca conseguiu.[144]

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to the Congo, the Rhodesias and the Union. The report put the infant mortality rate at 60 per cent, the workers' death rate at 40 per cent. The natives, it said, were simply regarded as beasts of burden and special condemnation was reserved for the practice of herding workers off to government projects huge distances from their villages." Kay, p. 215.

Galvão was arrested for alleged complicity in a coup d'etat in 1952 and spent seven years in jail before escaping to Venezuela in 1959.

[142]"Carta do Rio de Janeiro," Diario Popular, 6 April 1949, pp. 1, 3; "Carto do Rio," 15 April 1949, pp. 1, 12; "Carta do Brasil," 17 May 1949, pp. 1, 3; "Carta do Rio" 8 June 1949, pp. 1, 9; and "Carta do Brasil," 21 June 1949, pp. 1, 8.

[143]Mercedes de C. S., interview, 1 April 1972.

[144]Ibid.

Ferro apparently told Mercedes' mother that Soromenho, although a young man with a great deal of talent, had a personalidade inquietante. Nevertheless, the two were determined to marry and Soromenho arrived in Buenos Aires by ship from Rio at the end of April, 1949. As Mercedes recalls, he was not allowed to disembark in Buenos Aires even though his passport and visa were in order. Mercedes' mother, it seems, had denounced him to the Perón government as a communist because of his "disquieting personality." Mercedes was only able to get him off the boat becuase she worked for the Foreign Ministry at the time. And despite family opposition, they were finally married on 23 May 1949.

Before Soromenho had left Rio for Buenos Aires he had contracted with the Brazilian publishing house, Livraria-Editôra da Casa do Estudante do Brasil to have Terra Morta published. He also worked out an arrangement with the owner whereby he would become the Lisbon representative of a new publishing house owned by the Rio-based Casa do Estudante, to be called the "Sociedade de Intercâmbio Luso-Brasileiro, Ltd." Through this dummy corporation, which was technically and legally owned by a Brazilian firm and thus less subject to censorship, Soromenho hoped to publish his own works in Portugal.

While in Argentina, he wrote two more articles for the Diário Popular about Buenos Aires.[145] Back in Brazil to work out the final details of his newest enterprise, he found time

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[145]"Imagens de Buenos Aires," Diário Popular, 5 July 1949, pp. 1, 5 and 7 July 1949, pp. 1, 5.

to write another two cartas[146] and interview Graciliano Ramos[147] for Diario Popular.

According to Mercedes,[148] when the Soromenhos returned to Rio from Buenos Aires, among the friends who came to greet them at the dock were Luis Carlos Prestes. They were also greeted by Soromenho's Brazilian editor-partner with the just-published first edition of Terra Morta in hand.

Upon returning to Lisbon, circa August 1949, Mercedes immediately went to work in the Argentine Consulate-General, continuing her career with that country's Foreign Ministry. Meanwhile, Soromenho's Sociedade de Intercâmbio Luso-Brasileiro became his first independent commercial venture. Nominally, the Sociedade was the result of his long years of dedication to improved cultural relations between the two lusitanian communities. This cause, we may recall, began during his first trip to Brazil a decade before. Commercially, the company concerned itself primarily with the publication of deluxe editions of Portuguese and French classics. Soromenho hired his friends Casais Monteiro and Manuel Ribeiro de Pavia. The latter had illustrated Calenga and A Maravilhosa Viagem and also had done the cover for Rajada. One of their first projects was the trans-

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[146]"Cartas do Brasil," Diário Popular, 10 August 1949, pp. 4, 9 and 31 August 1949, pp. 4, 9.

[147]Castro Soromenho, "Graciliano Ramos fala ao 'Diário Popular' acerca dos modernos romancistas brasileiros," 10 August 1949, pp. 4, 9.

[148]Mercedes de C. S., interview 5 April 1972.

lation of Jacques Pirenne's Les Grande Courants de L'Histoire Universelle.[149] This momumental five-volume work was published in thirty-eight fascicles over the course of five years.[150] Soromenho's relationship with Casais Monteiro went back to the early 1940's, as has been documented. Their close friendship was publicized by Casais Monteiro in an article in Seara Nova dedicated to Soromenho.[151] It is understandable, therefore, why Soromenho endeavored to further their friendship through a joint commercial venture such as the one described above. Mercedes told this writer that they published a deluxe edition of Fernão Mendes Pinto's Peregrinacão, also edited by Casais Monteiro. Such editions however had very limited appeal and did not bring in enough money to keep the business on a sound financial footing. Soromenho was forced to take in a prospective brother-in-law who offered to help finance the now-sagging enterprise.

At the same time, the middle of 1952, Mercedes was recalled to Buenos Aires by the Foreign Ministry. Her husband returned with her, leaving the company in the hands of his new partner. However, his problems with the Argentine authorities, deriving from the first complaints by Mercedes' mother in 1949 about his alleged political affiliations, persisted even after

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[149] See "As Grandes Correntes da Historia Universal," Portucale, 2nd series, V, 25-27 (January-June 1950) 159-160.

[150] Ibid., Portucale, 3rd series, I, 3 (Spring 1955) 184-185.

[151] Adolfo Casais Monteiro, "Ar de Paris," Seara Nova, XXVIII, 1108 (2 April 1949) 125-126, ("Ao Castro Soromenho").

his second visit to that country. Upon his arrival, the police confiscated his passport. Without documents, he could not get a job. He spent his days caring for their new-born son, Waldemar, while Mercedes worked in the Foreign Ministry. The difficulties inherent in that situation were further exacerbated by plaintive letters from his partner in Lisbon. Under those circumstances the couple decided to return to Lisbon, arriving on 4 November 1952.

Now devoted almost exclusively to publishing and raising a family, Soromenho wrote little during this period. In 1952 he contributed a chapter on Angolan ethnography to a four-volume compendium, Portugal Maravilhoso.[152] After the Brazilian edition of Terra Morta was called to the attention of the Porguguese literati[153] through very early criticisms by Casais Monteiro,[154] Francisco José Tenreiro[155] and José-Augusto França[156]

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[152]Castro Soromenho, "A População indígena de Angola," Portugal Maravilhoso, IV: Portugal de Além-Mar, ed. João de Barros and Julião Quintinha, 4 vols. (Lisbon: Edições Universo [1952]), pp. 155-170.

[153]Even Vértice mentions receiving the novel but never bothers to review it. See "Recebeu-se na redacção," Vértice, X, 89(January 1951)461.

[154]Adolfo Casais Monteiro, O Romance e os seus Problemas (Lisbon: Livraria-Editôra da Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1950), pp. 313-316. N.B. The publisher of Casais Monteiro's book is Soromenho's own company.

[155]Francisco Tenreiro, rev. of Terra Morta by Castro Soromenho, in Portucale, 2nd series, V, 25-27(January-June 1950) 130-132.

[156]José-Augusto França, rev. of Terra Morta by Castro Soromenho, in Seara Nova, XXVIII, 1131(10 September 1949)149-151. It was not accidental that Soromenho started printing this reviewer's novel, Natureza Morta (Lisbon: Livraria-Editôra Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1951), the very next year.

Soromenho's writings on Angola were limited to this type of generalized article. The piece itself was simply a synthesis of the many others he had written for O Mundo Portugues in the early 1940's. Nothing new had been added.

Because of continuing difficulties with his business partner, Soromenho dissolved the Sociedade de Intercâmbio Cultural and established a new publishing company, Editorial Sul. Because he, himself could not be listed as the owner, for reasons to be discussed shortly, Soromenho had to take in another partner. He remained as sub-rosa publisher and editor until the firm was ordered closed by the Salazar government in 1958. Mercedes recalls[157] that her husband's publications between 1953 and 1958 included Arquitectura Românica em Portugal by Reynaldo dos Santos, O Azulejo (no author given), História Trágico-Marítima with a preface by António Sérgio, a deluxe edition of Tolstoi's Guerra e Paz (for which Soromenho hired his then-indigent friend Gaspar Simões as translator).[158] He also published a Portuguese translation of a French best-seller, Le Solaire de la Toure and another work by José-Augusto França who was simultaneously hailing him as being in the "vanguard" of Neo-Realism.

Although thoroughly devoted to the work of publishing from early 1953, Soromenho could not absent himself from the

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[157]Mercedes de C. S., interview 5 April 1972.

[158]See: "Noticiário," Vértice, XV, 145(October 1955)604 and 146(November 1955)671.

literary tumult swirling around him. Late that year, the Portuguese poet and essayist Ramos de Almeida proposed a congress of Luso-Brazilian writers. The proposal caused as much excitement in Portuguese literary circles as it did in Brazil, where writers and scholars generally spend their careers running from one congress to another.

In Portugal the literary monthly Vértice immediately launched a poll of well-known Portuguese writers and critics to determine the viability of such a congress. Three questions, with answers to be published in each succeeding issue of the periodical, were asked in the poll: "1) What do you think of the idea of such a congress; 2) What would be the fundamental advantages of such a congress; and 3) Would you participate."[159] Thirty of those polled responded affirmatively to the idea and to participation. Among them were Álves Redol, António Jóse Saraiva, Carlos de Oliveira, Fernando Namora, Hernâni Cidade, José Cardoso Pires, João José Cochofel, Mário Dionísio, Virgílio Ferreira, Assis Esperanca, José Regio, etc. The "colonial" writers polled included Alexandre Cabral, Guedes de Amorim, Julião Quintinha, Maria Archer and Manual Ferreira. Again Soromenho was most conspicuous by his absence from the list. Yet we know his own opinion of the proposed congress because his name was among one of fifty-four Portuguese writers who sent a telegram to the Brazilian participants of the"Primeiro Congresso Nacional de Intelectuals," in session in Goiânia at the end of January

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[159]"Inquérito sobre o congresso luso-brasileiro de escritores," Vértice, XIII, 123(November-December 1953)641.

1954, asking their endorsement of the proposal.[160]

It is important to conjecture why Soromenho was not among the writers polled by Vértice. Why would Soromenho, one of the foremost proponents of Luso-Brazilian cultural exchange dating back to his association with Humanidade in the late 1930's, be excluded from a survey of writers on this key question? Hadn't he also written for the bi-cultural review Atlântico, a magazine whose express purpose was to encourage Luso-Brazilian cultural exchange? Didn't the very name of his first publishing house, Sociedade de Intercambio Cultural Luso-Brasileira, reflect, per se, his cultural orientation?

A calculated hypothesis as to why Soromenho was deliberately ignored by Vértice, as we believe he was, must be based on an understanding of the nature of Vértice itself. What kind of a periodical was it, what was its point of view, if any, and what were its antecedents? Vértice began as a monthly publication in Coimbra in the early 1940's. It was founded by the Neo-Realists, who had taken over editorial stewardship of O Diabo in 1937 until its demise in 1941. These young marxist-oriented theoreticians also founded another monthly, Altitude, which published only two issues in February and April of 1939. When the censors closed that magazine, its editors started Sol Nascente, which enjoyed a very brief existence in 1941. They then tried, again unsuccessfully, to publish another periodical,

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[160]Telegram reproduced in Vértice, XIV, 125(February 1954)112-113.

Nova Luz. Thatone appeared once, in January of 1942.

Having failed repeatedly to publish an organ of theory and practice in the face of Salazar's censorship, the Neo-Realists attempted once more with Vértice, whose first issue came out in 1942. Vértice, then, became the successor to all the other Neo-Realist periodicals which had disappeared because of permanent suspension by the censorship. During its first three years, Vértice too was continually suspended by the censors, but the publishers held on tenaciously. As the fortunes of war changed in favor of the Allies, the Salazar government was less and less inclined to persevere in its rigid totalitarianism so mercilessly evident in the early years of Nazi military victories. By 1945, Vértice's survival owed a great deal to the new post-war Salazar policy para o inglés ver. Having thus managed to survive, it became the predominant advocate of Neo-Realist political and literary ideology.

The editors of Vértice must have known a great deal about Soromenho. Nevertheless, as is clear, they went out of their way to avoid any mention of his works. And even though they acknowledge receiving Terra Morta for review purposes in 1951, as has been documented, they never do review it. These solons of Neo-Realism did not consider Soromenho even remotely connected with their movement. Their feelings towards him had to have run so deep, as with all zealots towards one who does not adhere blindly to their ideology, that they avoided even a graceful mention of his death in 1968. Such was the nature of Soromenho's relations with the "pure" Neo-Realists of

Vértice.[161]

It is indisputable that the influence of the Neo-Realists, beyond the circulation of Vértice, was all-pervasive in Portuguese letters in the 1950's. In this regard two facts are worth mentioning as they relate to Soromenho. In 1952, according to the writer and critic David Mourão Ferreira, Soromenho came to him indignant because he had heard that two writers, José Régio and Casais Monteiro, were on the Neo-Realist blacklist. They were to be abatidos, (struck down) because they were too individualistas and had to be destroyed in print.[162] The second fact relates to the establishment of the Portuguese Writer's Society, founded in 1954. Many of the writers who had opposed the Salazar regime were invited to join; Soromenho was not among them. His name was also absent from a telegram of solidarity sent by thirty-six Portuguese writers to Thomas Mann, the paradigm of German humanism in the face of Nazi tyranny, on the occasion of his

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[161]Only twice during his lifetime is Soromenho's name mentioned in more than succinct references by Vértice. The first time comes in Fernando Mourao's review of L'Afrique dans L'Oeuvre de Castro Soromenho by Roger Bastide (Vértice, XX, 199[April 1960] 216-217.) Of course it was Bastide's booklet that was being reviewed and that was permissible. The second time Soromenho's name is mentioned is in a very brief summary of the plot of Terra Morta as part of an article on Portuguese-African literature. See Raul Gomes, "Uma nova literatura africana," Vértice, XXII, 228(September 1962)462. The reader will note that both articles come eleven and thirteen years respectively after Terra Morta is first reviewed in Portugal!

[162]David Mourão Ferreira, interview with this writer, Lisbon, 25 October 1972.

80th birthday.[163]

Until the publication of Terra Morta in 1949, in fact, Soromenho had remained on the periphery of Portuguese letters. This was certainly not because of the quality of his art but rather the subject matter he had embraced. His only contacts with the literary "center," and even the literary left, were through his long-time friends Gaspar Simoes and Casais Monteiro. The latter was the first to review Terra Morta, which he did in glowing terms.[164] Of course that review might also have mitigated against Soromenho's acceptance by the Neo-Realists, as they had been "at war" with the reviewer for more than a decade over the question of arte pela arte vs. arte social. Whether Casais Monteiro's very positive review of Terra Morta was related to the fact that the novel had been dedicated to him is a matter of conjecture. What is certain is that the inclusion of this review in Casais Monteiro's anthology of literary criticism published by Soromenho, brought the latter a degree of recognition. He could not possibly have attained such recognition outside of the restricted world of colonial literature. One might even go so far as to assert that the renowned critic's stamp of approval was instrumental in bringing Soromenho into contact with the literary power-brokers of the times, the Neo-Realists. To wit, in 1951, Unicórnio, the first of five publications carrying inéditos de autores portugueses contemporâneos,

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[163]Telegram reproduced in Vértice, XV, 142(July 1955)437.

[164]Adolfo Casais Monteiro, O Romance, pp. 313-316.

made the initial connection between Soromenho and Neo-Realism. In an article on the Portuguese novel,[165] the writer Tomas Ribas takes the first small step towards incorporating Terra Morta into Neo-Realism. To Ribas, the importance of Terra Morta lies in the fact that its author "nem um só momento esqueceu a sua posição de romancista-observador interessado numa renovação social . . . ."[166] The theme here is renovação social which was, of course, the essence and ultimate objective of Neo-Realism. Whether, and to what extent, Soromenho was "interested in social renovation" will be discussed in a detailed study of Terra Morta, later on. What is important for the moment is to note that Ribas perceived social change to be Soromenho's theme and saw in Terra Morta the beginning of a new and universal phase for Neo-Realism. Ribas continues, "Por isso, Castro Soromenho acaba de dotar o neo-realismo português com a primeiro obra que pode guindar-se, desde já, ao interesse universal."[167] As a result of Ribas' statement on Terra Morta, Soromenho was, in one stroke of a pen, lifted out of the obscurity of a "colonial" writer and placed in the vanguard of a new Neo-Realism. To Ribas, Terra Morta stood at the portals of a new period in the Portuguese novel as a "retrato da realidade social documentada."[168] Unfortunately for Soromenho, and more

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[165]Tomas Ribas, "Breve nota sobre as portas do romance portugues," Unicórnio, ed. José-Augusto França (Lisbon, 1951), pp. 47-51.

[166]Ibid., p. 50.

[167]Ibid.

[168]Ibid., p. 51.

unfortunately for Portugal itself, his readership expanded only slightly. Now it would include the Neo-Realists (some of them, anyway) and the young Africans gathered into a newly-formed cultural movement, Vamos Descobir Angola.

Soromenho's status was consecrated in the fifth issue of Jose Augusto Franca's Anthology of unpublished manuscripts of contemporary Portuguese writers, Tetracórnio.[169] This issue, subtitled Meio século XX de literatura portuguesa, includes articles on the contemporary Portuguese novel by Jorge de Sena[170] and João Pedro de Andrade,[171] along with yet another literary survey. This poll asks various authors, "what books are worth reading" and "what books were worth writing."[172] For the first time, Soromenho is included among the writers polled but this development may be attributed to two causes. Firstly, the author employed José-Augusto França, the editor of Tetracórnio, to write a book for Editorial Sul as well as he published França's novel, Naturaza Morta. Secondly, Tetracórnio was published in 1955, almost six years after Terra Morta had come to Portugal. By that time, Soromenho was, literally, a man to be reckoned with in spite of the fact

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[169] Tetracórnio, ed. José Augusto França (Lisbon, 1955).

[170] "Tentativa de um panorama," ibid., pp. 3-26.

[171] "Ambições e limites, ibid., pp. 51-60.

[172] "1901/1950: Quais os livros que vale a pena ler?" and "Quais os livros que valeu a pena escrever?" ibid., pages unnumbered but respondents listed in alphabetical order by first names. The author was listed under "C."

that the Vértice clique continued to ignore his existence.

Now the critics could not praise Soromenho enough. Jorge de Sena wrote that the author "em obras purificadas no crisol do não-reconhecimento por parte das capelas 'neo-realistas,' veio a escrever uma obra prima destas e do romance ultramarino."[173] De Sena himself was somewhat of an iconoclast and perhaps better able to emphasize with a fellow outcast. As we can see, he did not hesitate to take a swipe at the capelas (a Portuguese pejorative for literary clique) neo-realistas.

João Pedro de Andrade, who took a more positive view of Soromenho's opus by allowing that he might not have written Terra Morta "com o intúito de servir uma escola,"[174] still agreed with de Sena's conclusions about the novel. As we may recall, Pedro de Andrade described it, after A Selva by Ferreira de Castro (yet another writer who did not fall into the ideological straight-jacket of Neo-Realism), as "a mensagem das letras portuguesas de mais largo significado."[175] The key difference between the two critics in their evaluations of Terra Morta is that to de Sena it was an Obra prima of the Neo-Realist and "overseas" novel while to Pedro de Andrade it was primarily a "message," the buzz-word of Neo-Realism itself.

As has been noted, not only was Soromenho discussed as a Neo-Realist in Tetracórnio but he was also among the writers

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[173]Jorge de Sena, "Tentativa," ibid., p. 23.

[174]João Pedro de Andrade, "Ambicoes," ibid., p. 59.

[175]Ibid.

polled in this latest literary inquiry. Any judgment of the nature of the questions themselves must be left to the reader to make. One was: "Which books/poems were worth writing?"[176] Of the fifty-seven men of letters queried, twenty-one responded, including Soromenho (who was not about to give up his first chance to be linked with the mighty) and the two writers cited above, Jorge de Sena and João Pedro de Andrade. And these two, after praising Terra Morta in great detail, do not even mention it among works they recommend as "books worth reading!" Such a glaring omission serves to reinforce our contention that only insofar as Terra Morta could be used to attack the Salazar regime's colonial policy was it accepted as a Neo-Realist novel. Nor would this be the last time that the political as opposed to the literary, value of a work was to be given careful consideration by the capelas in making their critical judgments. Of the twenty-one respondents to the poll, only three[177] mentioned Terra Morta.

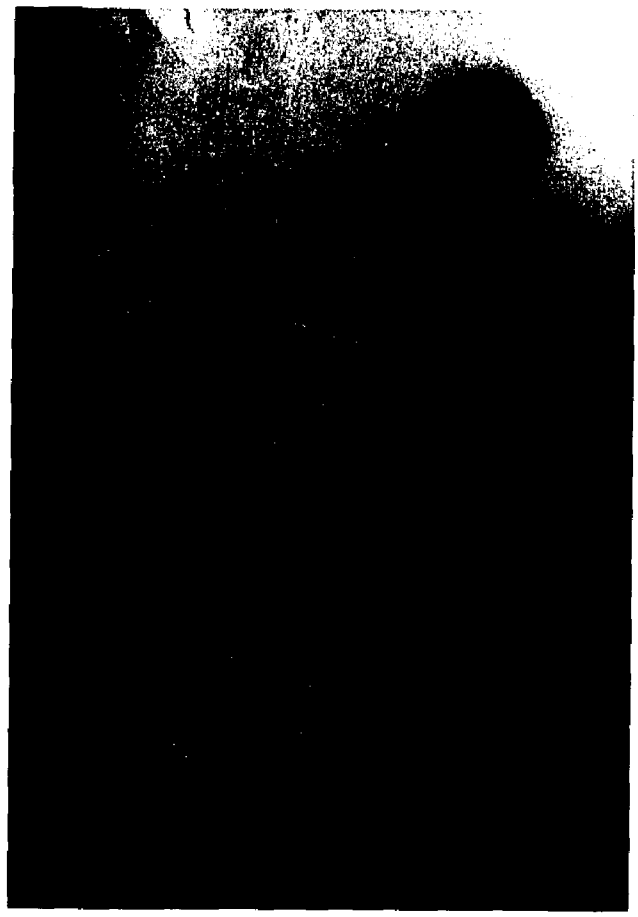
Soromenho's own response to this same poll shows him to be widely read, for he mentions among others, Raul Brandão, Aquilino Ribeiro, Miguel Torga, Branquinho da Fonseca, José Régio, Vitorino Nemésio, Ferreira de Castro, Soeiro Pereira Gomes, Carlos de Oliveira, Fernando Namora, etc. It must also be noted, in passing, that most of the writers he mentioned

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[176]To this writer, such a question goes beyond the ludicrous. It might be understood in the context of seeking such responses as would yield some tangible commercial value for the authors mentioned.

[177]Armando Ventura Ferreira, José Augusto França and Tomas Ribas.

were certainly not Neo-Realists. Soromenho's own bitterness at the Salazar censorship is difficult to contain and he cannot but refer to it directly when he talks of Vergílio Ferreira's O Caminho Fica Longe. Of this novel he says: "o primeiro publicado em 1940 e o segundo impresso em 1943, datada de 1939, mas que não pôde circular no nosso país."[178] This remark, of course, reminds us of the frontispiece of A Maravilhosa Viagem, where Terra Morta was listed with a similar notation: "não pode entrar no mercado."



The author with his first two children,
Waldemar & Stelinha
(Lisbon, circa 1955)

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[178]"1901/1950: Quais os livros que vale a pena ler?" Tetracórnio.

As we know, Soromenho's first publishing venture had failed and in early 1953 he started Editorial Sul. Casais Monteiro went into self-exile in Brazil for personal and political reasons and Soromenho hired Gaspar Simões who, by his own admission, had fallen on hard times.[179] In 1956, Sul published a second, revised edition of A Maravilhosa Viagem dos Exploradores Portugueses.[180] Two stories from Rajada also appeared in print again in a pamphlet entitled A Voz da Estepe.[181] That same year Soromenho went to Paris to attend the first world conference of Afro-Asian writers, held under the aegis of the Paris-based African review, Presence Africaine. While in Paris he also audited some courses given by the French sociologist Roger Bastide at the Sorbonne. Soromenho's Angolan friends at Présence, Agostinho Neto and Mário Pinto de Andrade (whom he had first met in Lisbon in the late 1940's), helped him obtain a contract for the French translation of Terra Morta. It was published by Présence Africaine under the title Camaxilo.[182] This novel, now in a universal language, was as well-received by the African nationalists opposed to European colonialism as it had been by the Neo-Realists opposed to Salazar. The key difference was that Camaxilo was much more meaningful to these

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[179]João Gaspar Simões, personal interview with this writer, Lisbon, 28 June 1943.

[180]Castro Soromenho, A Maravilhosa Viagem, 2nd ed. rev. (Lisbon: Editorial Sul, 1956).

[181]Castro Soromenho, A Voz da Estepe, Colecção Novela, 14 (Lisbon: Fomento de Publicações, [1956]). The two stories were "A Voz da Estepe" and "Samba."

[182]Castro Soromenho, Camaxilo, trans. Violante do Canto, pref. Roger Bastide (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1956).

nationalists than Terra Morta could ever have been to the capelas neo-realistas.

The French edition, prefaced by Roger Bastide, catapulted Soromenho into the international, anti-colonial limelight of 1956. In comparison, Ribas' critique of Terra Morta the 1951 edition of Unicórnio may have been read by a few dozen people. The publication of Camaxilo brought Soromenho a fame and recognition that he would never enjoy in Portugal and this was one of the great tragedies of his life. While he could gain instant recognition in France, he was to remain during his lifetime almost totally unknown and unread in the Portuguese-speaking world.

On the heels of his great triumph in France, Soromenho published Viragem,[183] his second novel on the impact of colonialism in Angola. Knowing that the publication of Terra Morta had been forbidden in Portugal and fearful that his own firm might be closed if it were to release Viragem, he had the novel published by another Lisbon firm, Ulisseia. For reasons which have never been clearly understood, other than the generally arbitrary nature of literary censorship in Salazar's totalitarian state, Viragem was not censored. It was not taken off the bookshelves ten days after publication (a not uncommon phenomenon in Salazar's arsenal of sanctions against those who might seek to think and write freely in Portugal), nor were any

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[183]Castro Soromenho, Viragem, Colecção Atlântida, 1 (Lisbon: Ulisseia, 1957).

sanctions taken against the publisher. According to the author's widow, however, indirect but devastating sanctions were soon to be taken against Soromenho himself.

Editorial Sul had been incorporated originally in Ponta Delgada, in the Azores. The owner of record was another of Soromenho's brothers-in-law, Carlos Lucio de Oliveira. Sul, like its predessor, Sociedade de Intercâmbio Cultural Luso-Brasileiro, was a dummy corporation which Soromenho himself controlled. He could not be the official, legal owner of a publishing firm for two probable reasons. Firstly, he did not meet the educational requirements of the government (he had never finished high school). Secondly, after he went over to the opposition in 1945 he was not considered reliable enough politically to merit ownership. Nevertheless, a year after Viragem was published, Editorial Sul, Lta. was closed by Salazar's Division of Censorship. According to the official notice of cancellation of the firm's charter,[184] the revocation was made "por virtude de sucessivas irregularidades cometidas pelos interessados." There were three "irregularities" mentioned. First, the legal owner, Carlos de Oliveira, had turned over his share of the company to a third party, one Gil Moreira, "que não estava reconhecido por esta Direcção quanto à sua idoneidade intelectual e moral." Second, in 1956, another change in the company's charter was made, giving a financial interest to one

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[184]Shown to this writer by Mercedes de Castro Soromenho in São Paulo, 5 April 1972.

Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho [sic] who had also not proven to the Censorship his "capacidade para dirigente responsável de Editorial." Third, Soromenho became sole owner of the company and, without notifying the Censorship, had not only changed its name from Editorial Sul, Ltda. to Editorial Sul, but also had moved the company's legal address from Ponta Delgada to Lisbon. The company's charter was therefore revoked effective immediately (15 October 1958), and any further publications would be considered "clandestine" under the Law.

It is probable that such petty transgressions of the letter of the law would have been ignored under normal circumstances. If, however, the Salazar government wanted to take reprisals against Soromenho for Viragem, without prohibiting its publication or pulling it off the bookstands, they could do so simply by preventing him from making a living. That is exactly what they did.

Soromenho's experiences in Paris in 1956 had radically changed his life during this period. He was adopted by the nascent African liberation movements in that city after the publication of Camaxilo and, for the first time in his life, was made to feel that his writing was actually understood and appreciated by men whom he respected. Terra Morta had become the literary rallying point for the young Angolan and Mozambican intellectuals living in Paris and planning the liberation of their peoples. Most of them had come from the large African cities and, until reading Terra Morta, had only general ideas of how colonial oppression affected their brothers who lived in the bush. The

fact that Soromenho was a white man only enhanced the value of his novel in their eyes. His involvement with these groups increased as it appears that he travelled to and from Paris often between 1956 and 1958. Gaspar Simões corroborated that assertion when he told this writer: "Fazia muitas viagens a França onde começava a intrigar."[185] Notwithstanding Gaspar Simoes' oblique stab in the back, Soromenho's stature must have grown enormously in Paris because in 1958 he was elected an honorary sponsor of the African Popular Theatre in that city. He shared tht honor with the likes of Jean-Paul Sartre, Richard Wright, Leopold Sédar Senghor, Nicolás Guillén, Langston Hughes, Aimé Cesaire, etc.[186]

After Editorial Sul was closed in October of 1958, Soromenho's sole means of support, according to his widow, was working as an off-the-books consultant for another publishing house. Although life became economically "precarious" the Soromenho family, in Mercedes' words, Soromenho remained in Portugal. In attempting to explain certain of the author's motives, especially in the absence of specific documentation, it is necessary to transcend the facts relating to the author's

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[185] João Gaspar Simões, interview with this writer, 28 June 1974. In this same interview Gaspar Simões expressed his eternal gratitude to Soromenho for the latter's having literally picked him up off the streets and put him to work translating War and Peace. Nevertheless, the subject could not help adding that while in Paris, Soromenho "began to plot."

[186] See "Noticiário," in Vertice, XVIII, 180(September 1958)510. This was all the coverage Soromenho would ever get from the Coimbra clique and then only because his recognition had come from Paris!

life during this period and to place him once again within the eontext of the times.

We have already seen the depth of the author's involvement with the intellectual and political opposition to Salazar. In 1945 he joined the M.U.D. In 1949 he worked actively in the presidential campaign of Norton de Matos. By the mid-1950's, through his friendship with the Angolans Agostinho Neto and Máro Pinto de Andrade and the Mozambican Marcelino dos Santos, he became active in the African liberation movements nurtured by Présence Africaine in Paris.

In the Fall of 1957 the Salazar government scheduled elections to the National Assembly. That October, about one hundred intellectuals, retired military officers and former members of Republican governments signed a public statement indicating their intention to abstain from the voting Their contention was that since the elections would be rigged in favor of Salazar there was no sense participating. The writer does not know whether Soromenho was a signatory to that document. He had signed a similar document during the 1949 campaign and would lend his name to others in the future. In any event, the elections of 1957 marked the first serious campaign to unseat Salazar himself. These efforts gained momentum with the presidential candidacy, in 1958, of General Humberto Delgado.

The General had served the Salazar government faithfully in the field of aviation for many years but by the late 1950's he had become dissatisfied with the slow pace of Portugal's economic development. He was also a man with a purported-

ly enormous ego, a very necessary component of political ambition. One of his campaign promises, which attracted many members of the opposition to his cause, was that he would dismiss Prime Minister Salazar if elected. (Under the provisions of the Portuguese Constitution in force up to that time, the President of the Republic had the authority to dismiss the Prime Minister.) Unlike Norton de Matos, Delgado had the fortitude to stay in the race until the bitter end. And bitter it was. The New York Times of 10 June 1958 reported the results of the election as follows:

> "General Delgado naturally lost by a large majority of votes to the candidate chosen by António de Oliveira Salazar, dictator and Prime Minister. The name of the victor happens to be Rear-Admiral Américo Tomás, but it is of no importance whatsoever. He will have no power, and Dr. Salazar could just as well have chosen the first traffic policeman he came across."[187]

The writer has no doubt that Soromenho played at least as active a role in Delgado's campaign as he had in Norton's. But Salazar triumphed again in spite of charges, widely believed by many within and without Portugal, of gross electoral fraud. And as Salazar was never a man to forgive or forget his enemies, the usual post-election purge began.

On the highest levels, Delgado himself lost his job as head of Portugal's Civil Aviation and was ordered to return to active military service. Important changes were made by Salazar himself on the ministerial level. Marcello Caetano, for example, was dismissed from his cabinet post although he had al-

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[187]As quoted in Kay, p. 349.

ways been a fanatical supporter of Salazar and had been, back in the 1930's, the first head of the Mocidade Portuguesa, Portugal's equivalent of the "Hitler Youth". Leaders of the opposition, including António Sérgio, Jaime Cortesão and Azevedo Gomes, were subject to continued harassment and even arrest.

In 1959, Delgado was dismissed from the Army and took political asylum in the Brazilian Embassy. Amid a rampage of intrigues and purported coups, he was finally given safe-conduct to Brazil. Indeed, there was an attempted coup in March of that year. Many of those implicated fled abroad when they could or sought refuge in foreign embassies in Lisbon.

Of Delgado himself, Kay tells us that after arriving in Brazil he established a "National Independence Movement." At about the same time, he received a letter from Henrique Galvão (the famous ex-Deputy for Angola who had stunned Portugal in 1949 with his report to the National Assembly on conditions in that colony and who had since been arrested, escaped and fled into exile) in Venezuela "proposing the seizure of the Portuguese luxury liner 'Santa Maria'."[188]

This psychological climate of purges, purported and aborted coups, flights into exile and plots from abroad undoubtedly swept up the entire opposition, not to mention Salazar and his supporters, and had a direct impact on Soromenho. What

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[188]Kay, p. 352.

ties he had with Delgado's National Independence Movement, or whether he knew of Galvão's plot to seize the Santa Maria, is unclear. What we do know through his widow is that at the beginning of April 1960 he would tell her: "As coisas aqui estão se tornando muito feias e eu vou pegar o primeiro trem para París. Vou sair daqui."[189]

On 4 April 1960, Soromenho departed Lisbon for Paris leaving behind twenty-three years of exile in Portugal.

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[189]Mercedes de C. S., interview with this writer, 1 April 1972.

CHAPTER 3

WANDERING ABROAD

One month after Soromenho's hasty departure from Lisbon (on 3 May 1960, according to Mercedes), the P.I.D.E., Salazar's secret police, came looking for Soromenho at his apartment. The housekeeper told the P.I.D.E. that he had gone to Paris and Mercedes remarked to this writer that she was surprised at their total ignorance of the fact. He was certainly not Public Enemy no. 1 in Portugal. Nor could he have been considered an immediate threat to the regime, as he had obviously not been the subject of police vigilance. Nevertheless, he had been involved in some kind of anti-Salazar plot, as his widow recounts:

> Eu sei que alguma coisa se estava preparando e que ele foi considerado elemento de confianca e consentiu em fazer uma aproximacão. . . entre as duas facções. Eu não posso dizer propriamente o que e que eram essas duas faccoes. . . . A coisa agorou, se falhou, se estragou, por diversos motivos, por inexperiência de muitos elementos e quando o meu marido pressentiu que tinha chegado o momento de sair de Portugal, pegou o trem em abril e foi para França.[1]

According to Mercedes, there had been a falling out among some of the plotters. Two of them killed a third and dumped his body on a beach outside Lisbon. The police identified the

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[1]Mercedes de C. S., interview with this writer, 5 April 1972. For further discussion of the temper of the times in Lisbon, see Kay, pp. 350-351.

body as that of a Captain Almeida Santos. Soromenho, upon reading of the discovery of the body in the newspaper, although evidently not knowing who had killed Almeida Santos, is purported to have told his wife:

> Agora, como sempre, a polícia liquidou o tipo e deu com ele. Matou-o e eles vão começar, como sempre, a tirar as culpas para a oposição portuguesa e vão começar a fazer prisões. Eu não quero ficar aqui quando essas prisões começarem.[2]

It is important to note here that Soromenho had never been imprisoned by the secret police even though he had been involved with the opposition for years. This particular incident, however, seems to have preoccupied him inordinately, indicative to the writer that he was somehow directly involved with this group of plotters. The fact is that he was sufficiently afraid of being implicated and going to jail that he decided, after this particular turn of events, to flee Portugal.

There is also little doubt in this writer's mind that Soromenho knew that sooner or later he would have to leave Portugal, especially if we're ever able to write and publish what he truly wanted to say about Portuguese colonialism. His widow verified that contention by stating that he usually had his passport up to date. In response to the question of why no reprisals were taken against Mercedes or her children after her husband's flight to Paris, the widow answered that she was still an Argentinian citizen and, furthermore, that the secret police were rarely, if ever, interested in a

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[2] Ibid.

man's family. Our belief is that, at least in May of 1960, if the police were that much involved in taking sanctions against the now-absent Soromenho, they could probably have begun deportation proceedings against his wife by charging her with being an undesirable alien. The Salazar government never took such steps, nor did it prevent Mercedes and her children from leaving Portugal in September of that year to join the author in Paris.

In the late Fall of 1960 Soromenho received an invitation from Professor Alberto Machado da Rosa, then teaching Portuguese literature at the University of Wisconsin, to come to the American university as a visiting lecturer for the Spring semester while Machado da Rosa went on leave to Washington. Soromenho accepted the invitation and, after Mercedes left the children with family in Portugal, the two departed for the United States, arriving in New York on 5 January 1961. After a stay in that city at the home of the self-exiled Portuguese writer José Rodrígues Migueis, they continued on to Madison where Soromenho took up his new duties.



MAR 1961

The author at the University of Wisconsin

For Portugal, 1961 was to mark the beginning of the end of its more than four hundred year hegemony over its possessions in Africa. On 22 January 1961, Captain Henrique Galvão seized the passenger liner "Santa Maria" on the high seas. The resultant publicity over this quixotic venture forced the Western governments to finally wake up and take a long look at Portuguese fascism. As Kay understates the issue, "the world was in no doubt that a Portuguese opposition was alive and had something to say for itself."[3]

Thirteen days later, 4 February 1961, and perhaps vaguely connected with Galvão's actions, well-armed Angolan

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[3]Kay, p. 353.

nationalists attacked colonial police barracks and prisons in Luanda. That date marked the beginning of a new phase of the national liberation struggle which had really begun when the first Portuguese set foot in Angola in 1482. This attack was not, however, a spontaneous, one-time uprising against Portuguese colonial oppression. Its immediate antecedents were: the arrival in Angola, for the first time, of cadres of the P.I.D.E. in 1959; the subsequent arbitrary political arrests of black and white Angolan nationalists; and the Portuguese massacres of two small villages whose inhabitants had protested against some of these arrests, and had had the temerity to march on police headquarters demanding the release of all political prisoners.

The impact of these events on Soromenho must have been incalculable. After only one semester at Madison, he returned to Paris in October of 1961, stopping briefly in Spain to pick up his children. (Soromenho was ever-fearful that the Spanish secret police would track him down and turn him over to the Portuguese authorities. Such fears were not unfounded, since fascist Spain owed Portugal a huge political debt since 1936. It was then that Salazar expelled thousands of Spaniards who had fled the advancing Franco forces. Once back in Spanish territory, these thousands were murdered indiscriminately by Franco's army; the most infamous of the slaughters taking place in the bullring of Badajoz in late 1936.)

Back in Paris once again, and almost destitute, the best the Soromenhos could afford was a small, one-room

apartment for themselves and their three children.

In 1960, while still in Lisbon, Soromenho had made arrangements to republish several of his short stories and his first two novels, Noite de Angústia and Homens sem Caminho, in a two-volume work Histórias da Terra Negra.[4] This edition also reprinted Roger Bastide's monograph on Soromenho published in Paris earlier that year under the title L'Afrique dans l'Oeuvre de Castro Soromenho.[5] There can be little doubt that Bastide's work helped bring Soromenho to the forefront of writers in African liberation in France, just as it helped boost the sales of his Histórias da Terra Negra in Portugal.

With the monies from this new edition (received only when the P.I.D.E. allowed checks to be sent from the publisher in Lisbon without, according to Mercedes, altering the amount of the payments), savings from his salary at the University of Wisconsin and a small salary that Mercedes received from a job she had taken in Paris, the Soromenhos were at least able

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[4]Castro Soromenho, Histórias da Terra Negra, with a study by Roger Bastide, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Editorial Gleba, 1960). Included in Volume One are: "Samba," "Os Escravos dos Deuses," "Rajada," "A Morte da 'Chota,'" "A Arvore Sagrada," "A Voz da Estepe," "Perdeu-se no Caminho," and "O Lago Enfeitiçado" reprinted from Rajada. Also included were "Calenga," and the five stories of the history of the Lunda "A 'Arvore Velha' da Luba," "A 'Mãe das Pedras,'" "Os Caminhos da Aventura," "A Terra de Amizade," and "O Caminho de Quinguri" under the title "Leuji e Ilunga na Terra da Amizade," from Calenga. Volume Two contains the 3rd editions of the novels Noite de Augústia and Homens sem Caminho. In other words, Historias da Terra Negra gathered in one two-volume opus all of Soromenho's pre-colonial fiction except for Nhari.

[5]Roger Bastide, L'Afrique dans l'Oeuvre de Castro Soromenho. (Paris: Pierre John Oswald Editeur, 1960).

to pay the rent and feed their children. In 1962, in no small part due to the impact of Bastide's monograph, the highly-respected French publishing house Gallimard put out the second French translation of a Soromenho novel, Virage[6] (i.e., Viragem).

In July 1962, Soromenho was invited to attend the World Congress for General Disarmament and Peace in Moscow as an observer in the unofficial Portuguese delegation. The delegation naturally consisted entirely of members of the Portuguese opposition; the Salazar government having no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. In Moscow, the author made important contacts with Soviet writers and African specialists. He returned the following year at the invitation of the Soviet Writers Society. In the interim, Mercedes became seriously ill with tuberculosis and spent the next two years in and out of French hospitals and sanatoriums (i.e., January 1963-June 1965). Soromenho, who could hardly speak a word of French or, for that matter, any other foreign language (according to his widow and the writer José Cardoso Pires[7]), now had to care for a hospitalized wife and three children by himself. He obtained occasional jobs as a Portuguese and

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[6]Castro Soromenho, Virage, trans. Marylse Meyer, Coll. Du Monde Entier (Paris: Gallimard, 1962).

[7]José Cardoso Pires, interview with the writer in Lisbon, 25 October 1972. Cardoso Pires had spent a good deal of time with Soromenho in Paris and told this writer that "Castro Soromenho era incapaz de falar uma lingua. Após quatro anos em Paris, mal podia pedir um 'café au lait.'"

Spanish reader for Gallimard, contributed to the periodicals Présence Africaine[8] and, allegedly, Révolution[9] and worked as a researcher under Michel Leiris in the African section of the Musée de l'Homme. His financial situation became totally untenable and he sent the children back to Portugal to live with family and friends.[10] Without the children and with Mercedes now removed to a sanatorium, he returned to Moscow in mid-1963, courtesy of the Soviet Writers Society. While there he co-edited a Russian-language anthology of Angolan literature[11] and, again, according to his widow, he had

> todos os convites possíveis para ir viver na Rússia. Se ele não tivesse a sua absoluta independência de pensar e de agir, ele podia ter ficado na Rússia, podia ter ficado no Mar Negro onde eles têm casas de repouso para escritores, para artistas, onde as pessoas são examinadas por todos os médicos, os melhores especialistas, com os melhores sanatórios. . . . O Jorge Amado esteve temporadas inteiras na Rússia.[12]

Mercedes' recollections of the utopia allegedly offered to her husband must be understood in light of the gravity of her illness, the resultant isolation from her husband and children and

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[8]"Portrait de la Reine Jinga," Présence Africaine, XLII, 42(1962)47-53.

[9]Moser, Mourão and Mercedes mention Soromenho's contributing to Revolution but this writer was unable to find any article or review in it that bore his name.

[10]His daughter, Stelinha went to live with José Cardoso Pires for a while. Cardoso Pires, interview, 25 October 1972.

[11]Castro Soromenho and L. Nekrasova, eds., Dóroga [O Caminho: Contos e Narrativos dos Escritores Angolanos] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura [Art Press], 1964).

[12]Mercedes de C. S., interview, 5 April 1972.

the price the Russians purportedly asked in return for granting Soromenho asylum. Mercedes was on the verge of death more than once during her confinement. Much of this time Soromenho lived from hand to mouth, unable to support his children or pay his wife's medical bills. The Russian offer of asylum, medical care for Mercedes and a peaceful writer's life in the Elysian Fields of the Black Sea must, at first glance, have seemed attractive. One of the conditions of Soromenho's receiving asylum in the Soviet Union, according to Mercedes, was that he denounce France as an imperialist, colonialist, capitalist power. This Soromenho was unwilling to do. He had already seen the "freedom" accorded the party-line writers who were on the extreme left of the Neo-Realist movement in Portugal. For that reason, probably, he preferred the "slavery" of continuing to write in imperialist, colonialist, capitalist France. Also, as he spoke no other foreign language and understood only French, the Russian language barrier must have seemed insurmountable. Beyond all these pragmatic considerations, we must look to the nature of the man himself. For all intents and purposes, he was always a loner and, in purely political terms, independent of any party line or ideology. He was vehemently opposed to both political and cultural totalitarianism in Portugal, regardless of the fact that those systems emanated from opposite sides of the political spectrum. And, ultimately, he could never denounce France. Not only had France nurtured African cultural independence but it had taken him in and given him a professional recognition

which Portugal had denied him all his life. On the other hand, his personal situation in France, aside from his precarious financial state, was far from tranquil.

According to the Portuguese writer José Cardoso Pires who spent some time with him in Paris in the early 1960's, Soromenho was harassed two or three times in the street by French police on the suspicion that he was an Algerian and involved in the Algerian liberation movement.[13] Such occasional harassment during the waning days of the Algerian struggle aside, a much more bizarre incident then occurred in Soromenho's life, which, without the considerations mentioned above, might have been decisive in leading Soromenho to accept the Russian offer of asylum.

There appears to have been a plot to assassinate Soromenho in Paris sometime in 1963. The incident, first recounted by Mercedes[14] and later corroborated by the Portuguese writer, journalist and grande dame of Portuguese exiles in Paris, Maria Lamas,[15] was probably the most frightening of Soromenho's life. The gist of both accounts, insofar as they coincide, is that the French secret police arrested a man carrying photographs of four people whom he had been allegedly hired to assassinate. One of the photographs was of Soromenho

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[13]José Cardoso Pires, interview.

[14]Mercedes de C. S., interview, 5 April 1972.

[15]Maria Lamas, interview with this writer, Lisbon, 29 June 1974.

and another of the Portuguese socialist, Fernando Piteira Santos. The police urged Soromenho to leave Paris because, according to thiir information, he had been marked as an enemy of the Orqanisatión du Armeé Sécrete (O.A.S.). The O.A.S., we may recall, was then fighting its losing battle for an Algérie Francaise. Anyone of stature and reknown actively involved in African liberation movements was targeted for assassination. Soromenho was very close to Mário Pinto de Andrade and Viriato da Cruz of the MPLA and Marcelino dos Santos of FRELIMO. (If he were not, in fact, a direct target of the O.A.S., then the P.I.D.E. may have bought a contract on his life through that organization.) Soromenho's ties to these men now leading the cultural and political battles for the liberation of Angola and Mozambique respectively, went back to the late 1940's when some of the members of the Vamos Descobrir Angola movement came to Lisbon. As an Angolan writer opposed to Salazar, increasingly conscious of the evils of Portuguese colonialism in Africa and unaligned with any political party, Soromenho must have seemed to these young Africans a kind of "great white hope." He was a Portuguese born in Africa who loved Angola and who came closer than any others of his race to comprehending the true nature of black and white suffering under Portuguese rule. He was a universal man who could not ignore the suffering of even the oppressors and who showed deep compassion for all the victims of colonialism. Through his earlier works he was, furthermore, the only one of his race to attempt to express the "reality" of Africa from within the

traditional tribal structures.

It is not surprising that his contact with these young leaders should be as close and binding as it was. Nor did this writer doubt Maria Lamas when she told him that these men, during the early 1960's in Paris, would seek Soromenho's advice and counsel, care for him in his destitution and ultimately keep him alive spiritually until his wife's recovery. Of his personal relations with the Africans in Paris, Mercedes said:

> Eles vinham à casa, conversavam com ele, saíam. Era uma relação de amizade e de ideias. Embora meu marido sempre dissesse que essa revolução era revolução a ser feita por eles, e que eles várias vezes o queriam convidar para coisas de chefia e ele sempre foi recusando, sempre disse que tudo que eles quisessem saber da opinião dele, ou de conselhos ou tudo que quisessem, ele estaria a disposição deles.[16]

There is also little doubt that they knew of Soromenho's involvement in one of the many anti-Salazar plots of the late 1950's. And they knew him to be a signatory to the militantly anti-colonial "Declaration of Portuguese Exiles"[17] presented by Dr. Manuel Sertório, a director of the Portuguese Socialist Action Party (A.S.P.), at a meeting of nationalist leaders from the Portuguese colonies held in October, 1961 in New Delhi.

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[16]Mercedes de C. S., interview, 10 April 1972.

[17]"Declaração de Portugueses Exilados (I)," Angola Através dos Textos (São Paulo: Felman-Rêgo, 1962), pp. 31-32. Among the other signatories were Ruy Luís Gomes, Jorge de Sena, Adolfo Casais Monteiro and António José Saraiva.

The three main points of this document were blunt and forthright. The signatories demanded self-determination and independence for all Portuguese colonies in accordance with the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man and a December 1960 U.N. General Assembly resolution to that effect. They denounced the war begun in Angola by the Portuguese government and "Salazar's fascist army" as designed to prolong the practice of genocide, continued deprivation of civil and political rights for blacks, forced labor and racial discrimination. And they repudiated any blame for that war levelled against the Portuguese people who, like the peoples in the colonies, had been prevented by the P.I.D.E. from exercising any civil or political rights and had been denied any information as to the true nature of the war. This document is dated October 1961. By mid-1963, the P.I.D.E. certainly had it in their possession. It is not inconceivable, then, that Soromenho had become a true threat to Portuguese colonialism. He was, after all, a white man and his very existence denied Salazar's claims that opposition to his Portuguese colonial repression was rooted only in black tribal savagery. He had lived in Angola and had written two novels (Terra Morta and Viragem) which depicted life as it really was in the Angolan interior. And he had gained wide recognition in France. Portugal, as a member of NATO, needed France's tacit approval for its wars of repression.

After repeated warnings of the danger to his life, Soromenho went to live with a French family in the outskirts of

Paris some time in March 1964. The only information we have on his whereabouts from that time until June 1965, when Mercedes was permanently discharged from the sanatorium, comes from a little-known work entitled As Histórias Dramaticas da Emigração.[18] It is prefaced by Maria Lamas[19] and is a compilation of individual cases, often highly dramatized, of Portuguese exiles struggling for survival in France. In her preface, Maria Lamas says:

> O autor não fantasiou nem deformou a realidade: limitou-se a exprimir em palavras alguns factos em que ele próprio interveio, desabafos que escutou, dificuldades de toda a ordem e a sensação terrível de solidão e abandono que ele tambem conheceu no seu inquieto e amargurado exílio.[20]

A chapter in As Histórias Dramáticas, "O Medo," turns out to be an interview with Castro Soromenho.

The interviewer found him in a sleazy hotel on the Rue Croix Nivert, in a small room with only one lamp on the table. His belongings consisted of

> . . .dois ou três livros, um fato, além do que tinha vestido e pouca mais roupa. Era toda a sua bagagem. Cabia tudo numa pequena mala que se podia transportar de um hotel para outro, sem esforço, sem despesas de

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[18]Waldemar Monteiro. As Histórias Dramáticas da Emigração, pref. Maria Lamas, Colecção O Homem No Mundo (Lisbon: Prélo Editora, 1969).

[19]Ms. Lamas was gracious enough to give this writer her copy, which she autographed "em memória de Castro Soromenho."

[20]As Histórias Dramáticas, p. 3.

taxi, sem demorar a fazer ou desfazer.[21]

The reason that Soromenho had to be able to travel light, aside from not having enough money to buy more clothing, was that there had already been threats on his life and he was constantly being watched. Soromenho claims in the interview that he had been followed for a long time, and although no one ever bothered him, the constant need for vigilance robbed him of tranquility and sleep. He would get up at four in the morning to verify if he were still under surveillance, even at that hour. Occasionally, he would go out in the early morning hours and wander around Paris; it was the only time he felt completely free. The interviewer suggested that Soromenho go to the police. He replied that "nothing is gained by pitting police against police." Of his work, he declared that he had been unable to write. He could not, in fact, write under such conditions. "E a verdade é que a minha vida, nos últimos tempos, tem sido passada em quartos de hotel todos iguais."[22] The interviewer finds it

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[21]Ibid., p. 197. Although Waldemar Monteiro is listed as the author, he did not write the chapter "O Medo," on Soromenho. It was written by the Portuguese writer and critic Mário Sacramento. We make this assertion after reading a eulogy Sacramento wrote for Seara Nova on the event of Soromenho's death. That piece, referring to Soromenho, begins: "Vão anos que me disse: Nunca consegui escrever duas linhas nesse hotel." See Mário Sacramento, "Castro Soromenho," Seara Nova, XLVI, 1477(November 1968) 357. "O Medo," in As Histórias Dramaticas, quotes Soromenho as saying: "Não consigo escrever. . .num hotel destes. . . .Não consigo escrever duas linhas. . ." (p. 198).

[22]As Histórias Dramáticas, p. 198.

difficult to believe that Soromenho has not been able to write even about Angola. The author responds:

> -Conheço bem Angola, mas o meu coração, se aindo o tenho, está preso a todos os recantos do mundo por onde tenho passado. Gostaria realmente de escrever mais um livro sobre Africa, mas desta vez para descarnar as origens da luta daqueles povos pela independência. Das causas da permanência ou da instabilidade dos ideais, da discriminação racial onde a há, e do ódio rácico que existe por todo o lado e que é preciso remover.[23]

We get a quick glimpse of his state of mind as he continues:

> -Às vezes, é pior não sentir nada de concreto, à volta. E ainda mais desesperante. Prefiro sentir passos atrás de mimm, espreitar pelas vidraças e verificar que há um 'bufo' que espia os meus movimentos, chegar ao hotel e encontrar o quarto todo revolvido.[24]

He went on to recount that it had been impossible to find peace and quiet in such an atmosphere. He informed the interviewer that "um compatriota nosso" had been assassinated in Campigny the night before. It happens all the time, he said. Lastly, Soromenho told of his plans to emigrate to Brazil. He wanted to be together with his family on a permanent basis and try to start a new life. He was certainly going to return to writing and one of his themes was to be Portuguese emigration. He was shocked at the condition of the Portuguese emigrants in France, considering their plight nothing less than cultural genocide. "Esta gente. . .perde as suas caracteristicas como povo português,. . .brualiza-se. . .na forma primitiva de viver, . . .e adapta o vocabulário francês como se fosse um dialecto nacional."[25]

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., p. 200

[25] Ibid., p. 199.

Soromenho's life did take a turn for the better when his wife finally recovered. Nevertheless, they were forced to move to Le Havre because they could no longer afford even a one-room apartment in Paris. He had mentioned in the above interview that he might be going to Brazil and these plans were beginning to formalize. It was also at this time that Soromenho worked for the Musée de l'Homme and the couple lived in the Ville des Juifs in Le Havre. It had now become impossible for Soromenho to continue living in France because, apart from the constant political persecution, his inability to speak French made for little opportunity for employment. Casais Monteiro and Soromenho's old friend from Lisbon, Fernando Mourão, (who had somehow gotten involved with a military uprising at Beja in 1962 and had fled to Brazil) made plans to bring the entire Soromenho family permanently to Brazil. Mourão was to get Soromenho a part-time job lecturing on African sociology in the Department of Sociology at the University of São Paulo, and Casais Monteiro had a commitment from Júlio Mesquita, owner of the newspaper O Estado de São Paulo, to hire Soromenho to write on Africa. Casais Monteiro, in his words to this writer, saw this as feasible because

> Ele teria sido um excelente elemento, porque era a única pessoa que havia nessa época aqui no Brasil, quando comecou o interesse pelos problemas africanos aqui. Ele teria sido um colaborador precioso.[26]

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[26]Adolfo Casais Monteiro, interview with this writer, São Paulo, 7 April 1972.



Mercedes and the author in Le Havre shortly before their departure, 1965.

With these possibilities almost at hand, Soromenho went to the Portuguese Embassy in Paris in 1965 to renew his passport. But he was by no means forgotten by Salazar's minions and all they gave him was a passport valid for one year with a very large stamp on it saying: "Bom só para regressar a Portugal via Espanha."[27] The Portuguese dictatorship was determined not to let go its hold on Soromenho. His last resort

[27]This was a restriction commonly applied to suspected Portuguese subversives.

then, was to seek safe-conduct from the Brazilian government. Because Mourão had now arranged for him to work at the University of São Paulo, the Brazilians did issue him a safe-conduct (at the same time they issued one to António José Saraiva, who had been with Soromenho in Moscow at the World Conference in Disarmament in 1962, had been close to him in Paris thereafter, and who had been invited to teach at the University of Brasília). The Soromenhos departed Le Havre on 17 December 1965, arriving in Brazil on 31 December. Casais Monteiro boarded the boat in Rio and accompanied them to São Paulo. In the new year of 1966, the family had finally been reunited to begin a new life in Brazil.

Jourao, as has been mentioned, had arranged for Soromenho to teach sociology of Black Africa as an adjunct instructor through Professor Ruy Coelho, then Chairman of the Department of Sociology of the University of São Paulo. Casais Monteiro had also prepared a position for him with the newspaper O Estado de São Paulo. With these assignments promised him, the one part-time, the other full-time, Soromenho could look forward, for the first time in seven years, to financial security and family stability.

The misfortune which had followed him all his life however was not to desert him upon his arrival in Brazil. Because of lack of funds at the University, the position sought by Mourão did not materialize. Rather than being paid directly, his meager salary for teaching one course would come from limited grant monies. His prospective position with O Estado

de São Paulo fell through altogether, according to Casais Monteiro, because of personal attacks made against him by Henrique Galvão, "que era protegido do Dr. Júlio Mesquita."[28] The latter, publisher of O Estado, evidently believed Galvão's allegations that Soromenho was some kind of communist. Casais Monteiro commented on this incident:

> Nós tentámos as coisas mais diversas, tudo falhou. Sobretudo essa do Estado de São Paulo, que eu achei muito grave e nunca perdoei essa ao meu amigo Rui Mesquita, que, realmente, pràcticamente me tinha prometido por lá o Soromenho. E isso teria resolvido todos os problemas. . . ."[29]

The fact is Soromenho did not get the job with O Estado, in spite of his long years as a journalist. He had no other leads and became very depressed. In early 1966, during their first few months in São Paulo, the Soromenho's had to live with Mourão. They were aided financially by "Comandante" Sarmento Pimentel, President of the Centro Republicano Português (an anti-Salazar group of Portuguese exiles in São Paulo).[30] Sarmento Pimentel had been a captain in the

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[28]Casais Monteiro, interview, 7 April 1972.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Sarmento Pimentel had also helped support Soromenho in Paris, as the latter's dedication of a copy of A Maravilhosa Viagem tells us. "Para o Capitão João Sarmento Pimentel. Ao escritor que me acompanhou nas horas amargas do meu exílio em França. Dando-me, com as suas memórias, certezas e esperanças no homen português. E ao amigo que tão inteligente a generosamente me tem ensinado a compreender o Brasil para que este país não seja para mim terra do exílio." (Shown to this writer during an interview with Sarmento Pimentel in his home in São Paulo, 14 April 1972.)

Portuguese Republican Army in 1919 and had successfully put down a monarchist uprising in Porto that year. He had been living in Brazil in self-exile since 1927.)

Lacking job and income were far from Soromenho's only problems. The humid weather in São Paulo severely aggravated his asthma and he suffered attacks with much greater frequency. A major difficulty too, was finding a publisher for his most recent work, A Chaga. which he had completed in Paris in 1964.[31] For reasons not fully understood, he took the manuscript to only one small publishing house, Samambaia. Although they made the galleys, the company suffered financial problems and never published the book. Mercedes herself, after her husband's death, retrieved the galleys and, through the intervention of mutual friends, convinced Jorge Amado to have the book published by Civilização Brasileira. A Chaga appeared posthumously in 1971.

In 1966, Soromenho taught one course, "Introduction to the Sociology of Black Africa," at the University of São Paulo, gave some lectures on sociology and African literature at the state college in Araraquara,[32] and wrote

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[31]Soromenho's claims of not being able to write in Paris are born out when one reads A Chaga.

[32]Moser says Soromenho gave courses there. See Moser, p. 47. This was emphatically denied to the writer by Casais Monteiro who was Professor of Portuguese Literature at Araraquara and who had invited Soromenho to give "uma série de conferências. . .lá. Não deu cursos." Casais Monteiro, interview, 11 April 1972.

four articles for O Estado de São Paulo.[33] The following year, while his wife had secured a job at a bank to help support the family, the author taught another course, "Sociology of Black Africa," at the University and wrote one last article for O Estado.[34] Throughout, he continued to seek full-time employment. His friends and acquaintances interviewed by the writer in São Paulo[35] all made repeated mention of their collective and individual attempts at securing a position for Soromenho. For example, Casais Monteiro: "Nós tentámos as coisas mais diversas, tudo falhou."[36] António Soares Amora said:

> Eu fiz mais de uma diligência junto do Soromenho para que ele aceitasse um contrato de trabalho. . .de tipo de professor visitante numa dessas recém-criadas faculdades de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras do governo do Estado. . . .[37]

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[33]Africa - encontro com seu passado," O Estado de São Paulo, 17 April 1966, p. 83; "O Japão na literatura portuguesa," O Estado, "Supplemento Literário," 27 August 1966, p. 1; "A África das pedras escritas," O Estado, 13 November 1966, pp. 80, 114; and "Peculiaridades africanas," O Estado, "Supplemento Literário," 19 November 1966, p. 2.

[34]"Africa dos velhos impérios," O Estado, dos velhos imperios," O Estado, 5 March 1967, p. 77.

[35]António Cândido, 11 April 1972; Adolfo Casais Monteiro, 7 and 11 April 1972; Fernando Mourão, 1 and 13 April 1972; Comandante Sarmento Pimentel, 14 April 1972; and Antonio Soares Amora, 12 April 1972.

[36]Casais Monteiro, interview, 11 April 1972.

[37]Soares Amora, interview, 12 April 1972.

António Cândido added:

> Ele vinha me ver no meu escritório. . .com bastante frequência. Ele estava com problemas materials muito sérios. . . .Então a nossa conversa girava em torno das possibilidades de ele encontrar alguma coisa para fazer aqui. Mas lutámos, tentámos na Faculdade [mas] não foi possível. . .inclusive houve processos formais, houve várias tentativas, não foi possivel. Eu sabia da dificuldade da situação dele. Esforcei muito as minhas tentativas e as de outros amigos a não deram resultados.[38]

And again Casais Monteiro: "Nós tivemos que fazer um grupo para lhe ajudar proque ele não tinha condições de vida aqui."[39]

Finally, the concerted efforts of his friends succeeded. António Cândido helped get Soromenho a research grant from the Fundação de Amparo à Peaquisa of the state of São Paulo, to organize and publish his manuscripts. At the same time, Professor Ruy Coelho secured a full-time teaching position for him in the Sociology Department of the University of São Paulo. These happy events coincided in the Spring of 1968.

Soromenho could now go back to his writing and told his wife of his plan, among others, to write a complete history of the Lunda people before and after the Portuguese conquest. He even had a tentative title, "Um País Nasceu na Savanna." He would publish A Chaga and write the third novel of his

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[38]António Cândido, interview, 11 April 1972.

[39]Casais Monteiro, interview, 11 April 1972.

trilogy on colonialism, which, for him, had begun with Viragem.[40] He also planned to write a novel about life in Lisbon, an idea which he had been toying with since the mid-1940's. Regarding Soromenho's appointment as Professor of African Sociology, Antonio Candido told this writer: "Eu sai do Brasil e fui aos Estados Unidos para Yale, em 1968, já deixando todo o problema dele resolvido."[41] Sarmento Pimentel also gave a lunch in his honor. Among those who attended were Cândido, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Paulo Duarte. Of the party, Sarmento Pimentel recounted:

> Foi uma festa muito agradável e para nós uma satisfação muito grande porque o Castro Soromenho tinha passado dessa vida de dificuldades económicas para uma vida desafogada.[42]

For the first time since his precipitous departure from Lisbon in 1960, Soromenho found economic security and recognized professional status. At the same time he was free to research and publish, without fear of political reprisals, all those works he had been writing in his mind for more than a decade. He no

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[40]"Estou a terminar A Chaga, que é o segundo romance da trilogia começado [sic] com Viragem, embora a trilogia nunca tivesse sido anunciado [sic], nem penso fazê-lo [sic]." Quoted by Professor Raymond L. Moloney in a letter to him from Soromenho in 1963. See Raymond L. Moloney, "Castro Soromenho's Africa," in Studies in Honor of Lloyd A. Kasten (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1975), p. 175. The fact that Soromenho himself mentions a triology is significant. Whether intended or not, he did write a trilogy but it began with Terra Morta and not Viragem, as we shall see.

[41]António Cândido, interview.

[42]Sarmento Pimentel, interview, 14 April 1972.

longer had to rely on the charity of his friends, or pittances received from an occasional course or article, to support his family. For the first time he was truly free to pursue his principal goal in life, the portrayal of life in Angola through literature. That goal, eluding him always because of economic necessity coupled with political repression and consequent exile, finally became a reality in mid-1968. It was the culmination of his life-long dream.

On 18 June 1968, ten days after his appointment at the University and eight days after the party at Sarmento Pimentel's home, Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage and died.

Sarmento Pimentel's reaction to his death typified those of the others in São Paulo interviewed by this writer.

> Depois de estar nomeado, e está a exercer o lugar durante uns dias, oito dias depois de estar aqui onde nós festejávamos a sua entrade como professor efetivo, tem um ataque e morreu.
> Fiquei tão emocionado, tão desanimado e tão triste com o triste destino do Castro Soromenho, que [quando] fomos levá-lo ao cemitério e eu tencionava dizer alguma coisa, umas palavras, não pude falar, perdi a voz. Tão emocionado que estava, tão triste e tão conmovido fiquei, que não disse nada. Foi o homen mais infeliz que eu tenho visto. Tudo conduzia sempre para lhe trazer dificuldades e para o tornar o que se chama 'uma criatura perseguida por um cruel destino.' E acabou um grande homen, um grande português e um grande intelectual.[43]

The themes of "cruel fate," "misfortune" and "persecution" were echoed by everyone in São Paulo. Mourão, who knew him intimately, agreed with this writer's assertion that Soromenho seemed

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[43]Sarmento Pimentel, interview.

plagued by tragedy throughout his life, that he was a man crushed by life's pressures, persecuted as much from within as without. To Casais Monteiro, he was "um sujeito muito . . . eu creio que isso é muito comum entre sujeitos que sofrem de asma . . . um homen que dá assim a impressão deprimido e bastante azedo, muito amargurado . . . ."[44] Part of that attitude might also have resulted from the fact that Soromenho was, in Casais Monteiro's words, "um dos sujeitos mais perjudicados, mais perseguidos pela polícia. Não há dúvida . . . que ele foi um homen impossibilitado de trabalhar em Portugal."[45] It must be remembered, however, that it was as impossible for Soromenho to write in Portugal because of government censorship as it had been because of the non-existence of any market for African literature. This was aggravated by another kind of censorship, the deliberate non-recognition that was applied to Soromenho's works by the early Neo-realists who monopolized Portuguese literary criticism in the 1940's. Throughout, too, it must be understood that Soromenho could only publish his early works through the Salazar government's presses, or those owned by fascist fellow-travellers. His early literature did not deal with the oppressed Portuguese peasant or worker.

To Soares Amora, who was more acquaintance than friend but who had known Soromenho in Lisbon, Paris, Madison and São Paulo, Soromenho was a man

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[44]Casais Monteiro, interview, 11 April 1972.

[45]Ibid.

> . . . que dava a impressão de ter certa depressão, traduzida numa espécie de atonia. Creio que era mais doente da vontade do que a outra coisa. Demorava a tomar uma resolução e uma vez tomado, demorava a execução do projéto.[46]

Mourão attempted a more psychological insight into Soromenho's character.

> Acho que teve alguns problemas de juventude. Ele e educado . . . num colégio na metrópole, sòzinho, com os pais na Africa. E nesse período [que] diveria ter havido coisas realmente de muito pêso de ponto de visto psicológico que cria toda essa angústia, todo este medo da vida. Quer dizer, por um lado há um medo tremendo da própria vida e por outro lado há uma grandeza, uma coragem imensa e a esperança do milagre de amanhã. Nos momentos em que ele tem uma situação melhor financeira, aquilo não surge e nos momentos da crise, surge.[47]

Post-mortem psychological analyses are always difficult undertakings. Yet this writer agrees with the logic of Mourão's views. Soromenho was first severed from his African roots at the tender age of five. For the next twelve years he was forcibly separated from his parents and left in a boarding school in Lisbon. That environment was not only totally alien to Angola where he had spent his earliest years, but was devoid of the most important component of a child's upbringing, parental

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[46]Soares Amora, interview, 12 April 1972. To illustrate this point, Soares Amora recalled to this writer that Soromenho, while at the University of Wisconsin in 1961, was supposed to have compiled an anthology of African Literature in Portuguese. Soares Amora arrived in Madison to take Soromenho's place at the end of the Spring semester of that year but the latter, who had completed most of the work and even showed it to Soares Amora, did not finish the job. What Soares Amora and the University of Wisconsin did not know was that Soromenho, in fact, did finish this anthology, in 1964. He merely published it in Moscow, instead of Madison! See Doroga, ed. Castro Soromenho and L. V. Nekrasova (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1964).

[47]Fernando Mourão, interview, 13 April 1972.

affection. A child who spent twelve of his first seventeen years in a "foreign" country, without his parents, must certainly have been traumatized by the experience. His congenital asthma may well have been severely aggravated, not only by the climate in Lisbon, but by the separation from his family. He was, in point of fact, an exile from early youth, and his Mãe Pátria, his motherland, would always be Angola. The only means he had of ever returning to Angola was through his literature.

Soromenho's death came as a great shock to all of his friends in Brazil, Portugal and elsewhere. Mário Sacramento, writing in Seara Nova recounted:

> Vão anos que me disse: Nunca consegui escrever duas linhas nesse hotel. Oiço-o dizer-me com a modéstia da verdade: Nunca consegui . . . . Revejo o edifício lôbrego, empregnado de maus cheiros, sujo . . . . Não me disse: o hotel é mau. Apenas: Nunca consegui escrever (lá) duas linhas. Escrever, função vital. Unica razão de ser . . .
>
> Revejo o edifício lôbrego . . . . E ponho nelo lápide sangrenta que diz: Aqui morreu intelectualmente um grande e humilde senhor das africas--ex-dos-algarves.[48]

An editorial in Seara Nova eulogizing Soromenho stressed his membership in the political opposition while only alluding to his works.

> Não podemos deixer de sentir a sua perda e de relembrar a sua persistente actividada em alguns dos movimentos cívicos em que 'Seara Nova' esteve integrada.
>
> Castro Soromenho impôs-se junto do seus companheiros de ideias pela inteireza do seu carácter e pelo valor da sua actividade intelectual.[49]

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[48]Mário Sacramento, "Castro Soromenho," Seara Nova, XLVI, 1477(November 1968)357.

[49]"Castro Soromenho," Seara Nova, XLVI, 1473(July 1968) 228.

This editorial, while naming some of the newspapers and magazines for which Soromenho wrote, compressed his entire literary career into one short and meaningless sentence: "Escritor, várias obras suas foram editadas no Brasil, Franca, Alemanha, Rússia, Grécia, Argélia, Hungria, Checoslováquia e Itália."[50] Even on his death, Soromenho's entire literary production could be disregarded by most of the Portuguese literary establishment. It goes without saying, of course, that Vértice made no mention whatever of his passing.

His friends in Portugal and elsewhere, those who knew the man and his works, could not give him such short shrift. The Suplemento Literário of the Diário de Lisboa of 4 July 1968, carried a "Homage to Castro Soromenho" by four different writers.[51]

In the first article, Cardoso Pires wrote:

> . . . quando me lembro do nosso tempo de convívio . . . encontro-me diante de um homen de infinito puder. Pudor por ele e pelo semelhante . . . . Nenhum escritor português deste tempo foi tão castigado como ele por tantos e sucessivos golpes de destino.
>
> Doente, sempre a carregar o fantasma de uma asma, Castro Soromenho suportou nos últimos anos da vida as mais desesperadas aventuras.[52]

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[50] Ibid.

[51] José Cardoso Pires, "Um homen de perfil," Diário de Lisboa, "Suplemento Literário," 4 July 1968, pp. 1-2; Manuel Ferreira, "O Primeiro romancista de temas africanos," ibid., pp. 2, 6; Roger Bastide, "Um edifício admirável," ibid., p. 6 (abstracted by the editors of Diário de Lisboa, or perhaps Manuel Ferreira from Bastide's L'Afrique dans L'Oeuvre de Castro Soromenho,); and José-Augusto França, "Na morte de Castro Soromenho," ibid.

[52] Cardoso Pires, "Um homen," p. 1.

The second tribute, by Manuel Ferreira, the noted novelist on Cape Verde and a renowned critic and historian of African literature in Portuguese, referred to Soromenho as "The first novelist of African Themes." For Manuel Ferreira, Soromenho's greatness inhered in his having been able to

> . . . deixar de ser apenas (e tanto já era) o espectador interessado como tinha acontecido em Rejada e outras historias ou em Noite de Angústia ou em Nhárí para se tornar no escritor que participa por inteiro da vida dos brancos, mulatos e negros integrados num sistema de relações comuns . . . .
>
> E é o conhecimento profundo que Soromenho revela de angolinidade e o ter sabido agarrar essa realidade com ambas as mãos que lhe deu o direito de ser considerado romancista angolano. Genuino romancista angolano.[53]

The third piece, under Roger Bastide's name, praised Soromenho for the fact that "Ele reencontrou a maneira de eizer a África . . . a voz de Homero ou de Hesíodo."[54] But his greatest triumph, according to Bastide, was Soromenho's ability to transcend pre-colonial Africa and portray "uma sociedade na fase da penetração e do confronto."[55] All this came to Soromenho logically, in response to the dual necessity of

> . . . a libertação do subjectivismo puro e a de reencontrar uma identidade do escritor com o povo, ou seja, de descobrir uma nova tecnica do antigo 'romance de tesse,' 'tomando partido' nos conflitos.[56]

José-Augusto Franca, who had been very close to Soromenho, had already written of him critically in Tetracórnio[57] and was the

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[53]Manuel Ferreira, "O primeiro romancista," p. 3.

[54]Bastide, "Um edifício admirável," p. 6.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Tetracórnio: Meio Seculo, 1955.

godfather of his youngest son, Jorge, took a more personal view in the fourth and final article of this homenagem. França had a debt to Soromenho:

> . . . aquilo que a mais ninguém devo em Portugal: o ter-me animado os passos que, por 1946, começava a dar nas artes-e-letras do País . . . . Nao quero fazer mais aqui do que lembrar-me dele com um [sic] comoção de amigo, tomado de surpresa e de alguma grande angústia. Porque detrás da morte de Castro Soromenho estão muitas outras coisas, misérias e aflições, obrigações e destinos - que a seu tempo se dirão.[58]

In Brazil, Soromenho's death was noted by O Estado de São Paulo in an unsigned article[59] which did list his novels. João Alves das Neves, a writer on Portuguese-African literature for O Estado and other Brazilian newspapers and magazines, also praised the deceased author. While not a literary critic per se, Alves das Neves observed that Soromenho "era de fato, o mais significativo representante de literatura angolana moderna." He concluded

> . . . Soromenho revelou-se, desde Nhári, a mais vigoroso e categorizado escritor da Angola negra, mulata e branca. Além de ser o único, até agora, com uma obra que repercutiu para lá das fronteiras da língua portuguesa.[60]

Professor Fernando Mourão, Soromenho's long-time friend and disciple wrote of him in the São Paulo review Jornal das Letras, that

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[58]José-Augusto França, "Na morte de Castro Soromenho," p. 6. This short piece was dated "Paris, Junho, 1968."

[59]"Desaparece Soromenho," O Estado de São Paulo, 19 June 1968, p. 7.

[60]João Alves das Neves, "Lembrança de Castro Soromenho," O Estado de São Paulo, "Suplemento Literário," 24 August 1968, p. 1.

> . . . êsse intelectual, romancista e sociólogo, uma das maiores expressões literárias contemporâneas da língua portuguesa, amou deveras o continente negro . . . . Esse africano de pele branca . . . . recorda as figuras quase lendárias dos intelectuais de Vila Rica, que filhos de portuguêses, com cultura portuguesa e formação de Coimbra, se sacrificaram pela terra onde nasceram.[61]

Mourão concluded in prophetic tones that

> O mundo branco e prêto muito hão de dever ao escritor Fernando Monteiro de Castro Soromenho pela sua valiosa colaboração quando estudou e pesquisou com amor e devoção à África do passado e do presente.[62]

His passing was also memorialized in a long, unsigned article in Portugal Democrático,[63] a monthly published by Sarmanto Pimentel's Centro Republicano Português. This article described him as "um dos maiores escritores africanos, talvez o maior escritor africano de língua portuguesa, dos nossos tempos." This same epitaph gave special thanks to all his Brazilian friends who did everything they could "para atenuar o exílio de Castro Soromenho em terras do Brasil," especially Professors Ruy Coelho and Antônio Cândido of the University of São Paulo.

The most poignant eulogy has been left for last because, in the opinion of this writer, it best synthesizes the sum total of Soromenho's life and works.

> Por avoir été lui-même un fonctionnaire de l'administration coloniale, il sut démonter le mécanisme par lequel la colonisation en arrive à déciviliser le colonisateur . . . Castro Soromenho: une ironie profendement humaine, une passion sous-tendue par l'ardente clameur de l'Afrique . . . Confronté

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[61] Fernando Mourão, "Com olhos de negro viu o mundo dos negros," Jornal de Letras, July 1968, p. 12.

[62] Ibid.

[63] "Castro Soromenho," Portugal Democrático, XII, 131 (July-August 1968)2.

> avec l'appareil de domination, vivant en son sein, enserré dans les mailles d'un système oppresseur, tenu de brandir le férule, Castro Soromenho n'avait d'autre choix que de s'en éloigner . . .
>
> Il ne devait pas revenir dans le pays où prit forme sa sensibilité d'homme angolais . . . . Castro Soromenho apparaît dans notre horizon de l'imagination créatrice comme un revelateur de la fiction angolaise contemporaine . . .
>
> Il nous lègue le trait indélébile de l'edifice de la colonisation portugaise établ dans le Nord-Est de l'angola; avant la guerre de liberation nationale. Engagé dans la mutation de la réalité oppresive il fut un perturbateur de la bonne conscience des colonsateurs . . .
>
> Et l'exil fut le tribut par lui versé pour le defense de la liberté de ces deux pays.[64]

Mario Pinto de Andrade, Angolan poet, critic and a leader of the M.P.L.A., one of Soromenho's oldest and closest friends, wrote this in French for all the world to know.

Soromenho's works led him inevitably to denounce colonialism, not from a particular ideology, but rather because of his love of Man and his totally humanistic concept of life. His central theme was the dehumanization wrought by the colonial process as it stifled, then crushed and extinguished the spirits, if not the lives, of all those it touched.

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[64] Mario de Andrade, "In Memoriam: Evocation de Castro Soromenho," Présence Africaine, 67(1968)234.

PART II

AFRICAN BEFORE THE WHITE MAN

CHAPTER 4

PROLOGUE

Castro Soromenho's entire career as a man of letters, ethnologist and historian sprang from his love of Africa, that Africa which had nurtured him in his formative years. Soromenho's all-consuming obsession with learning about his native Angola took him to the bush to listen and transcribe the oral histories of the Lunda and the Quioco. It took him also to the Archives of Angola in Luanda and to the Colonial Ministry in Lisbon. There he expanded his personal, first-hand understanding of these peoples by studying the accounts of the Portuguese explorers, historians and ethnologists who brought Angola to the attention of the metropole in the 19th century.[1] The author's understanding of the native Angolan

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[1]Portuguese attention to Africa blossomed suddenly as word of Livingstone's explorations reached Lisbon. Some of the historical works consulted by Soromenho, as listed in the bibliography of his A Maravilhosa Viagem dos Exploradores Portugueses, are: Hermenegildo Capelo and Robert Ivens, De Angola à Contra Costa (1881); Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, Ethnographia e História Tradicional dos Povos da Lunda (1890); Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida, Travessia da África (1888); Alexandre Alberto da Rocha de Serpa Pinto, Como Eu Atravessei África (1881); and António Francisco da Silva Pôrto, Viagens e Apontamentos de um Portuense em África (1889). The results of his research first appeared in print in the eight-part series "A literatura dos exploradores portugues," in O Mundo Português, 1943-1944.

was never limited by frontier; he followed black slaves to Brazil on prison ships and steeped himself in the works of Arthur Ramos, the foremost Brazilian sociologist of the times to concern himself with the African as a slave across the sea.

Soromenho, although keenly interested and attuned to the black experience per se, was generally mindful of the historical imperatives operating on this experience from without. He lived in the colonial present but like Galdós, who had to write the historical Episodios Nacionales to understand the origins of the 19th century Spanish society and then produce his Novelas Contemporáneas, Soromenho had to write about Angola devoid of whites before he could interface that period with modern colonial times. The natural evolutionary process which was the nexus of those two realities began with the introduction of the white man, first as explorer and then as conqueror. Soromenho's entire career as fictionist, in fact, recapitulates the whole of the tribal African past. Its span begins in African pre-history (by definition ahistoric), briefly alludes to the intitial discoveries of Diogo Cão, details the late 18th and 19th century "opening of the dark continent" by the European powers and ends in modern times. It was in this last period that the black African entered into the historical stream of Western Civilization under the yoke of white colonial oppression.

Soromenho was a voracious reader and student of African history as it related to the black as well as the

white. His tiny pamphlet Imagens da Cidade de São Paulo de Luanda,[2] published in Lisbon in the late 1930's as part of the already-mentioned Cadernos Coloniais series, is early evidence of this contention. The little booklet seems only to have caught Moser's attention; no other critic or bibliography ever mentions it. Surprisingly, Moser quotes only one small passage in which Soromenho describes a black chieftain, be-medalled by the Portuguese Republic with sardine can lids and other pieces of junk, strolling around Luanda to show himself off.[3] For Moser, this particular description is an example of the ridicule with which the Angolan tribal nobility was perceived by the Portuguese. For Soromenho, in our view, such behavior and dress were something else--yet another example of self-abnegation by the formerly all-powerful African leadership. The importance of that one-sentence description was minimal, compared to everything else Soromenho had to say in the booklet. It was his first judgment of the European in Africa in anything more than a newspaper article and was, indeed, his own statement of purpose. Such an assertion is of course ex post facto, but is easily verified by a short description of the pamphlet's contents. This brief examination

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[2]Castro Soromenho, Imagens, 1938.

[3]Gerald Moser, "How African is Afro-Portuguese Literature," Review of National Literatures, II, 2(Fall 1971)149-150.

is useful before attempting an analysis of the author's works because, as we shall see, it was a statement of purpose and it did lay the foundation which was to tie all of Soromenho's works together into a rational, meaningful, and aesthetically superb literary whole.

Imagens da Cidade de São Paulo de Luanda[4] begins with a visual description of the Angolan capital as seen by the author from a ship just arrived from Lisbon and moving slowly toward the docks of the harbor. The very nature of that introduction goes to the essense as it metaphorically reflects the view the Portuguese explorers had when they first came upon the bay in 1498. The early morning is clouded in fog, "a wave of humid smoke rolling across a gray sky," slowly lifting and giving way to an "ugly and sad day." As the ship docks, the author's early tendency to exotic imagery comes to the fore when he describes the sunrise which will burn away the fog as the "rosa auripúrpuria a abrir-se no oriente enevoado . . ." (p. 4). It is this first ray of light which illuminates for the reader one of Soromenho's principle themes: the African night ". . . e morreu o grande silêncio da noite africana" (p. 4).

At first glance, this booklet is merely a short travel piece consisting of a series of fleeting images. Careful

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[4]Inasmuch as all subsequent references to Imagens are to this one and only edition, page numbers of quotations will be henceforth indicated in the text.

reading, however, reveals it to be laced with forebodings. To Soromenho, Luanda was an old and ugly city and had been that way since its founding in 1575 by the Portuguese explorer, Paulo Dias de Novais--not quite a complimentary view from one who had lived and worked there himself for some five years. We are told that Dias de Novias founded the city in that particular bay because of its military and strategic value but that it became more. In fact, Soromenho writes, Luanda did not remain merely a way station in Portugal's maritime quest for a monopoly of the Indian spice trade but became a point of departure all its own,

> . . . um marco de dôr na escalada de uma tragédia. Dali largaram as naus para a jornada mais dolorosa que se levou a cabo nos negros tempos do maior crime que mancha a história da Humanidade-a Escravatura. (p. 5)

The casual Portuguese who might have picked up this essay for a passing glimpse of Luanda is suddenly jolted into the ultimate condemnation of his country and its history. He is immediately informed that the great capital of Angola was the embarkation point for the slave trade with the Americas, that slave trade which was, for Soromenho, "the greatest crime which stains the history of Mankind." Fortunately for the author, few casual readers were interested in Angola and the Portuguese censorship of the time was not very fastidious as far as written matter about Africa was concerned.

How did slavery come about in Angola? Soromenho explains simplistically that in earlier days, "em tempos venturosos de calma na terra e nas almas" (p. 5), the African

built his villages and lived his life peacefully, unaware of what was to become his destiny. One day that destiny arrived on his shores, on the caravelles which brought the European to Africa. The black man shouted in terror, "Muana calunga!" (which the author tells us in a footnote means "child of the sea" and was the first collective term used by the Africans along the Angolan coast to describe the white man.)[5] The white men came, unfolded their flags "comos asas de ave num voo sem fim" (p. 6) and wrote yet another page in their "Discoveries" and "Conquests." At first, blacks and whites lived in peace.[6] The European brought gifts to the great sobas (the Bantu word for indigenous tribal chiefs which Soromenho

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[5]Joseph C. Miller in his very thorough study of the development of early Angolan states, Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angola (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), asserts that the Mbundu identify "Kalunga" only as the "great water," without really knowing its exact location. More importantly for this study is his statement that: "Because almost all European observers have interpreted the word as referring to the Atlantic Ocean, or to the African 'great lakes,'" [i.e., Lakes Tanganyika, Mweru, Bangweolu and Nyasa in East Africa] the Mbundu today also give this meaning to the name 'Kalunga'. . . . There is obviously no basis in fact for this assertion" (Miller, Kings, p. 59). The root -lunga however is used extensively throughout Central Africa in association with ancestors and state-founders and can be traced linguistically all across the Central African savannas to Lake Malawi. The exact meaning of the root itself has yet to be determined, although the prefix Ka- is common to most Bantu languages "denoting unusual size, either large or small, and turns up specifically on words for authority symbols" (Miller, p. 61).

[6]In 1938, Soromenho's knowledge of Angolan history still left a lot to be desired.

uses throughout all his works) and the chiefs gave young black girls to the white men for their pleasure. The whites began arriving in Angola in ever-increasing numbers and in another historical allusion we are told:

> A terra que Diogo Cão descobrira em 1482, recebia aventureiros, para quem a vida era longa estrada onde só bailavam ilusões; homens de saber, governadores, e militares; missionários católicos, em busca de ovelhada negra para maior glória de Deus; homens de negócios, sonhadores de cifras; e também [sic], vagabundos, desertores da vida em sociedade, párias amarrados e remorsos de endoidar. (p. 7)

All told, not a pretty picture of the Portuguese "founding fathers" of Angola, and it must be remembered that Soromenho had written this booklet for a Protuguese readership in Lisbon.

The whites explored the coastal area driven by greed but finding no gold or precious stones they became uneasy. More ships landed, more houses were built and in the wombs of African women who had been given or sold by their sobas to the white man, the new African Man was gestating. At this point Soromenho, the white African living in the colonial present, described what was later to be formalized in Gilberto Freyre's highly debatable socio-historical theory of "Lusotropicology."[7] This new African Man, with a white father and a black mother, would be

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[7]For an explanation of the theory, see Gilberto Freyre, New World in the Tropics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1963). For an analysis of its weaknesses and contradictions, see Roger Bastide, "Lusotropicology, Race and Nationalism, and Class Protest and Development in Brazil and Portuguese Africa," Protest and Resistance in Angola and Brazil, ed. Ronald H. Chilcote (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972), pp. 225-240.

> . . . o homem a quem adestrámos a caminhar ao nosso lado, a quem ensinámos a amar a nossa raça, para que, num esfôrço único, possamos difundir, cada vez mais e melhor, a civilização latina em África. (p. 8)

In other words, the mulatto, brought into the world as a result of rape or concubinage and always illegitimate in the eyes of the Portuguese, was to become the conduit as well as the symbol of Portuguese civilization in Africa. Although a most naive view in modern terms, it was widely held by the Portuguese throughout this century. It is also a view that Soromenho could never completely abandon for it reappears in somewhat modified terms in A Chaga, his very last work, as a possible solution to the clash of cultures under colonialism.

In this connection, Soromenho excerpts from a speech made by Norton de Matos, twice High Commissioner for Angola during the Republic, entitled aptly enough, "A Missão Colonizadora de Portugal em África." Portugal's "colonizing mission" had first been espoused by António Enes at the end of the 19th century and Soromenho refers to it in the first part of his booklet. This view of mission proposed the doctrine that the Portuguese, through their five centuries of colonial government and administration, were particularly adapted to transforming primitive African civilizations into modern-day Brazils. One can excuse the young Soromenho (he was twenty-eight when he wrote Imagens) for parroting this doctrine, because he had grown up in the home of a district governor who had served directly under Norton and whose

principal task was to carry out the High Commissioner's directives. This writer cannot justify these views but wishes only to make clear that they were almost universally held by the Portuguese of the period. Soromenho's stance on the history of Portugal in Africa prior to "enlightened colonialism," on the other hand, was an heretical one for the times, as we shall see.

The white man had come to Africa in search of gold but was told there was none. While waiting, he bartered bright cloth and knickknacks for ivory (as he would barter the same things for wax and rubber after the abolition of slavery), and continued to dream of gold. Without notice, suddenly, an order arrived from the Portuguese crown that slaves were needed for the new colony in the Americas. The filhos do mar, because of the economic imperatives of the Brazilian sugar cane economy, finally discovered the gold they had come for: black gold. "E começou a desenrolar-se a grande tragédia da escravatura" (p. 13). The blacks continued to come out of the bush to trade with the white man until one day they were suddenly thrown into ships' holds for the arduous and often fatal trip to Brazil.

It was the slave trade that would firmly establish the European presence in Africa, and open the "dark continent" to white greed.

> E durante longos anos, que foram uma noite de terror, a África mandou milhões de escravos abrir as entranhas

> da terra americana para se arrancar o oiro e as pedras preciosas que ornaram as coroas dos reis da Europa. (p. 14)[8]

The theme of night with which Soromenho began this booklet is expanded shortly thereafter to "night of terror." It was to be broadened farther still.

Brazil had been born out of the cries of the Negro race, a fact understood in no uncertain terms by the young Angolan writer: "O baptismo da raça brasileira foi feito com o sangue do negro" (p. 14).

Back in Angola, the slave trade grew, either through treaties with the more powerful sobas anxious to sell their brothers for bright cloths and trinkets or by Portuguese force of arms. With the growth of that trade, the city of Luanda grew and prospered for the white man. Colonists debarked from Lisbon while black slaves were embarking for Brazil. Daily arrivals of sobas with their "rebanhos humanos" (p. 15), made the slave market the center of town. The blacks were held in "campos de concentração" (p. 15), awaiting transfer to slave ships bound for Brazil. (That particular term, "concentration camps," is not a Portuguese one; it was, of course, most familiar to any European adult in 1938 and the author seems to have chosen it deliberately to evoke the image of the Portuguese as Nazis, herding millions of innocent blacks

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[8]For a more literary and therefore more tragic description of the slave trade, see Soromenho's short story, "Samba," in Rajada, esp. pp. 110-112.

into holding pens on their way to cultural and even physical annihilation. He makes the point perfectly clear when he writes: "Europa vivia do sangue da África" [p. 15].) Needless to say, such an allusion could have gone unnoticed in Portugal of the late 1930's only if, as this writer has often detailed, Africa and its inhabitants had no concrete existence in the collective mentality of Portugal. More importantly, Imagens is the earliest indication of Soromenho's deep-rooted thoughts and feelings about slavery, the black man as a human being, and the white's exploitation of the black.

The author goes on to recount how the Dutch conquered Luanda from the Portuguese to gain control, among other things, of this now-lucrative slave trade and how the Portuguese, "desamparados pela Metrópole" (as usual then as it was until 1960), had to abandon their settlement on the coast and take refuge in the jungle. From their little fortress at Massangano in the interior, three hundred Portuguese held off the Dutch and hostile Africans for years. To the young, white Soromenho,

> Massangano é um marco de glória.
> Ao heroísmo dos bravos de Massangano se deve a reconquista de Angola.
> Massangano é a mensagem de Angola que os colonos enviaram ao Portugal europeu que os entregou ao seu próprio destino depois de lhes legar a defesa da terra abandonada. (p. 16)

This description of the defense at Massangano, albeit somewhat dramatic and distortive of the truth as to the "reconquest" of Angola, was yet another thinly-veiled attack against contemporary Portuguese colonial policy. It, too, went unnoticed by Salazar's censors.

Finally, Luanda was "liberated" by Salvador Correia de Sá at the head of a Brazilian-equipped Armada, on 15 August 1648. With Angola safely back in Portuguese hands, the white population begins to grow by way of an increase in immigration, which the author calls "the bulwark of peoples who build empires." Once more in total control of their trade in humans, Portuguese slavers ply the South Atlantic as never before. For the slaves, however, these journeys were beyond nightmare.

> Eram longas e pavorosas essas jornadas do Atlântico. Os escravos, encerrados nos porões das naus, viviam dias de angústia, e muitos foram lançados ao mar, mortos por maus tratos. . . . (p. 18)

Another of Soromenho's themes, anguish, is clearly annuciated here and it is the logical condition arising out of night and terror. Anguish is also a state of total helplessness and that is how Soromenho perceived the black man in black Africa. Unforeseen, the colonial system by which the European imposed himself was ultimately to result in anguish for all concerned. That greatest of ironies is perfectly synthesized in Terra Morta. Imagens goes beyond the point of capture and the wrench from Africa, however, as its author focuses on the life of the black slaves once they get to the Americas. Slavery was to him not only the massive, almost genocidal forced migration of entire peoples from one world to another, it was also the resurrection from one terror-filled night of anguish on the shores of Africa to another horror-filled night of suffering on the shores of the Americas. To tie these two facets of that continuum of living death together, Soromenho cites

liberally from Arthur Ramos' As Culturas Negras do Novo Mundo.[9] Returning to the thematic substance of his essay, Soromenho reminds the reader that Luanda itself cannot be seen or understood "sem pensar na grande tragédia africana" (p. 20). And without having written more than one collection of short stories, Nhári, Castro Soromenho brilliantly outlines all of his basic literary themes: night, which causes terror, then leads to anguish, and ultimately results in tragedy.

These themes are reinforced, as he states: "Foi durante a noite negra da escravidão, noite de angústia que durou centenas de anos e que projectou sua sombra em todo o mundo . . ." (p. 20).[10] A humanist imbued with a deep sense of human dignity, Soromenho was also an Angolan patriot of the highest order. Translating the human tragedy of slavery into an economic and social scenario of the development of Angola, he was one of the very first to understand and articulate the inestimable cost to Angola of selling into bondage its greatest asset, manpower. To Soromenho, Angola had languished in economic, social and political stagnation because of its export of slaves to Brazil. Angola was a colónia mártir, and Brazil owed its existence to the Angolan peoples. He went so far as to propose

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[9]Arthur Ramos, As Culturas Negras no Novo Mundo, Bibliotheca de Divulgação Scientífica, vol. 12 (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1937).

[10]The term "noite de angústia" became the title of Soromenho's first novel, as we know. Its characters, as will be seen, suffered under a different kind of slavery than that outlined in Imagens.

that Brazil should erect a statue to the anonymous black slave who built that country.

His sketches of Luanda do not end with the abolition of the slave trade. He treats the reader to a quick social judgment of the present-day city, where upper and lower cities are juxtaposed.

> A impressão de desagrado que Luanda, vista da baía nos causa, modifica-se quando percorremos a cidade alta, onde se vêem avenidas rasgadas com elegância, arborizadas e ladeadas por chalets com jardins abeirados dos passeios públicos, em flagrante contraste com o casario miserável, que lembra os mucambos do Nordeste brasileiro. . . . Nas barrocas, fazendo uma vida à-parte [sic], fica a cidade misteriosa das feitiçarias. (p. 21)

In other words, although the upper city with its tree-lined avenues is a pleasant sight, the author's first interest in glorifying that world is to point up its flagrant contrast with the slums, the musseques, of Luanda. It is that part of the city, the "mysterious city of witchcraft," which interests him most, for it is there that the black Africans subsist. In the lower city, in the slums with their "poeirentas e tortuosas ruelas" (p. 22), the blacks find cultural nourishment by dancing the rebita, a sensual dance accompanied by pidgin Portuguese lyrics but performed within the rhythms of African music. Even the African dances and their sensuality which are found as a sub-theme in all Soromenho's pre-colonial fiction, are mentioned in this booklet. He would use sensual to describe African dancing as often as angustia to describe African life. Yet he does not stop to let us listen merely to African rhythms. He goes out among the slum-dwellers and tells us that the old mulatto women

are the repositories of the cruel and degrading histories of their people: ". . . so elas e que recordam os dramas de amor dos senhores brancos com as negrinhas da rua" (p. 22). He notes and judges the white man's violations of the bodies and dignity of young, African women even in the city. He will expound on that theme again, and more forcefully, in Terra Morta, Viragem, and A Chaga which center on the clash of the black and white races.

Amusingly, and possibly because he had little to say in praise of Luanda (he even criticizes its monuments in writing that "Seus escassos e pobres monumentos são de tal maneira desgraciosos que se tornam ridículos" [p. 22]), Soromenho lashes out against American cities. His opinions are based on the observations of a Brazilian writer and he criticizes the American metropolis for having "edifícios tão colossais como antipáticos" (p. 23). In contrast to those horrendous sky-scrapers, Luanda is almost charming.

> Na África portuguesa - Louvado seja Deus! - impera o destino português, a civilização latina, incompatível com a concepção empírica da vida que comanda, escravizando o homem-máquina, o único para quem foram feitas essas gigantescas gaiolas inestéticas que são arranha-céus. (p. 23)

(It must be remembered that Soromenho did not visit the United States until 1961.) The author was telling the reader that even Luanda, because of its "Latin soul" and notwithstanding its faults, was superior to cities in the United States. No doubt his Portuguese readership, if they understood nothing else he had written, would agree with that affirmation.

Following a description of Luanda in the twenty years preceding, Soromenho ends by taking a trip into the interior. His last words tell us not only where he is going physically, but also lead us into the realm of all his subsequent literature: "Vamos . . . penatrar na selva, na África misteriosa . . . ao sertão que chama por nós. É que o sertão é um caminho e um destino" (p. 27).[11]

Let us now begin to follow Soromenho into the jungle, into his mysterious Africa, into the bush which beckoned him. As we shall see, the trails into the jungle on the other side of Angola, in the northeast corner known as Lunda, were the course he had to follow and would become his destiny as a novelist.

Soromenho's work is clearly divided into three separate yet deliberately related periods: (1) Africa as seen by the African, before the arrival of the white man; (2) Africa as seen by the European explorer of the late 18th and 19th century, anxious to open up the "dark continent" for his imperialist masters; and (3) Africa controlled by the European colonialist.

The simple logic of these works is historical, and the three thematic stages[12] will be studied as functions of both a

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[11]The words caminho and destino are used interchangeably throughout the author's pre-colonial fiction. For him they indicated the path of his career but for his characters they lead only to slavery or death.

[12]Most critics (Moser, Mourão, etc.) accept Roger Bastide's simplistic division of the author's works into "epic" and "realist." (See Bastide, L'Afrique dans . . ., 1960, and reprinted as an

temporal and personal evolutionary process.

In the beginning, Soromenho simply retold what he had heard or read. He invented no plots or themes but merely recounted what he calls "legends" of the Africans. Some he had heard first-hand, as we know from a photograph in his first work published in Portugal, Lendas Negras.[13] In that booklet he is shown seated in front of an African hut in some small bush village listening to the "curiosas lendas do gentio."[14] Although the placement of the adjective curiosas is his, and might be interpreted as representing a certain cultural bias, he did sit down with the blacks and did allow himself to be photographed with them while listening intently to their strange legends. The fact that the photograph appears in this booklet published in 1936 is of great significance in and of itself because it was his first published fiction. He had an insatiable desire and need to understand black culture and history and knew full well the importance of African oral tradition.

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introductory study in Soromenho's Histórias da Terra Negra, pp. iii-xiv.) Perhaps this is so because Bastide's imprimatur gave international recognition to the author after he had been almost totally ignored in Portugal. (See also: Fernando Mourão, rev. of L'Afrique dans l'oeuvre da Castro Soromenho by Roger Bastide in Vértice, XX, 199[April 1960]216-217 and João Alves das Neves, "Castro Soromenho visto por Roger Bastide," in Anhembi, 41, 122[January 1961]402-404.) Not only are the terms "epic" and "realist" broad and unspecified but they seek to define Angolan literature in European terms which, in the opinion of this writer, distorts the true significance of the works themselves.

[13]Lendas Negras, 1936.

[14]Ibid., p. 9.

Although he had no formal training in ethnology, Soromenho was a born observer and recorder. He was, as has been noted, a voracious reader. Perhaps his first historical and ethnographic goal was to become a specialist in popularizing the works of the 19th century Portuguese explorer of Lunda, Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho.

For Soromenho, Dias de Carvalho was the greatest chronicler of Portuguese explorations in Africa.

> De todos os viajantes portugueses no Continete Africano, aquêle que nos legou obra mais vasta e completa, única no género na nossa bibliografia colonial, foi Henrique de Carvalho, chefe da expedição ao Estado do Muatiânvua, no país da Lunda, em 1884. . . .
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> . . . . . .
>
> Hoje, quem quizer [sic] conhecer alguma coisa sôbre a Lunda dos Muatiânvuas, que é a Lunda Negra, e dos seus povos, tem de recorrer à obra dêsse ilustre viajante africano, porque não se voltou a fazer trabalho dessa natureza. . . .[15]

The judgment of Dias de Carvalho's six-volume opus, published under the general title Expedição Portugueza ao Muatiânvua,[16]

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[15]Castro Soromenho, "A literatura dos exploradores portugueses, III--Henrique de Carvalho . . .," O M. P., 177 (September 1943)865, 868.

[16]Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, Expedição Portugueza ao Muatiânvua, 6 vols. Descripção da Viagem á Mussumba do Muatiânvua, vol. 1 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1890); vol. 2 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1892); vol. 3 (Lisbon: Typographia do Jornal As Colonias Portuguezas, 1893); Ethnografia e História Tradicional dos Povos da Lunda (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1890); Methodo Prático para Fallar a Língua da Lunda (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1890); and Meteorologia Climalogia e Colonisação (Lisbon: Typographia do Jornal As Colónias Portuguezas, 1892). Also included under the general title Expedição Portugueza was a volume written by Dias de Carvalho's second in command, Agostinho Sisenando Marques, entitled: Os Climas e as Producções das Terras de Malange á Lunda (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1889).

was as valid in 1943 as it is today. Joseph C. Miller tells us in Kings and Kinsmen (1976):

> Still the best record of northern Lunda traditions is the account of Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho . . . , the earliest recorded and including the greatest detail on events of the remote period. . . .[17]

And José Osório de Oliveira, in the preface to his anthology Literatura Africana goes even further:

> Só quem sofreu a desilusão de buscar, inùtilmente, nos mais célebres exploradores portugueses . . . algum documento da vida mental do negro, pode dar verdadeiro apreço à obra exaustiva de Henrique de Carvalho.[18]

Osório de Oliveira goes on to chastise other explorers like Capelo, Ivens and Serpa Pinto for being motivated exclusively by geographic curiosity and for not bothering to probe the African soul for even a moment. In contrast, that was the secret of Dias de Carvalho's memoirs and became the key to Soromenho's works. It is the latter who captured the essence of the African soul, as hinted by Dias de Carvalho, and gave it immortality through literature. This writer does not doubt that Dias de Carvalho's works were standard references for Soromenho's father as governor of the Lunda district. But whether the author first came upon them there or in Lisbon, there is no doubt that his sense of Africa was indelibly impressed by the peoples, places and histories taken down by

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[17]Miller, n. 7, p. 115.

[18]Literatura Africana, 1962, p. xiv.

Dias de Carvalho--most especially in his Ethnografia e História Tradicional dos Povos da Lunda.[19] Soromenho's preface to his five-part fictive chronicle of the origins of the Lunda and Quioco peoples, "Lueji e Ilunga na Terra de Amizade" in Calenga[20] pays due homage to his source: "Esta é a história da criação do país dos lundas, como êles a contaram a Henrique de Carvalho, o grande explorador da Lunda. . . ."[21] The same theme first appeared, without credits, in the short story, "Terra de Amizade" from Lendas Negras[22] and Nhári[23] and was incorporated as a sub-theme into the novel, Homens sem Caminho.[24] As 1936 marks the first appearance of "Terra de Amizade," Soromenho's familiarity with Dias de Carvalho goes back at least as far as that date. Furthermore, much of the ethnography and lore first described by that Portuguese explorer is given parallel development by Soromenho in factual articles of the

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[19]The scope of this study precludes a comparison of Dias de Carvalho and Soromenho but the former will be cited when particularly applicable.

[20]Calenga, 1945, pp. 75-232.

[21]Ibid., p. 77.

[22]Lendas Negras, pp. 33-39.

[23]Nhári, 1938, pp. 125-139.

[24]Homens sem Caminho, 1942.

late 1930's and early 1940's[25] and in his other fiction of the same period. In fact, almost all the author's reworkings of Dias de Carvalho's descriptions of life among the Lunda and Quioco which he presented editorially in magazine articles (mostly for O Mundo Português) were integrated into his fiction, making it "realist" in the true sense of the word.

Soromenho is the curious spectator in the world around him. As a storyteller and observer of local customs, he could have interpolated that talent from any of the societies in which he was subsequently to live. We recall, for example, that he did write descriptively of Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. But he never showed any interest in fictionalizing those places. He reserved his craft of fiction for Angola.

The cultures which surrounded him as a child and young man were undoubtedly somewhat alien, as he had been brought up as European, the son of a high colonial official. In spite of that fact he alone, of all the white Africans of

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[25]E.g., "Calunga--O mar," O Mundo Português, 1939; "Música negra--Instrumentos da música africana," ibid., 1940; "Apontamentos etnográficos--Lundas, sua vida no sertão," ibid., 1941; "Apontamentos africanos--O significado dos penteados africanos," ibid., 1942; "A origem do Estado do Muatiânvua," Esfera, 1942; "A Lunda e os seus Estados," ibid.; "Organização social do povo lunda," ibid.; "Os deuses da Lunda," ibid.; "Os músicos negros e a literatura oral do sertão," Vida Mundial Ilustrada, 1942; "A origem das tribos lunda e quioca," O M. P., 1942; "Tahi--o adivinho africano do sertão dos bantus," ibid., 1945; "O fogo puro dos Lundas," ibid., 1945; etc.

his generation, attempted to overcome this barrier by learning as much as possible about the tribes around him. In his fiction he demonstrated a fidelity to the spirit of these cultures with an intensity found nowhere else in Angolan letters of the time. And it will be that spirit which he alone translates into art.

In order faithfully to depict the present, Soromenho felt compelled to plunge into the African past. His only options were to listen to that past as recounted to him, or read about it as it had been recounted to others. He had to know the African as a man, since that is how he saw him. Further, he had to explore and attempt to comprehend the mentality of that man. Then and only then would he be able to portray the African in contact with another, superimposed civilization. In his first works, he therefore attempted to absorb and describe the African concepts of time, history, hero, justice and human values. It was through this spectrum of cultural totality that he was able to communicate to his European readership the true nature of African man.

Soromenho had long been exposed to African narratives and in his own early stories and novels sought to preserve that oral tradition. He faithfully recreated the African bards plying their trade. He called them os poetas da planície.[26]

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[26]Preface to "Lueji e Ilunga na terra de amizade," Calenga, p. 78.

Not unmindful of the exoticism of his contemporaries, a literary current in Portuguese letters that dates back to Fernão Mendes Pinto, Soromenho concentrated on the human aspect, on the African man in his world. This was by no means an easy task for our amateur ethnologist, so concerned with telling his stories from within while, in fact, an outsider. He knew he was a European writing in Portuguese. He tried hard to lay aside his own cultural heritage by delving into the inner workings of the African mentality. Ultimately, he achieved his end not through subjective psychological portraits, but through objective descriptions of the African world as perceived by the African himself. Soromenho proposed to humanize and demystify the African by revealing to his readers all the components of African culture: myth and legend, song and dance, war and peace, love, social institutions--in short, his whole way of life. There were few white Angolans of this period who even tacitly admitted the existence of an African culture. Soromenho on the other hand, was its startling and foremost literary exponent. He not only analyzed it for himself but described it in print, holding it up to his readers as if in blazing lights and saying: "These are human beings, just like yourselves!" In a review of Noite de Angústia, the literary critic Alexandre Pinheiro Torres confirmed this quality:

> O mérito de Castro Soromenho está justamente em mostrar . . . como o homem negro da senzala, mesmo sem o contacto do

> branco não é só homem . . . abstractamente biológico . . . mas o homem já marcado como ser vivente. . . .[27]

To this critic, the author went beyond mere anecdote in presenting

> . . . toda a orgânica social da tribo autóctone, a qual . . . está muito longe de carecer de historicidade. O que temos . . . é um grupo de homens negros, envolvidos já nas apertadas teias das suas relações sociais. . . . O soba . . . representa, para todos os efeitos, o mesmo que o suserano na sociedade feudal. Os aristocratas da tribo em tudo se comportam como nobres de sangue. . . . [O] sobrinho [do soba] estabelece a sua intriga para eliminar a concorrência . . . a sucessão, e os factos que ocorrem como consequência dessa intriga têm nítidos aspectos de semelhanca com as complexas maquinações das personagens shakespearianas.[28]

As we have seen in the pamphlet Imagens, as well as in earlier articles, the author was imbued with enormous empathy for the black African. This may have been the result of some collective white guilt he felt over "the greatest stain on the history of mankind," the enslavement of the black man by the white, but he was equally attuned to the plight of the black man dealing with the world around him. Whatever his sources, Soromenho was impelled to attempt that vision of Africa which, for the first time, transcended race and portrayed the black man directly inside the complex of his own societal structures.

All the fiction to be discussed here, whether short story or novel, has an emotional, even theatrical, cast.

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[27]Alexandre Pinheiro Torres, Romance: O Mundo em Equação, Colecção Problemas, 19 (Lisbon: Portugália, 1967), p. 208.

[28]Ibid., pp. 208-209.

That was how Soromenho saw African life and this part of his work reflected that view. It is almost as if Africa and drama were synonymous. There were inextricable. He sensed that African life had been dramatic, ab initio, long before the arrival of Muana calunga, the "children of the sea." The African whom Soromenho first portrays was beleagured and bewildered by nature, mythological elements and superhuman forces. He had to rely heavily on sorcery and witchcraft to explain the unexplainable, to find and punish those who had transgressed against the laws of the gods or of the tribe. Only revenge and retribution would prevail against such transgressors. The incomprehensible could only be faced with terror and anguish.

Drawing from his understanding of African man, the author portrayed him within his own collective body, the tribe. Soromenho must be a writer of masses, and of groups, because his subjects viewed themselves within that framework. Rarely do we see individual characterizations; often we are shown only types. The author creates protagonists in terms not of who they are but rather how they relate to the group. His individuals are at the service of a people. His interest lies in describing what binds man to man within groups that act upon their members and interact with other groups. It is therefore only natural that he go to the only available source of these relationships, African oral traditions (gathered directly or indirectly), to achieve his goal.

The world Soromenho describes is dramatic and it is also tragic, as if tragedy were drama's only possible conclusion. Man is forever defeated in this world, if not by other men then by his own flaws or, escaping those, by the wild forces of nature which terrorize him into anguish and brutalize him into resignation. The peoples of the central African savannas were the subject of all his early fiction, especially the Lunda. Their history epitomized, for him, the total defeat and submission of the African by the forces around him. He could have concentrated exclusively on the Quioco with whom he was also familiar, since they had recently been victorious over the Lunda. But even the Quioco were finally vanquished by powers beyond their control or understanding. In sum, there are no heroes in Soromenho's African tragedies, only a long noite de angústia for homens sem caminho, who are all os escravos dos deuses.[29]

From a purely descriptive point of view, Soromenho's pre-colonial period include the short stories Lendas Negras (1936), and Nhári (1938), the sustained narratives Noite de Angústia (1939) and Homens sem Caminho (1942), and two final volumes of short stories, Rajada (1943) and Calenga (1945). The white man was totally absent from the plots of this period and was only referred to as a remote alien, in rare allusions. In this same period, Soromenho began to move away from African

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[29]The title of a story in Rajada, pp. 57-67.

folklore into a serious study of African history. His articles on Portuguese-African history have been detailed elsewhere in this study; they span the period from 1940 though 1948. As he began to move away from his position as a Portuguese jongleur of African life, he concentrated on the historical imperatives of the 19th century, moving towards the most meaningful products of his artistic creativity--his novels Terra Morta (1949), Viragem (1957) and A Chaga (1970).[30]

The synthesis of his literature, connecting the black Africa of the past with the colonial Africa of the present, was the historical fiction he based on the narratives of 19th century Portuguese explorers of Africa. Those works include A Aventura e a Morte no Sertão: Silva Pôrto e a Viagem de Angola a Moçambique (1943), Sertanejos de Angola (1943), A Expedição ao País do Oiro Branco (1944) and his largest undertaking in this field, a fusion of the major Portuguese explorations of the 19th century, A Maravilhosa Viagem dos Exploradores Portugueses (1948).

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[30]First written in 1964 but published posthumhously in 1970. Soromenho died in 1968.

CHAPTER 5

PLACES AND PEOPLES

Any writer dealing with life must deal with space and time; Soromenho's novels and short stories are narrative structures in which things happened to peoples in certain places at certain times. His space was circumscribed only by the mythical geographies of his subjects. That mythical geography was of course reflected in the minds of the African peoples whose real geographical limits lay between the "great African lakes" in the east and the Atlantic coast in the west, a territory easily located on any map of Central Africa. Soromenho's fictive space was vast only insofar as his subjects viewed their world in terms of além-Cuango or aquém-Cassai. Above all, it was the historical placement of his subjects which determined the space of his fiction. His subjects were, and are, real people, and he recreated their histories, legands and lore within the areas they effectively occupied.

Most of Soromenho's fiction takes place in the Lunda province of northeastern Angola. Lunda is bordered on the north and east by the Republic of Zaire, formerly the Belgian Congo. The arbitrary borders between the two countries is geopolitical and was determined in the late 19th and early

20th centuries by the European colonial powers; the frontier had nothing whatever to do with the location of the indigenous inhabitants themselves.

The present borders of the Lunda provice within Angola are the Cuango River[1] on the west and the Cassai River on the east and south (both tributaries of the great Congo or Zaire River at whose mouth Diogo Cão first landed in 1482). The northern border was fixed by treaties and conventions among Portugal, the International African Association[2] (a commercial front for Belgium's expansion into Central Africa), France, Belgium and the other signatories of the Berlin Conference (1884-85). This northern frontier extends west of the Cuango River on a line close to the 8th parallel, breaks directly north to almost the 7th parallel and continues west again, with a slight drop along the Chicapa River to the Cassai. This frontier was redefined, and its limits reinterpreted, at least five times between the signing of the first convention in 1885 and the signing of the last, in 1901.[3]

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[1]Portuguese orthography will be employed throughout Parts II and III of this study.

[2]See Eric Axelson, Portugal and the Scramble for Africa: 1875-1891 (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1967), pp. 67-83.

[3]See Henrique Galvão and Carlos Selvagem: Império Ultramarino Português, 4 vols. (Lisbon: Empresa Nacional de Publicidade, 1952), 3:143-144.

As stated, the divisions are political. As through all of sub-Saharan Africa they ignore the territorial integrity of the tribes of the region. Because it treats with Africa before the white man, Soromenho's fiction of this period localizes Lunda in terms of the tribal hegemonies established by the Africans themselves.

In Nhári the author sets the geographic foundations for all of his future fiction. Since he deals usually with Central African proto-history gleaned from readings of 19th century Portuguese explorers and personal transcriptions of 20th century Lunda oral histories, his subject tribes are rarely bound by European mapmakers. This is true most especially when he treats with one of his favorite themes, the foundations of the Lunda Empire.

The geographic setting for the novels and short stories of this period lies mainly between the Cuango River in the west (although the author will cross it more than once, as will be seen) and the Cassai in the east. The latter is by no means an iron curtain but is, in fact, the gateway to the court of the great Lunda "king of kings," the Muatianvua.

In the South, the author will have to traverse the Lungue-Bungo, a tributary of the Zambezi, to faithfully portray the locales of some of his plots. In the North, there are no rivers which run on an east-west axis affecting the lives of Soromenho's characters; none are mentioned nor are any created.

Other rivers of importance which flow through Soromenho's narratives, because they flowed between the Cuango and the

Cassai through the lives of his peoples, are the Cuilo, Luangue, Luxico, Chicapa, and Chiumbe. They, too, flow north-south and are direct or indirect tributaries of the Congo.

The importance of all these rivers and other smaller ones, as well as certain lakes, cannot be underestimated in anthropological and historical terms. They are used continually by the author not only to locate peoples, who had situated themselves by these bodies of water, but also to recreate the religious and social meanings they had for the Africans of the region.

The first short story in Nhárí, "O Ultimo Batuque," takes us from the town of Cassange, west of the Cuango, deep into Lunda country to the east, where the author poetically describes the plains rising from that river as the "leito suave . . . em épocas pluviosas" (p. 12). "Angústia," another short story from the same work, is set in the northern part of the Cuilo River, "muito perto das terras do Bula Matari" (p. 59) which the author defines as the Lunda designation for the Belgian Congo. And when a plot is not localized by rivers bordering the scene of action, the locale is inferred merely by a mention of the tribe involved. "O Milagre do Ganga" (in Nhárí) for example, takes place among the Bângalas. Anyone familiar with the ethnic distributions in Angola would know that tribe to be located near the town of Cassange, in the Malanje district, somewhere between the Cuango and one of its western tributaries, the Lui River. The title story

itself begins at the "margem direita do rio Luxico" (p. 83) and wends its way south with an ethnic identification of Ganguela peoples transposed for a geographical one.

The first rendition of the most important theme to appear in Soromenho's first period, the fictionalized account of the formation of the Lunda state, is localized by using a place name which was also the name of the region's soba. Such a toponymic structure was very common to the peoples of Central Africa and appears often. The specific reference, in the story "Terra de Amizade," is the territory of Capanga. This the author identifies in a footnote as being a county or duchy in the Belgian Congo "onde reside o rei Muatiânvua" (p. 129). Thus we may consider a soba a count or duke in European terms, rather than merely a tribal chief, which in the English idiom diminishes both his authority and the extent of his territorial hegemony. Because all of Soromenho's stories and novels are as much informational as they are works of art, the reader is constantly bombarded with seemingly irrelevant tidbits that appear to have little to do with the plot at hand or the themes being developed. Examining, as we now are, the author's extraordinary concern with geographical space, "Terra de Amizade" presents just such an example. The men of the village listen in awe to a brave hunter who has traveled "desde o Cassai até terras além Capanga, onde deambula o elefante, detentor do antigo oiro africano . . . lugar de boa sorte" (p. 135). Mythical geography at first view, but

in the minds of the Lunda a real place where the elephants stood guard over ancient deposits of African gold.

Noite de Angústia takes place near a small river, the Mussangeuje, but not far from the Cassai, "o rio sagrado da gente da sua tribo" (p. 20). That one phrase tells us not only of the place, but of the religious significance of this great river. Bula-Matari crops up again to indicate the proximity of what was the Belgian Congo as well as to place the action by inference in the northernmost region of Lunda. One of the villages is "enraizada para além do rio Cassai" (p. 20) and the region itself is described as a "canto do sertão lunda" (p. 37). Another river is included, to extend the space of former action, with the mention of the "águas barrentas do Caluango" (p. 34).[4] A lake makes its appearance to allow the author a momentary digression into yet another theme, the "bewitched" lake of Carumbo, which receives wider treatment in Rajada. It has no bearing on the space of the novel other than to presage yet another story. The witch doctor, Samugimo, describes the lake: "Carumbo tem outra história, um grande feitiço. . . . Eu já fui a Carumbo e ouvi o batuque do povo que vive debaixo da água" (p. 114). The

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[4]"Ca-" or "Ka-" has already been defined as a Bantu prefix denoting unusual size, large or small. This river is clearly the Luangue and was probably called "Caluango" by the indigenous inhabitants. Since Europeans tended to indiscriminately use prefixes when identifying Bantu tribes, they probably identified places with the same indiscrimination. See Area Handbook for Angola, eds. Allison B. Herrick, et al. (Washington, D.C.: American University, 1967), p. 79.

eu above is probably the author himself. But he has already told the story of another lake, "A Lagoa Maldita," in Nhári. That story is a legend of Lake Dilolo in the Moxico district near the Zairean border. According to José Osório de Oliveira, one of the few Portuguese to take a life-long interest in Africa, this particular legend was popularized by many different writers, including Livingstone. The inference is that it was a common legend among many Bantu peoples and that source was probably the same for all versions.

> Dada a identidade essencial do tema desta lenda e das do lago de Carumbo, podemos concluir que a existência de um lago, pelo menos entre os Povos da Lunda e os Luênas [sic], deu sempre origem a mesma explicação poética.[5]

Yet another story in Nhári, "Aves do Além," is a legend of the Dala cataracts on the upper Chiumbe River. As has already been mentioned in Part I of this work, that story was the first ever published, in 1934, and the author had been to these falls himself in 1932. Because of that fact, "Aves do Além" contains the best description of any body of water anywhere in Soromenho's entire literary production. This direct relationship between things he saw for himself and fictive technique will evolve into its highest form in his works dealing with the clash of African and European cultures. Although the following description is perhaps overly-exotic, it does convey the river's fantastic force:

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[5]Osório de Oliveira, Literatura Africana, n. 37, p. 218.

> O rio Chiumbe, imponente e rebelde, ondulante, arquejando nos braços hercúleos de rochedos tortuosos, galopa em vertiginosa correria, ...
> Depois, vai cair, convulsionado, qual bárbaro perdido na miséria de sua raiva insana . . . desenfreado . . . até se afogar, exausto de seu galopar aluciante, nas mansas águas do rio Cassai. (pp. 161-162)

Soromenho's peoples were, in broad anthropological terms, the Bantus of the Central African plains. He concentrated specifically on the Lundas and Quiocos because they were the tribes he knew personally. One of the principal themes he developed in fiction and fact was the origins of the Lunda peoples. It was a subject which fascinated him throughout his life[6] and seems to have become his paradigm for the development of all the modern tribes in Central Africa. He did not limit himself to these peoples, however, and his anthropological space expands to include not only Lunda sub-groups but non-Lunda peoples as well. For example, "O Último Batuque" in Nhári details the forced migration of a Bângala chieftain from Cassange (west of the Cuango and south of the Lui Rivers) to the lands of the Lunda queen, Mona Capenda. "Gando - O Feiticeiro" takes place among the Luenas,

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[6]Soromenho, as an Adjunct Professor of Sociology at the University of São Paulo, presented a paper in 1968 entitled: "Lunda: Da Formação do Império às Fronteiras Coloniais." He submitted that paper for publication in Protest and Resistance ed. Chilcote. The editor decided, however, not to publish the paper, possibly on the recommendation of the British historian on Central Africa, David Birmingham. In a letter from Birmingham to Chilcote (a copy of which the latter was kind enough to send this writer) Brimingham writes: "This paper . . . has a faintly Rip Van Winkle air of having been written around 1930." (David Birmingham to Ronald Chilcote, 30 April 1968.)

a Lunda sub-group inhabiting the territory between the southern Cassi and Lungue-Bungo Rivers. The story makes passing reference to a young woman's lover who is off hunting, far away among the Holos (an Mbundu tribe living north of the Bângalas). "Angústia" is set in the sobado (chieftainship) of one Xanvuri, on the northern Cuilo River. The chief protagonist is a slave of the Luchaze people, a sub-group of the Ganguela dwelling in the lower Zambezi. The Quiocos, Bângalas, Lundas, etc., weave their way in and out of his stories as naturally as the rivers they are constantly crossing.

In dealing with fictive geography, the author appears to be on less firm ground. In Noite de Angústia, for example, the axis of the plot is two villages. One of them is ruled by the soba Xandumba and the other is governed by his vassal, the sobeta (i.e., chieftain), Salemo. The distance between these villages seems to vary. At one point they are separated by a small patch of forest and are within shouting distance of one another. At another point, they are a league apart. The true distance is less important, however, than the fact that they are the only two villages "perdidos na terra erma, erguidos como sentinelas naquele canto do sertão."[7] Most other

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[7]Noite de Angústia, 4th ed., Colecção Atlântida, no. 13 (Lisbon: Ulisseia, 1965), p. 37. All future references will be made to this edition. Page numbers will appear in the text.

points of reference are likely to be fluvial. The land beyond the Cassai, the sacred river of the Lundas, is the kingdom of the Muatianvua. Immediately to the west, on the other side of the Caluango River, the Quiocos live and trade with Salemo's people. Much farther to the west, a journey of "many, many moons" (as the author tells us how the African measures time), runs the Cuanza River. Soromenho mentions that river and its peoples in an oblique reference to the so-called Bailundo campaign of 1902,[8] in a one-sentence interpolation of extraneous data that is a trademark of his style. Xandumba's nephew says of one of Salemo's advisors:

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[8]The Bailundos, an Ovimbundu sub-group living on the Bie Plateau in the region of the upper Cuanza River, had been peaceful traders since the late 1800's. A rubber boom exploded in the area bringing large numbers of Portuguese. They brought spirits to sell to the Bailundos in exchange for rubber, and then began conscripting them for Portuguese plantations. This combination of alcohol and forced labor inflamed the Bailundos and a massive revolt accompanied by wholesale murders, burnings and lootings, ensued. The Portuguese sent two army columns to quell the revolt before it could spread. Thousands of Africans were killed in this campaign while Portuguese losses were minimal. Mop-up operations continued through 1905 but few changes were made in the colonial policies which had originally sparked the uprising. See: Protest and Resistance, ed. Chilcote, pp. 285-286; James Duffy, A Question of Slavery (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 171-172, passim; Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, pp. 101-103. For a military view of the campaign from the Portuguese colonial side, see: Marquez de Lavradio, A Campanha do Bailundu. Colecção Pelo Império, no. 2 (Lisbon: Agência-Geral das Colónias, 1935); Idem, Pedro Francisco Massano de Amorim. Colecção Pelo Império, no. 73 (Lisbon: Agência-Geral das Colónias, 1941); Lt. Col. Belo de Almeida, Operações Militares de 1904 na Região do Bimbe (Bailundo). Colecção Pelo Império, no. 91 (Lisbon: Agência-Geral das Colonias, 1944).

"Ele até disse que andou com os brancos na guerra contra o povo do Cuanza" (p. 117). The author's moral judgment of a man who would betray his own race by fighting alongside the whites is that he's "worse than a Quioco." The western-most boundary of the plot in this novel is the Atlantic Ocean, established by inference with mention of the white man. But white men are ghostly characters, people who have never been seen by the Africans in the novel save the one "traitor." In the main, the white man's role is limited by the author to establishing geographical and historical points of reference. The white man never enters the scene of action in any of the fiction of this period.

Geographically, then, the author's broad strokes take us from the lands of the Muatianvua in the heart of Central Africa (present-day Zaire), westward across the "holy" Cassai, the Caluango, the Cuango and the Cuanza, all the way to the Atlantic coast of Angola. The peoples, however, are Africans. The principal tribes are the Lunda and their eternal enemies, the Quiocos. Let us examine more closely the Africa which was theirs.

The landscape for all of Soromenho's fiction roams between two primary focal points: the muxito (a Kimbundu word which Heli Chatelian defined in 1894 as a "floresta densa, como se encontra em depressoes e em encostas humidas"[9]

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[9]Héli Chatelain, Contos Populares de Angola. Trans. Lt. Col. M. Garcia da Silva (Lisbon: Agência-Geral do Ultramar,

and Miller synthesizes into "patches of gallery forest"[10]) and the planicie, estepe, or chana, the plains or savanna. The forests are in the lowlands, invariably criss-crossed by rivers and streams. They protect the African village while offering immediate sources of food and water. The forests are sometimes immense and impenetrable, as in Calenga, where "os homens nao conheciam toda a floresta. . . . Nem sabiam que para além da floresta havia uma planicie" (p. 22).[11] Occasionally the muxito is small enough to merely separate two villages with the plains not far off, like those of the soba Xandumba and the sobeta Salemo in Noite de Angustia. At other times, when these gallery forests are oases in a vast sea of elephant grass (capim) that extends beyond the

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1964), p. 514. This work was originally published by the author in English as: Folk-Tales of Angola (New York: G.E. Stechert and Co., 1894). It was the first compendium of Kimbundu folk tales ever published. In view of the attitude of the Portuguese towards their colonies, it is not surprising that this book was not translated into Portuguese until seventy years after it was first written.

[10]Miller, p. 35.

[11]"Imagine the whole of France and the Iberian Peninsula closely packed with trees varying from 20 to 180 feet high, whose crests of foliage interlace and prevent any view of the sky and sun. . . . An awe of the forest rushed upon the soul and filled the mind . . . one became aware of its eerie strangeness, the absence of sunshine; it was as if one stood amid the inhabitants of another world." Henry M. Stanley as quoted in Robin Hallet, Africa to 1875 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), p. 321.

horizons, the muxitos become truly impenetrable. A specific example, in Rajada, tells of a prolonged heat wave which has driven all the wild animals off the plains into the muxito in search of food, water and respite from the broiling sun. A literal blood-bath ensues among the beasts, a "luta de uma ferocidade inacreditavel," where "o homen nao tem lugar" (p. 151). This particular battle for survival focuses on both the attackers, ocelots, lions and leopards, and the victim, a panic-stricken antelope running blindly back and forth in the almost total darkness of the forest. Hyenas and wild dogs lap up the warm blood spilled in the fray. Snakes slither down trees and either strangle or poison their quarry to death. "Todos os bichos lutam com desespero para poderem comer e porque se temem mutuamente" (pp. 151-152). Even the bravest of hunters dares not enter the muxito on such an occasion.

At the inception of Soromenho's literary career, which we consider to be the publication of Nhári, his description of the African's external world is in sensuous, extoic metaphors. The author is still a prisoner of the Portuguese colonial literature of the period, glorifying the sensual and alien character of the African bush. He had not yet found his true metier: African man. He was to become the pioneer of Portuguese letters in that field, but not yet.

The planície or chana in Nhári is "o leito suave do Cuango" (p. 12). But the most completely poetic vision of

the plains follows later:

> A planície é sempre largamente ondeada e coberta por ervagem rasteira e vermelhusca, queimada logo a nascença pelo sol. . . .
>
> Aqui e acolá encontram-se arbustos despidos de folhagem e beleza. . . . E além . . . ergue-se uma árvore, braços negros levantados em súplica. . . .
>
> Esta planície é imensa, dolorosamente imensa, e aquela árvore está só. . . .
>
> E a planície não tem fim. . . . (pp. 103-104)

Even the path that cuts across the endless savanna is a poetic place where the sun "arranca pequenos relâmpagos de oiro" (p. 104).

After a long and arduous march across this immense, open expanse of grasslands, a muxito is discovered by two hunters. The sister of one of them, a ten-year-old girl, is about to be sold into slavery. The author grows rhapsodic: "Naquele muxito - aglomerado de árvores abraçadas por trepadeiras, estranho drama do mundo vegetal, náscedoiro de rio . . ." (p. 105). We follow the characters inside the forest and our eyes fall upon the trees: "altas, esguias e frágeis . . . sempre a buscarem com avidez as grandes alturas, ansiosas de luz, sôfregas do sol que não consegue penetrar além das copas" (p. 106). The image of this self-contained unit of night, the jungle, will return many times, tied inextricably to the night that haunts the African's soul (i.e., "A noite da floresta é uma noite sem fim," Homens sem Caminho, p. 154).[12]

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[12]Homens sem Caminho, 4th ed., Colecção Atlântida, no. 18 (Lisbon: Ulisseia, 1966). All future references will be made to this edition. Page numbers will appear in the text.

The jungle floor itself consists of drenched foliage turned to mud and the muxito is surrounded on all sides by the chana; where the former ends the latter begins.

Soromenho's early forests were a mystery of sight, sound and smells. Acting in chorus, all these stimuli became a "sinfonia da manhã africana" (Nhári, p. 85). The reader is aroused by the bright golden sun as it begins to "possess" the forest. The green is "reverberant," a "sumptuous cathedral of verdure." The blue of the sky, when it does filter through, is "imensamente vaporoso," almost good enough to drink. "Narcotic perfumes" waft their way through the trees and the entire jungle world becomes a "delirium of songs, of colors, of perfumes." The external world, even devoid of human content, is totally intoxicating.

Whether cloistered jungle or open plains, the land is bound only by the scorching sun at noon or the sparkling stars at night. The movement of the heavenly bodies are metaphors for day and night, perhaps accidentally, or perhaps because the author wants us to know that the African measures time only in terms of the sun and the moon. As the focus changes from a natural world with no human presence to man himself, the importance of the night increases dramatically, until all life is submerged within it. Night is silence and even desolation, but the evening sky which precedes it is a poem in itself: "O céu, nesta hora calada . . . é de uma beleza surpreendente: lágrimas de oiro, ardente pranto de deusas . . .

caídas, a capricho, em manto azul-negro" (Nhárí, p. 55). The night, while silent and desolate, is often filled with twinkling stars and emits a tropical perfume all its own. At times the silent night can be pitch black, with no moon and not a star in the sky; at other times it is luarejada, and the stars are shining brightly in the heavens.

In Nhárí, the two most striking periods of the day are sunrise and sunset. Sunrise is depicted through its effects on the morning sky: "O sol começou a ensangüentar o azul do céu" (p. 51). The sun is made of gold and blood and had followed its same trajectory since time immemorial. It begins its journey "na linha rósea do horizonte, . . . a iluminar e aquecer a estepe ondulada e longínqua" (p. 102). On occasion, sunrise is projected through the image of a fading night: "Morria a sombra da noite na tinta violácea do céu" (p. 83) or a retreating moon: "A lua, mais pálida e mais cansada, começou a espargir a sua luz nostálgica na luz do dia incipiente" (p. 100). The image changes suddenly once the sun is up, however, because it beats down unmercifully on the earth below: "Era a hora do sol em brasa" (p. 39); at noon, "Sol africano a doidejar" (p. 40). The heat of the sun, in cloudless skies, dries the high, yellow elephant grass even further. Aided in this desiccation of the earth below by the harsh, hot winds of the cacimbo (the dry season), the sun finally makes its peace with the earth by drenching

the late afternoon in stupefying colors. The afternoon becomes "essa hora dulcíssima dos grandes e afáveis silêncios" (p. 69).

The rivers and streams of the plains and muxitos are yet another constant in the African landscape. When they do not flow quietly, their soft murmuring can be heard when all else is silence. One particular river, the Luxico, is portrayed through the dense morning fog "espumando sua raiva insana" (p. 101). The Chiumbe River, at the Dala Falls, is "imponente e rebelde, . . . arquejando nos braços herculeos de rochedos tortuosos . . ." (p. 161). It, too, gets lost in the agony of its insane rage.

Although animals have appeared briefly in an earlier description of the muxito, they are present mostly as backdrop. Basically the animal world is divided in two: the wild birds and beasts of the forests and plains (shortly to become the objects of the hunt in man's endless quest to feed himself and his family), and the domesticated animals of the village. The crowing cock ushers in the day, chickens flutter about and dogs howl in distress from the relentless heat of the sun.

The smells of Africa are everywhere characterized as "um perfume selvatico de garridas flores africanas" (Nhári, p. 49).

As Soromenho moves from the early collection of short stories to his first novel dealing with witchcraft among African tribesmen, the function of landscape, scenery and natural background shifts radically. Where in Nhári their

depiction was an end in itself, in Noite de Angústia and all later fiction of this period, the external world of the African takes on a much more sinister and affecting role. Night becomes synonymous with fear; the reader is no longer regaled with moonlights and twinkling stars. Even in Nhárí, the author had communicated the primal relationship between man and the night: "A noite apavora o homen negro" (p. 84) but the theme was still the night. In Noite de Angústia, an almost identical phrase will be used: "A noite apavora o sertanejo" (p. 43), but this time, the theme is fear.

Throughout the novels and short stories of the black man's Africa, the elements of landscape and natural background--forest, plains, days, nights, sun, moon, rivers, animals--are present. They are, indeed, the principal external features of the African's world. But their importance is lessened as man and his ways come forth to center stage. Soromenho the humanist, delving into the humanity of Africa, has an appropriate use for nature and the elements: they become the props and the backdrop for the human drama.

Within the new landscape, African reality is now much more complex. The natural elements, rather than stand alone, are often blended with one another. In Noite de Angústia, for example, night falls and the scene is seconded by chirping crickets: "Negra, a noite tombara sobre a terra quente e silenciosa. . . . O grilo tornou a cricrilar e encheu de espanto a noite" (p. 76). This integration now becomes the

rule; compression of man's surroundings allows more latitude for the careful descriptions of his ways. Within the panorama, certain elements take on more importance than others. The crickets are secondary, as a night symbol, to the howling and baying of hyenas and wild dogs, animals who are always there. Presentiments of danger, catastrophe and death, they strike fear into the African and magnify the entire night/fear syndrome. In Calenga we find "um cão amarelo que . . . só uiva nas noites de luar, ou quando alguém morre na aldeia" (p. 119). Elsewhere in the same work: "Os cães selvagens . . . começaram a uivar às estrèlas" (p. 37). In Rajada, the blackness of night is metaphorically transposed with the darkness of the savannas as the dogs continue to howl: ". . . planície negra do céu. . . . Os cãis [sic] começaram a uivar" (p. 25). The same image reappears in Calenga, with the addition of one more element, the moon, "céu enluarado da planície" (p. 112), accompanied by the ubiquitous "uivos lamentosos dos caes selvagens" (p. 112). In Homens sem Caminho, "os cães ladraram ao vulto do sobeta" (p. 103). In that particular image, shadow and night are interchangable and the barking and howling are a de facto augury of the sobeta's impending doom. The compression of natural elements is intensified in Rajada, where the wind, howling in the night, sets off a multitude of jungle shrieks. "No silêncio da noite funda, os uivos da ventania acordaram todos os ecos da selva que . . . ainda ficaram a reboar nos ouvidos dos negros" (p. 25).

This juxtaposition of silence, wind and sound is a classic example of the author's sense of nature. What stands out in this sharp break in the night's silence is the sound of the jungle, reverberating in the ears of the black man long after the howling wind has died away.

Alone, the night is often contrasted with the brilliance of the moon or of the stars: "Noites brancas de luar" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 78) or "estrêlas que tremeluziam . . . pulverizando . . . o céu fundo" (Calenga, p. 84). At other times the weather itself is joined with that image: ". . . noites quentes de luar" (Calenga, p. 84) or "noites cálidas, brancas de luar" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 96). On the opposite end of that spectrum, the dark of night is heightened by mist and clouds: "Nas noites sem estrêlas, só negrume e nevoeiro" (Calenga, p. 153). This particular night, its blackness falling on darkness, presages the following day's battle, bringing the darkness of death and the blackness of slavery to the vanquished.

Withal, images of night are mere background in Homens sem Caminho; plot development in that work is concentrated in the actions of the characters: "Na noite cerrada, os homens fizeram altear as . . . fogueiras" (p. 86). Soromenho also alludes to the endlessness of night, not an unlikely metaphor for the African tribesman whose life is an eternal trek: "Se via o Sol estender-se . . . para logo se ir apagando no boqueirão da noite" (P. 86). On the same page, even the late afternoon sky with its castles of clouds is slowly cloaked in

darkness: "As trevas cresceram no céu e amortalharam os castelos de nuvens." The European image of clouds as castles in the sky recurs often, more as an oblique reflection of the intensity of the sky itself than anything else.

Sundown is still tinged with poetic imagery but there are merely fewer sunsets. In Calenga, "O sol começava a rolar na crista das ondas do capim dos longes da planície, lá onde o céu fecha sobre a terra" (pp. 145-146). The landscape and background are once again integrated. The result is a fusion of a setting sun, waves of elephant grass and distant savannas. A similar portrait appears in Noite de Angustia:

> Nos longes da charneca, o Sol, num fugidio poente de fantástica beleza, engolfou-se na sombra da noite. . . . É chegada a hora das hienas--sombras negras dos campos santos africanos, roubadores de cadáveres. . . . (p. 95)

In this triptych, Soromenho's broad strokes paint the vast steppes, the setting sun and the dark of night. He adds the hyena, not as a howling beast, but rather as a defiler of sacred burial grounds. Four elements of extra-human scenery are blended together to give us a sense of the desecration of hallowed sepulchers.

Sunrise can come simply, in one-word sentences such as "Amanhecia" (Noite de Angústia, p. 22). It also greets the reader in expanded poetic form, as in Homens sem Caminho: "O arco do Sol abriu-se" (p. 86) or Rajada: "O sol quebrou a linha azul do horizonte e derramou sobre a planície" (p. 56). The same idea is reworked later in Rajada as we see: ". . . na linha azul da terra longe, o sol abriu-se e golfou labaredas

que incendiaram o céu" (p. 132). And before the sunrise sends its flames to light the morning sky, the dawn comes quietly to the mist-covered pampas, where the capim is drenched in the early-morning dew.

The plains and the forests, now principally non-specific locations for plots and sub-plots, also become muted. The edge of the forest often opens on some kind of "campina com o horizonte perdido na terra longe" (Calenga, p. 56); the plains are always vast expanses of grasslands, lost on the distant horizon. The jungles, where the sun never enters, are engulfed in eternal night as the "endless night" of the muxito occurs over and over. Snake-like mists, inside the forests themselves, trace the paths of rivers and streams. So thick are these at times that a man cannot even see the palm of his hand.

Animals are everywhere. Hyenas and wild dogs howl continually, whether on the open plains or in the muxito. Often their cries are heard by the villagers as symbols of impending doom. The high capim of the steppes is as mysterious and hostile as the muxito itself, for in the capinzal awaits man's most dangerous enemy, the snake. Birds, too, are constant fixtures. They either flit from tree to tree singing happily or fly away suddenly when strange noises disturb the jungle's tranquility "enchendo a noite come o seu pio cruciante" (Noite de Angústia, p. 110). In all the novels and stories, the chirping cricket is the only animal at peace with himself.

Because peace is not a theme of African life, their appearance is rare. In sharp contrast are the dogs and hyenas: "Os cães uivavam lùgubremente pelos caminhos desertos das aldeias" (Noite de Angústia, p. 37) and the "uivo dos cães selvagens . . ." (Calenga, p. 41). Other animals of the jungle and the plains run the gamut from antelopes who come to the river's edge to quench their thirst to all manner of "bichos ferozes da selva" (Rajada, p. 86).

The jungle flora is also present, although to a lesser extent, and the perfume of wild African flowers in full bloom becomes less intoxicating. As part of this change of focus, Soromenho mutes the flowers' colors. On the other hand, the element of weather is magnified in importance. Because of their influence on man's life, the effects of storms or blazing heat are minutely detailed. The morning sun is no longer described visually as tinging the blue sky with flame; it is its heat, forcing even small children to rest in the shade of village huts, that we feel. The light and heat of the sun are "crua e ardente" in Homens sem Caminho (p. 75), and grown men seek haven beneath the "chão sombreado pela melemba[13] do terreiro da aldeia" (Calenga, p. 119). Blistering heat also takes its toll of the African landscape. Flowers wilt, butterflies burn up and small birds, who have literally dropped

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[13]The melemba is the sacred genealogical tree of the African chiefs. Its function will be analyzed in the following chapter.

dead from the skies, are devoured by armies of red ants. The dry season is not only marked by excessive heat but, of equal importance to African life, by a lack of wind. Without wind there can be no hunt, for the African of the savannas sets fire to the capim of the plains to flush out and bring down the antelopes and buffalo which feed his people. The wind is vital in spreading the flames. Even the howling of dogs ceases to be heard during this season as they migrate elsewhere in search of prey. The hunter, too, is forced to journey far to bring back food to his hungry village.

The return of the winds brings the breath of life to all the jungle's inhabitants, man and beast alike. Flora and fauna begin to stir again on the planícies verdes and in the covis da floresta (Calenga, p. 96). The force of the sun in the dry season, although felt immediately, paralyzes everything below it in just two or three months. By contrast, the African storms of the rainy season strike quickly and savagely. The havoc they wreak ends in two or three days. The storms, then, are easily incorporated into the novelist's fiction because they blend so well with the other spurts of action so common to his plots. Thunder rumbles across bleak skies. Violent gusts of wind and repeated flashes of lightening lay bare "as planícies do céu e da terra. . . . E o trovão ribombou sobre a aldeia" (Rajada, p. 31).

Man's fear of storms equals, even surpasses, his fear of night. The storms are often messengers and instruments

of doom, the tangible anger of the gods. All the features of the tempest combine to terrify and destroy: "Uma nuvem rebentou . . . e o céu, riscado por uma faísca, começando a chover violentamente. . . . E . . . relâmpagos zebravam o céu." (Rajada, p. 85). To the night of the heavens and the perpetual night of the forests the author adds yet another, the night of the storm: "Só havia água e noite. A noite durou muitos dias" (Rajada, p. 98). The most vivid description of this holocaust of the elements also comes from Rajada:

> De repente, um golpe de vento atirou uma nuvem negra sôbre o sol. . . . Escureceu ràpidamente. Fêz-se noite. Longe ribombou um trovão. O vento abraçou as nuvens e estoirou-as. Serpentinas de fogo correram na noite de tempestade. . . .
>
> A tempestade corre veloz na planície negra do céu, iluminando-a . . . com a luz fugaz dos relâmpagos. . . .
>
> . . . Um relâmpago rasgou a falsa noite. (pp. 139-141)

In a few short sentences, wind, rain, thunder and lightning combine not to bring sustenance to the sun-parched grasslands but to terrify the African, and ultimately destroy his village. The devastation wrought by the storm is enormous. Huts lie in heaps, their conical roofs severed from paltry frames. Branches torn from the trees lie all about. Trees themselves are uprooted, and those too thick and strong to be disloged bear the wounds of the lightning's lash on their trunks. In Rajada the terreiro (the central clearing of the village) is "coberto de arvores derrubadas pelas faiscas e desgrenhadas pelo vento" (p. 11).

In our later analysis of African religion we will discuss the African gods who are, in the main, animistic symbols of

the natural elements in the African cosmos. The only god to play a dual role in that cosmos, however, is Cacone, god of rain and storms. As the storm god, he can change the destiny of an entire tribe in one upheaval. In Homens sem Caminho, for example, Cacone wreaks his vengeance on a tribe's melemba, its symbol of life, thusly: "O raio escachava-a, o vento despira-a e a chuva entoupeirara-se-lhe entre as raízes e comera-lhe a terra, obrigando-a a tombar" (p. 205).

In sum then, landscape and scenery, which are primary in Nhárí because the drama of African man has not yet come on stage, move quickly into the background of Soromenho's subsequent novels and short stories. Night and day, sun, moon and stars, forests and plains, scorched elephant grass and deluged villages, flowers, trees, animals, birds and butterflies--all are part of the African panorama. Their respective importance, however, is not inherent but rather a function of the role they play in the lives of African man.

African life is the foremost theme of all the fiction of Soromenho's first period, and a most important element of that theme is the physical setting and structure of the African village. Nhárí and the first editions of the novels, Noite de Angústia[14] and Homens sem Caminho,[15] are replete with

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[14]Porto: Livraria Civilização, 1940.

[15]Lisbon: Portugália, 1942.

italicized and footnoted Africanisms relating to both the village and African social institutions. In the second edition of Noite de Angústia,[16] the italics are retained but the footnotes have been condensed into a glossary at the end of the book. The second edition of Homens sem Caminho[17] continues to italicize Africanisms but the glossary has been omitted. The third and fourth editions of both novels[18] are almost bereft of italics altogether. Clearly, certain African concepts cannot be translated, while other words are retained for stylistic purposes. In describing villages, the author progressively deletes gratuitous African terminology as he becomes more comfortable with his material. It is a gradual refinement of technique in which Soromenho's craft evolves from the exotic and alien particular to the conceptual universal.

According to the anthropologists, "early villages in Angola had been concentrated along the river valleys since neolithic times."[19] Since some of Soromenho's tribes have barely left the neolithic stage of development, that distinction in African terms becomes even more important. The villages of

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[16] 2nd ed. rev., Lisbon: Inquérito, 1943.

[17] 2nd ed., Lisbon: Inquérito, 1946.

[18] 3rd edition in Histórias da Terra Negra, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Gleba, 1960), vol. 2; 4th ed. of Noite de Angústia, 1965; 4th ed. of Homens sem Caminho, 1966.

[19] Miller, n. 7, pp. 35-36.

the Lunda and their "relatives" are included among those concentrated along the river valleys. The location was a matter of simple survival, the rivers providing water, food and arable land. The soil at river's edge was highly fertile and small gardens flourished. The village itself, for defense against the encircling muxito, was built somewhat back from the river. The Lunda villages, indiscriminately denominated aldeia, senzala, povoação, aldeola, povoado, and taba (the last a misnomer because it is a Brazilian word for Tupí-Guaraní villages), are unchanged throughout the author's works. In Noite de Angústia, a typical village has its huts "espalhadas na parte superior da vertente da colina que morre junto das águas do Mussangueje" (p. 32). While men sleep in their huts, Soromenho's camera-eye scans the rest of the village and shows the reader

> . . . a chota no centro, e por trás das cabanas a paliçada a cintar a senzala. As casas do soba e de sua família, com as melembas à frente, formava uma pequena aldeia dentro da povoação. (p. 80)

Just as there are six or seven random words for village, so too will huts be described. We find cubata, colmado, choupana, cabana, palhota, and tugúrio (of all, the most European). The one term which most approximates the true form of the hut is colmado, the conical, thatched-roof hut of the savannas. These huts are rather low, as we can see in Noite de Angústia when the slave girl, Ivenga, has to bend down "para não bater a cabeça no capim da choupana" (p. 12). There is no direct reference to circumference but it was probably quite small.

Inside we find only mats woven of palm leaves for sleeping and a small brazier for warming the African when the nights turn cold. Many of the huts have alpendres, patio-type structures with small, quadrangular roofs supported on either side by slender stakes. The huts have doors which all face east, for reasons which are never explained, although that particular fact is repeated in four different places.

The geographic center of the village is the terreiro, a large, cleared village square. All movement within the village leads to and from the terreiro. The clearing is not merely an open space around which the huts have been built, for in its center is the symbolic epicenter of the village, the chota. Also cone-shaped, as is the colmado, this structure has no walls. Its openness is a symbol of the expanse of both the plains and the sky. In the very center of the chota is the "sacred circle" of the village. The reader is never told the true function of this circle except perhaps by inference, as a housing for the fogo puro (to be detailed in the following chapter). The chota is the center of all social life in the village and, as we shall see, has a symbolic importance equal to that of the soba himself. At night, when an entire village falls under the spell of collective fear and the villagers are afraid to return to their individual huts, they all sleep together under the roof of the chota. Fires are another constant in the African village, as much to repel the animals of the night as to warm the men squatting around them as they tell

stories, sing songs, plan hunts and wars, and invoke the gods. The ritual dances, the batuques, are performed outside the chota, in the terreiro. (They, too, will be examined extensively in the following chapter.) The village is surrounded by a tall, stockade-like fence to protect its inhabitants from enemies both human and animal.

Each man in the village has his own hut, save the soba, who has many. His place of residence is known as a banza or compound and consists of an unspecified number of huts, to house his many wives. The banza usually occupies the highest ground in the village. The soba, huddling with his councillors, sometimes conducts tribal business in his compound; more often the chota is the scene of such activity. Just outside the banza is the soba's principal symbol of royal authority, his genealogical tree, the melemba. Sprinkled randomly within and outside the village are the mahambas, small shrines which house the spirits of the dead.

Some distance from the village, at water's edge, are the small plots whose crops are the staples of the village diet. Tied to the one tree left standing at the waterfront for just that purpose are the small, fragile dugout canoes used by the Africans for short trips on the river, the dongos. The only other means of water transportation mentioned anywhere are the jangadas, which were built for the specific purpose of crossing a river to attack an enemy tribe.

When Soromenho writes about people other than the Lunda, as in his story whose locale is the slave market of the Bangala of Cassange, he views the differences in their villages as metaphors of tribal distinction. The Bangala live in a village "no fundo do covão" (Rajada, p. 109), implying an evolutionary process related to the commerce which they control. Also, Cassange is far to the west of the central savannas, and it is not unnatural for the village to conform to its geographical demands. The rich and powerful sobas who come from far away to the slave market to buy beautiful Bângala women put up their huts, after their fashion, much as European kings and princes pitched their tents at the medieval fairs of Europe. "Os machados e as catanas dos servos dos sobas . . ., vibram a sagrarem as árvores com que se constroem as palhotas da gente grada, . . ." (Rajada, p. 114). Although these sobas come from many different tribes in the jungle, the author makes no distinction here as to type of hut. In this story such detail would be irrelevant and detract from the plot.

There are two peoples in Soromenho's stories whose villages are quite different from the basic Lunda model, and their description is again a metaphor of dissimilitude. The Calambas, the tribe led by the king, Calenga, in the story of the same name, are unusual folk in that they live in carved-out ant hills: "A aldeia dos calambas não tinha palhota. As suas habitações tinham sido abertas em pequenos morros de salalé" (p. 23). Calenga had the honor of living in the highest

ant hill of all. The author informs us that these people killed the ants only if the latter burrowed out into the habitations; otherwise the ants were left alone to enlarge the ant hill--which would be taken over by a Calamba if he became wealthy enough to buy a second wife. To distinguish ant hill from human abode, the Calamba would decorate the outside of his part of the "house" with antelope horns. This village, too, was ringed by a palisade of trees and separated from the savanna by a river.

The second tribe, a sub-group of Lubas, leave their parched lands and follow their soba, Cassongo, eastward towards "the mountains of the moon." Having departed the protection of the muxito, the most rational place to build a new village becomes the top of a mountain. The final decision to build there is made by the soba, we are told, because the land is fertile and the game plentiful.

Soromenho's African village, in general, can best be understood as a series of concentric circles. The innermost is the "sacred circle" in the center of the chota; girdling the chota is the terreiro, at whose outer perimeter are the thresholds of the alpendres which protrude from the cubatas of the villagers. Behind these cubatas and the soba's banza is the wooden fence, sometimes called a sebe, which circumscribes the entire village. The outermost ring is, of course, the jungle itself. The importance of the muxito as a defensive barrier cannot be underestimated; certain forests were so dense

and vast that some tribes living in them not only had not explored them fully but had never seen the plains beyond.

Soromenho creates a very vivid sense of the external world of his characters. We come to know the form and shape of the village as well as the landscape. But the principal focus remains African man. Villages, jungles, rivers and plains serve only to place that man in his world. What most interests the author is how his subjects live--what are their customs, traditions, histories, tribal structures, religion, etc. These are the elements that most fascinated Soromenho, the amateur ethnologist turned novelist. At times the African way of life is so important to him that he will even subordinate his plots to detailed portrayals of social interaction.

The day-to-day life of Lunda, Quioco, Luba and other closely-related Central African peoples was as much confined by the natural world as it was by rigid institutional structures and beliefs. As in most societies, these latter are attempts to rationalize the world outside, to explain phenomena which the African fears because he cannot understand them. To control, or at least compensate, for his ignorance, he placed his faith in gods and sobas. The internal equilibrium of this process, the "how" of daily living in Africa, became for Soromenho the most important theme to be conveyed to the European reader. The motive underlying that passion, as has been stated, was the author's attempt to rationalize the two worlds through the universality of human experience. The African's side of that

experience emerges most clearly from the political and social structure of the tribe, as seen through Soromenho's eyes. Our examination will concentrate on the soba, who rules by a kind of "divine right" and, as chief of the tribe, is a metaphor for all the peoples in Soromenho's fiction. The group or tribe is a coherent entity and views itself in those terms. That view will be reflected in the works under scrutiny. We not only come to understand the soba in terms of his person and position, but we are also given a superbly clear picture of his relationships with his council of elders, his people and most importantly, the gods from whom his ultimate authority derives.

CHAPTER 6

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE TRIBE

The soba is the principal character in all of Soromenho's pre-colonial fiction, from Noite de Angústia through Calenga, because his fate is the fate of the tribe. As long as the gods favor him, his powers over life and death are absolute. But because he is also a man of Africa, his reliance on the supernatural strictly governs his decisions and actions. He is, in most cases, responsible to a council of elders but as long as his main authority symbol, the melemba tree, continues to foliate beside his compound, he is not bound by their advice.

Some of the principles which govern the acquisition and preservation of the title of soba are noteworthy. Most of the societies of the savanna were organized on a matrilineal basis, with descent and inheritance passed on through the women while forms of authority were retained by the men. The social pyramid of a typical village was usually topped by a group of full brothers, followed by a succeeding generation of their sisters' children, their nephews. According to Miller, the peoples of the savanna

> visualized their society as a set of named roles, personalized social statuses associated with defined rights and obligations, which living individuals might temporarily assume to the exclusion of any other person. . . . This . . . resulting network of named roles has been termed "perpetual kinship" in Central Africa.[1]

Heirs succeeded to the named roles when they occupied the position and exercised the attendant duties and obligations. In anthropological terms, this is "positional succession."

The "first" senior member of a tribe or descent group is defined in African oral genealogies as the man who originally separated that group from a related tribe (for whatever reasons), bringing his particular descent group to the lands they now occupied. His most important responsibilities in this new position included finding land suitable for agriculture, insuring the fertility of the women thereby perpetuating the descent group, bringing the rains and providing for plentiful supplies of game. To do this he

> stood as an intermediary between the living lineage members and the dead occupants of the same position, the ancestors who collectively represented the spiritual dimension of each title. . . . His was the position on which the social and ritual life of the lineage turned.[2]

Among all the peoples of the savannas, the Lunda, Quioco and others, this mode of lineage was basically the same.

The authority of the head of each descent group, the soba in our context, was always connected with the melemba

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[1]Miller, p. 45.

[2]Ibid., pp. 46-47.

tree which was planted in front of his residence. Miller points out that

> the practical facts that the branches of this tree rooted themselves when placed in the ground and grew rapidly . . . assumed some significance for the shifting agriculturists who moved their villages every few years.[3]

Here the reference is to pre-historic times, circa 1500, but the symbolic importance of the melemba evolved, as we shall see.

The authority of the soba resided principally in his ability to conjure up the gods to aid him in the performance of his duties; it "inhered not in human beings but in the authority emblems associated with the title."[4] It is in this specific context that the fate of the soba's melembas became the fate of the soba and ultimately of the tribe. While authority derived from this tree, it was also closely connected to the soba's ancestors, who collectively symbolized that authority because they had been previous holders of the position. It was through the melemba that the soba gained access to the spirits of his ancestors, thereby asserting his authority to rule.

Once we understand the dual foundations of perpetual kinship and positional authority, we more easily recognize the importance of Castro Soromenho's works as true reflections

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[3]Ibid., p. 48.

[4]Ibid., p. 52.

of the realities of his characters' lives. In fact, what most strikes the reader is not so much Soromenho's plots as his detailed descriptions of African institutions. It is fair to say that he paints much better pictures of people as figures within the tribal structure, responding to their various positions, responsibilities and obligations, than he does his characters as literary creations. This is, of course, the logical outcome of his decision to communicate African civilization to his Portuguese readership by establishing the validity of its political and social institutions. By detailing these in all their complexity, the author seduces his readers into an a priori acceptance of his thesis: Africans are real people, with real values and real societies, just like the white folk in Europe. Their way of doing things is a little different (although a comparative social study not biased by certain structural methodologies would probably dispute that assertion) and, from the European standpoint of the 1940's, more than a trifle backward. But above all else, Soromenho was a clever man, a good writer who knew how to mold his material subtly enough so as never to have to say: Except that the color of their skin is different, and they live on another continent, and their ways of life are strange to us, these people are just like you and me.

Most of the author's sources of information, as has been noted, came from Dias de Carvalho. But whereas that famous Portuguese explorer could only copy down what he was told by Lunda and Quioco griots and chiefs, in dry and

uninteresting diary-like prose, Soromenho took that same material and breathed life into it through his fiction. He remained faithful to the spirit of the stories transcribed by Dias de Carvalho but, as an artist, he created at every turn the opportunity to transmit the essence of African life through literature.

Analyzing this technique then, one must first question the veracity of the sources. The more this writer has researched those sources, the more convinced he has become that Soromenho relied heavily on secondary ones and only mildly on primary ones. What about the veracity of Dias de Carvalho's work? We have already seen him upheld by Miller and Osorio de Oliveira but how valid was the material given him by his Lunda and Quioco hosts? Miller asserts generally, and we concur, that

> Wherever institutions have survived for a long time, they have tended to preserve the concomitant oral evidence of . . . very early . . . social and political forms. . . . Documentary sources show that the dominant institutions of the late nineteenth century (states, lineages, etc.) had become established at best by the mid-1500's. . . .
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> . . . Since social and political changes tend to cause old versions of traditions to disappear, those remaining would seem to describe historical events . . . with a high degree of accuracy. Thus, interpretations of traditions describing the origins of kings' titles which still exist today (or existed at the end of the nineteenth century) carry a relatively high probability of veracity.[5]

(The key to the above is "interpretations of traditions.")

Soromenho, making no pretense to being a structural anthropologist, does not offer interpretations to his readers.

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[5]Ibid., p. 15.

He accepts unquestioningly the information culled from Dias de Carvalho but he transmutes it into palpable reality through fiction. As true as the "facts" of Lunda and Quioco history and institutions might have been for the Portuguese explorer of Katanga, and through him for Soromenho, it must be remembered that those facts were recounted with certain inherent and inevitable biases. Miller explains it thus:

> . . . oral traditions are histories of groups (general, local and familial, . . .) and strongly reflect the state of . . . social and political structures at the time they are recited. They further refer selectively to only certain part of the past, . . . [historians] view past centuries through the prism of social and political conditions of their own time, seeking the origins of descent groups, political titles and structural relationships which have importance in the present.[6]

History, for Soromenho's subjects, is the preservation of

> only those events which established precedents influencing contemporary behaviour patterns (e.g. lineages A and B regard each other as enemies; the modern holder of an ancient political title plays a specified role at the king's courts; lineage C occupies the lands of lineage D subject to specified conditions, . . .).[7]

Although Miller concentrates primarily on the Mbundu, he finds that their historical and genealogical ties with the Lunda and Quioco validate his assumptions about them, as well as about other peoples of the Central Savanna. The fact that the histories recounted to Dias de Carvalho, and later fictionalized by Soromenho, were so present-oriented indicated that the events which occurred before the times of the oral historian

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[6]Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[7]Ibid., p. 14.

became timeless ones, lost in the ahistoric past. Miller's final observation is of the greatest relevance here.

> Although the traditions provide a fairly coherent picture of the development of political institutions, they have almost nothing to say about individuals. . . . Most previous writing . . . has tended to interpret the traditions literally . . .; in fact, the recoverable history . . . deals almost exclusively with dynasties (rather than kings), officers (not officials), and emblems of authority (rather than holders of authority). . . .
>
> . . . The knowable history . . . deals only with idealized versions of reality, ...[8]

In other words, all the histories of the inhabitants of the savanna as related by the chiefs and elders to their successors and eventually to the white man were already fictional in nature. Accepting Miller's conclusions, it becomes apparent that our author did not so much fictionalize reality as he created a new reality through art. With most of its pieces plucked from the tombs of an explorer's memoirs, Soromenho's fiction is not once but twice-removed from the "fact" (excluding his direct sensory contact with African life and traditions, for the moment).

The writer has had special reason for laying this theoretical foundation for what is to follow. Since this study of African life as seen by Soromenho is essentially a descriptive one, interpretative points of reference will serve to heighten the reader's appreciation of the author's insight.

Soromenho is, without doubt, among those who have "tended to interpret the traditions literally." Indeed, he

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[8]Ibid., p. 12.

did interpret them literally, but in such a fashion as to make them transcend mere reporting. Therein lies his strength, and what will in due time become the recognition of his universality.

We have already discussed the physical structure of African villages as well as the natural elements surrounding them. We now examine the political and social structures of the people who inhabit them, as seen in the fiction of Castro Soromenho.

The term "positional succession" has already been discussed but its definition for the purposes of this study requires expansion. If we understand it as "the temporary dimension in which heirs succeeded to the named role of their predecessors,"[9] we know immediately who the soba or tribal chief was. That position within the lineage group carried certain very special responsibilities. Some of them, already mentioned en passant, will be repeated along with others previously omitted. The soba also carried out his responsibilities through authority symbols, which will become an important feature of our study.

To a greater or lesser extent, depending on certain external factors, the soba was aided in the exercise of his obligations by a council of elders. At various times the author will call these elders velhos, "homens bons da tribo,"

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[9]Ibid., p. 46.

ministros (in his very early works), and conselheiros. Their position within the tribe can be enhanced if a soba is sick, dying, or dead, just as it is diminished by the presence of a strong and healthy one. By and large, however, there is an equilibrium to their position within the tribe's political structure. The soba embodies the position of his ancestors by acting as the intermediary between the rest of the tribe and the spirits of those supernatural beings. The elders are the repositories of all the tribal customs become law, and ensure their enforcement in the "real" world. To a limited extent, the elders acted also as an intermediary between the soba and the people.

Two other important positions within the tribe, the hunter and the witchdoctor or medicine man, will be discussed later because they occupy spheres of action tangential to the soba and his councillors. This, albeit their action very often directly affected the soba's decisions, if not his very life.

Soromenho's sobas march before us in a variety of ways. We see them in victory and defeat, love and hate, anguish and comfort, fear and courage. Mostly, however, we see them as they wield their tremendous powers over the people they rule. This rule being predicated on authority symbols, it is useful to backtrack and carefully examine what those symbols were and how they were used.

In Soromenho's non-literate societies, objects were more important than persons. Authority was not an abstraction to be wielded by a soba because of his inherent position but rather a power which derived from the symbols he possessed. These he wore on his person, all the time, for all to see. Chief among Lunda authority symbols was the lucano, a bracelet made of the veins of defeated enemy chiefs or royal ancestors. The best description of lucanos comes in Calenga, where they are described as "essas famosas pulseiras feitas de veias humanas dos sobas vencidos" (p. 118). The authority behind the symbol was so powerful that in the novel Homens sem Caminho, reference is made to a Muatiânvua ("the king of Lunda kings") named Xanama who betrayed his entire people to their archenemy, the Quioco, just so he could continue to rule, even if only nominally. "E tudo, tudo Xanama lhes deu . . . para que ele continuasse a ostentar o lucano, símbolo da realeza lunda" (p. 14). In the absence of a king, one of the young warriors dreams of killing his chief and succeeding to the Suzerain title. In this dream Gando, the warrior, strangles the old chief, Camba-Camba, whereupon the latter's bracelets, as pulseiras reais, drop to the ground. To Gando they are worthless because when he becomes king, his own bracelets will be the most powerful of all. "Aqueles lucanos nao valiam nada. Os seus, sim, porque eram do Muatiânvua" (p. 94).

Chronologically, lucanos do not appear until Homens sem Caminho (1942). The only authority symbol associated with sobas

in Nhari (1938) and Noite de Angústia (1939) are the melembas, the royal genealogical trees (to be discussed later). This, in itself, is significant in that it rules out any intensive consultation of Dias de Carvalho by the author prior to 1941. That contention is strengthened further by the author's numerous articles on Lunda ethnography, which appear late 1941 and throughout 1942 in O Mundo Português and elsewhere. Furthermore, even the first mention of these bracelets in Homens sem Caminho is limited to three or four scenes. They will become a most significant feature in Calenga (1945), by which time Soromenho has fully digested and reworked his sources. A better understanding of the lucano as the principal symbol of authority will be gleaned from two descriptions of royal investiture in Calenga. That ceremony is the transmission of the authority symbol to the positional successor, the chief's sister's oldest son, prescribed in the matrilineal society of the Lunda and related tribes. Nhárí confirms that the author understood these lines of succession. In the first story in that collection, the disgraced soba Xá-Caongo is told that his genealogical tree will not again take root in his lifetime. A soothsayer implies, however, that his lineage group will not be wiped out if the leaves of the melemba are planted by his sister's son, "seu sobrinho e herdeiro" (p. 23). This same reference is repeated shortly thereafter: "Mundejálala, seu sobrinho e herdeiro" (p. 35). Positional authority and power as a function of matrilineal succession is revealed in the title story, where

a cruel young warrior tells a friend that he cannot sell his sister because "Meu tio já a deu ao velho" (p. 93). A footnote at the bottom of that page explains to the readers that "o poder da familia cabe inteiramente aos tios da linha maternal."

In Noite de Angústia, Soromenho expands upon the relationship of nephews to an uncle occupying the position of tribal chief. Xandumba, chief of one tribe and liege of many others, has named his nephew, Muaquife, as his successor "como preceitua a lei da tribo para defesa da legitimidade da familia reinante" (p. 33). Immediately, the chieftains (sobetas) of Xandumba's tribe "passaram a ouvir e a atender o Muaquife" (p. 33). This in turn causes great enmity between the heir apparent and another pretender to the position, Salemo, who "pelo lado de mãe, era do sangue do Muatiânvua, o rei dos reis lundas, como o Xandumba, e não podia ser tratado como qualquer chefe de pobretona senzala" (p. 33). Salemo was also a nephew of the soba, "embora filho de um irmão que desaparecera há muitos anos" (p. 34), and therefore barred from succession to his uncle's position. The normal tension between descent groups and positional authority is perfectly expressed in that plot development. How that confrontation takes place between the contending nephews, who carry the blood of both the Muatiânvua and soba, is, indeed, the plot of the entire novel. What Soromenho neglected to say as a writer, not being an anthropologist, was that Salemo should have gone

to live with his mother's oldest brother, where he too could have become soba through proper matrilineal succession.

Positional succession based upon perpetual kinship did not always give the people the best leaders for the descent group, nor were the principles of succession inviolable. Muaquife, for example, is characterized by one of the soba's councillors as vain, arrogant, boasting, "um palhaço a trepar para um trono, perdido, num mundo de audácia" (Noite de Angústia, pp. 28-29). Notwithstanding these unfortunate personality traits, however, Muaquife would succeed to his uncle's position, barring only grave transgressions against tribal laws or traditions.

Within matrilineal succession, primogeniture is the rule. A Lunda tribe in Homens sem Caminho is afraid of another war with the Quiocos because of the possibility of losing the chief's remaining nephews in battle. This would leave the tribe without any effective leadership whatever, as "o herdeiro do sobado, o sobrinho mais velho do Camba-Camba, há muito tempo fora morto" (p. 59). In Calenga, on the other hand, an aging soba begins to sing the praises of his eldest son. This is the first time the reader is presented with the possibility of patrilineal succession. (The tribe in question is the Luba, antecedents of the Lunda.) The use of the term "son," however, could imply merely a named role within the matrilineal descent group, since people might take on one or more permanent named roles or titles through positional succession. Each position

within the tribe might be held by different members at different times, and the holders of these positions "treated the occupants of 'brother' and other related positions as if they were biological relatives."[10] For Soromenho, the creation of a successor-son rather than a successor-nephew might have been a device to allow the reader to distinguish between Lubas and Lundas by employing successional patterns different from one another. The Luba chief, then, "começava falar no filho mais velho, que não tardaria em o substituir" (Calenga, p. 89). The salient point is that the chiefdom was inherited directly from an uncle or a father by the eldest nephew or the eldest son. The key to that succession was transmission of the authority symbol. Lunda and Quioco concepts of political succession "rested on the theory that the living occupant of a title ruled through his control of physical relics preserved from his predecessors."[11]

These relics did, indeed, vary from people to people. The Lunda had their lucanos or bracelets made of human veins, as we have seen, and the Luba used a different symbol, a sacred hatchet. A variation of the hatchet theme was the use of a magical knife as prime symbol of authority. Tribes sometimes used both, as do the Calambas of Calenga (who were Lundas under another name, for purposes of fiction).

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[10] Ibid., p. 46.

[11] Ibid., p. 259.

The Luba authority symbol is the chimbúia (hatchet) which Soromenho takes directly from Dias de Carvalho and italicizes throughout Calenga. He also employs the explorer's own translation, "machadinha de luxo." The status of the hatchet, or knife as the case may be, as compared with the Lunda lucano, seems also to have differentiated iron-age societies from neolithic ones. The distinction will come to play an important role in helping us to understand the marriage of the Luba prince Cibinda Ilunga to the Bungo (Lunda) princess, Lueji. That same prince's father had gained great fame as a hunter, using a lance "que herdara de seus maiores . . . que a tradição diz . . . o primeiro rei luba trouxera da região dos grandes lagos, . . ." (Calenga, p. 85). The simple description typifies a characteristic style of Soromenho's writing in which he manages to include, in one sentence, elements of ethnography (the hereditary lance as authority symbol), history (the first Luba king) and geography (the eastern reaches of the Central African plains, the "great Africa lakes" of Tanganyika, Nyassa, and so on).

Authority symbols could be passed on to an heir during the life of the reigning monarch or upon his death, as we shall see. They could also be transferred from one named successor to another when the older had decided, for whatever reasons, to relinquish his claims and migrate elsewhere. In Calenga, for example, Cassongo, the oldest son of the Luba king Mutombo Muculo, decides to leave Luba country and start

his descent group in lands not plagued by famine and drought. In order to insure protection of the original lineage group, there is a transfer of authority ceremony witnessed by the entire tribe. "Cassongo entregou, na presenca do seu pai e do povo, a chimbúia a Ilunga, para que ele o pudesse ficar a substituir junto do soba e lhe herdasse as terras" (p. 103). The meaning of this public ceremony becomes even clearer when we read that Ilunga is the third son of the king and is receiving the chimbúia because his next oldest brother, Canhúica, has also decided to abandon the land. "Ilunga levantou . . . a machadinha de luxo--símbolo da autoridade dos lubas--para que o povo logo o reconhecesse como Suana Mulopo de Mutombo Muculo" (p. 103).[12] Another example of transfer of authority while a king is still alive takes place in Calenga, where the dying Bungo (Lunda) potentate, Iala Macu, gives his lucano to his daughter after having disinherited his oldest son. In this instance there is one small but important twist: the princess can only act as guardian for the authority symbol until she finds the right husband, whereupon she is obliged to turn it over to him, as only a male can govern. ". . . ele tirou do braço o lucano e entregou-o a Lueji, para que o colocasse no braco do homen que viesse a ser o pai de seus filhos" (p. 149). This is yet another example of the typical tension in matrilineal societies between the principle of reckoning descent and

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[12]Dias de Carvalho, and consequently Soromenho, defines Suana Mulopo as "Crown Prince."

inheritance through women but leaving most forms of authority in the hands of men.

Nevertheless, authority transfer must take place upon the death of the authority-bearer, the title-holder himself. This ceremony is mingled with funeral rites for the dead soba and the concomitant ascension by his successor to the now-vacant position. The most detailed ritual of direct investiture appears in Calenga, and is heavily laden with many ethnographic elements. Because the investiture ceremony involves both the transfer of authority and the elevation of a new soba, it will be described in detail here. First, a brief preface.

There has been some prior discussion of a pretender's personality in Noite de Angústia but no mention has been made, either by the author or this writer, of the educational process of an heir apparent; in truth, such finer points are almost wholly absent from that novel. In Calenga, in contrast, Soromenho the ethnographer, well-steeped in the Ethnographia e História dos Povos da Lunda,[13] is at his finest.

Calenga, the heir apparent to the Calamba throne, had been inculcated with his responsibilities and obligations (as will be discussed later) from earliest youth. He was taught that he must always listen to the advice of the tribal elders and respect them as much as his father. He learned that only

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[13]Dias de Carvalho, Expediçao Portugueza . . .: Ethnografia . . . .

the elders knew the difference between Good and Evil and thus became the moral guardians of the people. "E por isso que eles são os homens bons da tribo" (p. 17). The elders taught him, among other things, that he must always love his people and hate those of any and all other tribes. Such an ethnocentric view of the world was a basic defense mechanism, being the sine que non of lineage group survival. Leadership, he was taught, consisted of being ready to protect one's people from everybody else and not hesitating to mercilessly destroy non-lineage groups. As a result, "Calenga quis ser guerreiro, como o foram os seus avós . . ., para matar todos os homens das tribos vizinhas e beber vinho de palma pelo crânio dos sobas mortos por suas mãos" (p. 26). Drinking palm-wine from the skull of an enemy chief probably symbolized the annihilation of his spirit, a very necessary act to protect oneself and one's people from potential hauntings.

The elders were not the only ones to instruct the young heir in his duties. The people themselves continually remind him of his basic obligation to supply them with sources of food. "E todos os calambas lhe ensinaram que a fome é o maior castigo dos deuses" (p. 38). Implicit in that lesson is the need for the pretender to be on the right side of the gods and follow the precepts of religion and law, which were often one and the same. Calenga is reminded that he might even be called upon to give his own life in order to save his people, just as one of his ancestors had done, "para salvar o seu

povo da escravidão" (p. 31). In an interdiction that is an augury of doom, he is reminded further that the sobas of the tribe are forbidden to leave their jungle lands because the gods of the forest control the paths leading westward, "ao Poente." This proscription emerged, no doubt, from centuries of peace and prosperity within the isolation of the jungle.

As a typical, young, Central African boy, Calenga must, like all others, undergo the rites of circumcision and initiation into the hunter's society.[14] The difference between his ceremony and that of his peers is the use of an ancient and unique Calamba authority symbol, a metal knife, to cut his pupice while the other boys are circumcised with a sharpened stone. "Os últimas sobas calambas tinham sido circuncisados com aquela faca, que era a única metal que possuîam" (p. 38).

As a hunter, and because his authority rested on the ability to invoke supernatural sanctions, he had to learn the use of magic fetishes early, for only they would help him in the hunt. The Africans believed, as we shall see, that supernatural powers alone led the hunter to succeed in his search for game. The pretender to the throne had to be the best hunter in the tribe, thereby proving his worthiness to lead. As his first test, Calenga has to kill an ocelot, skin it and bring the skin to his father, the soba. This is the most

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[14]Both of these rituals will be discussed later in this chapter.

difficult of tests for any hunter, because these people feared jungle cats more than any other animal save the snake. Only the intervention of supernatural powers would allow a hunter to overcome those fears and bag his feline prey, be it leopard, tiger, lion or ocelot. And because the animal itself was so feared, possession of its skin became a secondary authority symbol to be worn or sat on by a soba. In the people's minds, the use of such skins as authority symbols served to relate their fears of the animal with fear of the soba himself. This zoomorphic fear is articulated in Calenga, through the soba's sitting "sobre uma pele de leopardo" (p. 87) and is repeated, for emphasis' sake, shortly thereafter: "o soba veio sentar-se . . ., sôbre uma linda pêle de leopardo" (pp. 90-91). In Rajada, the ocelot skin becomes almost the primary authority symbol, as we are told of the soba whose leopard skin had been burned near a fire during a drunken orgy. With his authority symbol gone, this soba has become paralyzed in the exercise of his authority: "não podia assistir às reuniões, presidir aos julgamentos, nem tão-pouco entrar na roda do batuque e deixar-se ver pelos visitantes" (Rajada, p. 163). Indeed, this particular soba is so anxious to obtain a replacement, a new set of working clothes, as it were, that he sends a special message to a group of his hunters on the distant plains "para que lhe levassem uma pêle de onça, grande e bonita" (p. 163).

Returning to Calenga, whose first test of skill, bravery and command of the supernatural requires that he kill, skin and offer the ocelot to his father, "O môço sabia que não podia fraquejar . . ., proque o povo teria de ver nêle, que um dia seria seu soba, o homem mais valente da tribo" (p. 33). The author assures us that the hero meets the demands made of him and "Em poucos anos, Calenga tornou-se caçador e o homem mais valente do seu clã" (pp. 33-34).

Perhaps the most important lesson of royalty that Calenga learns in his early youth is his right and obligation to exercise absolute authority over the lives and bodies of his subjects. This lesson comes, as it must, from the king himself. The object of the king's example is a slave girl. A first reading of the episode might be viewed by the untutored as simply an indication of savage and abusive treatment accorded women, a thread not absent in Soromenho's writings. A closer study, on the other hand, reveals a much more subtle and complex interplay between father and son. A young, nude slave girl is ordered to bring some palm wine to the soba. As she kneels at his side, her eyes fixed to the ground, he begins to fondle her breasts. The young Calenga smiles, and the father prides himself on his son's reaction. "É meu filho," he says. However, his purpose is more devious than to teach the young man how to fondle women. He starts to rub the slave girl's nipples, squeezing them harder and harder, until he draws a drop of blood. The slave remains silent, bearing her pain with dignity,

and Calenga begins to smile somewhat nervously. Suddenly, the soba digs his long nails into the slave's breast, precipitating a copious flow of blood. The young Calenga reaches out instinctively to protect the girl from further harm but his father slaps his hands away fiercely. As he roars with laughter, the slave grits her teeth in agony but utters not a sound, and Calenga starts to cry. He will learn his lesson well, as we shall see, by the time of his accession. To confirm this interpretation of the aforementioned scene as a lesson in power rather than maltreatment of a slave, the writer relies on a different description of the relationship between slave and master which appears very shortly after the episode above: "Quando no celeiro do escravo ja não havia um pedaço de inhame, na casa do soba também se passava fome" (p. 29).

When Calenga's father dies, his body is placed on a bier in the terreiro of the village and the transfer of the lucano takes place before the entire tribe. In what would seem to the uninitiated a somewhat bizarre ritual (which pales in comparison to some Bantu funeral rites, wherein the surviving spouse must have ritual sexual intercourse with the deceased), Calenga grasps his dead father's hands and, without letting go, slides the bracelets off the dead man's arm and up onto his own. He does this in such a fashion that all the people bear witness to "as pulseiras reais transitarem de um braço para o outro das mãos dadas" (p. 36). Calenga then lifts his arm over

his head to show the people that he now wears the lucanos. The assembled multitude roars its approval. "E, assim, Calenga se tornou o soba" (p. 36). The simplicity is only apparent; there are further and complex ceremonies to be performed before Calenga truly becomes soba. Taking on the bracelet, which embodied the supreme Lunda political authority, has symbolized the legitimacy of Calenga's ascension to power but is only the first stage of the ritual.

After what is probably a brief ceremonial mourning period (normal mourning could go on for days and even months), Calenga then puts on what this writer has chosen to call secondary authority symbols: "Calenga cingiu aos quadris a pêle de leopardo e empunhou a faca que herdara com os lucanos" (pp. 36-37). Soromenho calls the leopard skin and knife "symbols of Calamba royalty," but since the Calamba are an early Lunda group, the same symbols will be used by the latter. Miller says of the knife that it was "everywhere used as an emblem of appointive authority."[15] The knife, too, could have been another form of the chimbúia, "the . . . hatchet which still survives as an important symbol of political power among the Cokwe."[16] The same Quioco knife is referred to in

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[15]Miller, p. 157.

[16]Ibid., p. 127. "Cokwe" is an English rendition of Quioco. Other writers in English use "Chokwe."

Rajada, where someone kills a soba with his own knife, "a faca que é o ceptro dos reis quiocos" (p. 139).

Now the new soba must perform yet another ritual. For this part of the investiture, Calenga comes out to the terreiro with his chest painted red, "tatuado, mostrando uma serpente enroscada sôbre o coraçãão" (p. 38). (The snake is a most important creature for the peoples of the Central Savannas and its appearances in Soromenho's prose are distinctive and rare. As we shall see later, snakes "embodied potentially hostile supernatural beings."[17]) The snake tatoo on Calenga's chest implied his domination of its evil spirit as well as his ability to hunt it down and kill it. The mere wearing of the symbol, as with the leopard skin, made him magically immune from attack. Appearing before the crowd thus adorned, Calenga raises his arms and flashes his knife in the sun. The people immediately drop to their knees while rubbing dirt on their chests in "humble greeting." They remain in that position, eyes tightly shut, for an indeterminate period. Calenga then begins to invoke the spirits of his ancestors without whose guidance and instruction he will not be able to rule.[18]

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[17]Ibid., p. 134.

[18]We have already alluded to the role of ancestors "being" the position of the incumbent, as well as guiding his actions. The author had alerted his readers to this phenomenon as far back as Nhári, where he described a soba who was prohibited from returning to the land he had abandoned because "era-lhe vedado pela imperiosa vontade dos sobas mortos" (p. 15).

During the entire invocation all the people remain on their knees, eyes closed and heads touching the ground, save one poor unfortunate who makes the mistake of looking up. His fate is sealed as "Calenga saltou um grito e apontou a faca ao homen que ousara erguer-se e olhá-lo. . . . Então, Calenga avancou em sua direcção, . . ." (P. 38). A village elder peeks out of the corner of his eye and catches Calenga in the act of slitting the transgressor's throat. That becomes Calenga's first sacrifice in honor of his forbears and it matters not at all that the man he killed, one Dombo, had been his best friend. "Matou o amigo e estava cheio de alegria, porque o seu braço não vacilara" (p. 39). Only now did Calenga feel that the spirits of his ancestors would protect him. At that instant, more than ever, "êle se sentiu homen!" (p. 39). With that one ritual sacrifice, Calenga had earned "temor, o respeito e a admiração do povo, proque soubera sacrificar o seu maior amigo aos seus grandes antepassados" (p. 39).

Ritual sacrifice was by no means an uncommon phenomenon in Central Africa, any more than it had been among the Aztecs or the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent in Abraham's times. Its meaning to the African of the savannas, however, may have been somewhat different. Ritual sacrifice established the soba as almost super-human, thereby qualifying him to assert his authority and rule his less endowed subjects. (In dealing with magic and witchcraft as a separate social institution, we will further expound upon the supernatural. For the moment,

suffice it to say that the demonic qualities attributed to a soba were as important as those possessed by witchdoctors in helping the African control, to the limited extent that he did, the world around him.) This description of ritual murder is seconded by Miller:

> A new . . . king . . . always sacrificed a human being at his installation. . . . Human sacrifices during a king's initiation . . . occurred . . . to demonstrate the ruler's powers of life and death over his peoples. . . . Kings usually took the life of their human sacrifices with a special sacred weapon. . . .[19]

In this case, the sacred weapon was the only knife the Calambas had, the knife which had been used in just one other ceremony, the circumcision of former sobas. By successfully and remorselessly slitting his friend's throat, Calenga had shown his people that he did indeed command the spirits residing in the sacred knife. Dombo's death reflected the ability of these same spirits to punish as well as protect the Calambas.

The investiture rite was incomplete without a touch of ritual cannibalism. Tradition required that "the king and his advisers extended this common ceremony [i.e., human sacrifice] to include consumption of a part of the body."[20] The scene in Calenga is rendered as follows: "Os velhos cozinhavam as pernas de antílope e uma de Dombo. . . . E pela noite . . ., o soba e o povo comeram as pernas do sacrificado"

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[19]Miller, p. 247.

[20]Ibid., p. 248.

(p. 40). As if to exculpate, a priori, his beloved Lundas, and by inference prevent their being confused with other truly anthropophagous tribes to the west, Soromenho assures his readers that this cannibalism occurs only at investitures and "não voltaria a ser praticado em vida do soba" (p. 40). Behind the soba's powers of life and death lay the fear he instilled in the people. Calenga kills for ritual purposes only once, during his accession, to indicate to his subjects that they should fear him from the very beginning of his reign. He and his fellow sobas have other means at hand to keep that fear alive in the hearts of their subjects. The sobeta, Djálala, in Homens sem Caminho, for example, is feared by his slaves not so much because he is their master (reason enough for fear under normal circumstances) but because of the power he exercises over all his subjects. In his own land he was soba, and could "mandar chicotear vassalos e vendê-los como escravos" (p. 78).

Like all other Lunda ceremonies, the investiture is followed by a ritual dance, the batuque. Calenga becomes a true soba only when, during the dance, he takes his pleasure with various women "sobre o capinzal." Now his real education at the hands of the elders must begin. Only he can wield the authority of his position because only he, in the final analysis, is charged with guiding the destiny of his people and insuring the continuity of the descent group. He leaves his own hut and goes to live with the elders who now instruct

him in the ways of kings. His rule must be guided by the traditions of the past, which are tied to the three linchpins of lineage perpetuation: "os sábios conselhos dos grandes sobas . . ., os augúrios dos feiticeiros e as façanhas dos caçadores" (p. 41). By obeying the first two and facilitating and encouraging the third, the soba will have met his obligations as leader of his people. On a less philosophical plane, sobas can best serve their peoples by "mandarem matar os homens rebeldes . . ., queimar vivo o feiticeiro que espalha terror entre o povo e . . . expulsar das aldeias as mulheres casadas que não teem filhos" (p. 120).

Thus far, we have analyzed only one particular act of succession, that which involved direct physical transmission of the lucano authority symbol from a dead soba to his heir. We now turn to a different type of succession, indirect and highly complex, because it is the basis of Soromenho's version of the founding of the Lunda and Quioco states.

We have already discussed how Lueji, the daughter of Iala Macu, received her father's lucano in trusteeship for the man who would sire her children. Transmission of the Luba authority symbol, the chimbúia (hatchet), from Cassongo, son of the Luba king Mutombo Muculo, to his younger brother, Ilunga, has also been mentioned. In space and time, these are not two disparate actions relating to two separate customs of succession. They are, rather, the groundwork for the unification of two peoples, recounted in traditional form in

terms of a marriage between Lueji and Ilunga. A short synthesis of the story is useful, as this point, for the reader to understand how this marriage, or merger, came about.

At the headwaters of the Calânhi (Kalanyi) River, deep in Katanga, the first king of the Lundas, Iala Mácu, ruled. He is said to have fathered two sons, Quinguri and Iala and a daughter, Lueji. Reference has already been made to the fact that Quinguri had been disinherited by his father in favor of his younger sister. Quinguri, Soromenho tells us, was a drunkard, a sot and general ne'er-do-well. He has also led his younger brother astray. His exploits are carefully detailed in the story, "Lueji e Ilunga na Terra de Amizade," in Calenga.[21] Iala Macu, the king, lives a rather peaceful life in his old age, weaving mats in front of his compound. He greets visiting vassals seated thusly and continues to exercise his authority over them and all his peoples. Iala Mácu's vassals pay strict attention to his advice, heed his warnings on how to govern, and reverentially pay him special homage by called him "Xacala."[22] The figurative interpretations of this change of name which have been interpolated from time to time are

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[21]Page numbers for all further citations from Calenga will appear in the text.

[22]Dias de Carvalho explains the meaning of that title as follows: "a transposição d'estes vocabulos (maku iala) e a sua reducção, transformaram-no em macala (makala) e como Xa e titulo de respeito para com os velhos, muitos passaram a intitular aquelle chefe Xa Macala . . ., que com o tempo se reduziu ainda a Xacala. . . ." Ethnografia . . ., ibid., p. 60.

enlightening, since they permit us to understand Iala Mácu in terms of a positional, political title.

> A set of perpetual named positions . . . provided the underlying unity for Lunda lineages on the Kalanyi. . . . comparison of genealogies . . . reveals the existence of a single senior title which the Lunda ranked above several related, but subordinate positions. This set of Lunda political titles pivoted on a figure . . . called . . . Yala Mwaku; in any case, the position is depicted as the sire of such other positions as the kinguri, the kinyama and the Lueji.[23]

The same historian, Miller, interprets the name change as a resurrection of a former title under a new name. Be that as it may, the fictional rendition gives Iala Mácu the nickname of Xacala.

An attempt to fix an historical time for these changes, for the sake of that perspective, is most difficult but "two centuries or more might not fall far short of the mark."[24] Such an analysis is important to this section of the study because it affords the reader an understanding of Soromenho's use of endless time. We see it as a form of literary "ahistoricity" bounded by a very real time frame.

The thread of the story continues with Iala Macu having decided that Quinguri could never be his successor "porque o povo o odiava" (p. 129), among other things. Iala Mácu decides that upon his death, his sister's oldest son will succeed him, "gente do seu sangue" (p. 129). This would seem to indicate

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[23]Miller, p. 118.

[24]Ibid., p. 130.

some confusion in Soromenho's mind regarding the laws governing succession among the people he calls the Bungos (an early Lunda group). Iala Mácu on the one hand decides to follow the matrilineal tradition but, in fact, gives his "daughter," Lueji, his lucanos in patrilineal fashion. The author goes on to relate how the king's two sons return to the village one day in a drunken stupor and demand their father give them what they believe to be a jug of palm wine lying at his feet. He ostensibly refuses and the two proceed to pummel him so severely that he dies shortly thereafter. On his deathbed, however, the old soba dictates his last will and testament to the elders of his tribe:

> Repudiou Quinguri e Iala e indicou para lhe suceder sua filha Lueji, pedindo que todos a reconhecessem com o título de Suana Murunda-Senhora das Terras. Mas como ela era muito nova, os sobas deviam-na guiar com os seus bons conselhos e defenderam-na de Quinguri (p. 148).

An historical interpretation of this incident sees it as a struggle for power between the lineages led by the Kinguri and those led by the Lueji. The victor is of course the Lueji, who succeeds to the senior status of Yala Mwaku.[25] Furthermore, Iala Mácu's death has even wider meaning than simply the assassination of an incumbent soba. "The 'death' of a position in a genealogy consisting of permanent named titles signified

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[25]"The kinguri's assault on the Yala Mwaku had initiated fundamental changes in Lunda political structures which culminated in a new and more centralized state dominated by the Lueji position." Miller, p. 125.

that its enemies destroyed its authority emblems and ritually eliminated it from the political structure to which it had belonged."[26] It should be understood that Soromenho's narrative portrays not a direct succession, but rather a regency. The tribal elders, now regents, are called tubungos, "os velhos sobas, venerados como deuses, que velam pela execução das sagradas leis da tribo" (p. 205). Although the tubungos allowed Lueji a form of technical overlordship, as Senhora das Terras, they moved into her village to keep control of the lucano as well as the affairs of state. Dias de Carvalho's version follows.

> Morreu . . . o Xacala . . ., e os muatas (sobas) dos diversos estados agora unidos, tendo em muita consideração as suas últimas vontades e receando dos maus instinctos dos filhos . . . deliberaram que . . . todos elles, como fazendo parte da côrte, tivessem os seus representantes com famílias . . ., e que Lueji nomeasse, de entre elles muatas, quem fizesse as vezes de Xacala e ainda outras auctoridades que vigiassem pela sua segurança.[27]

Quinguri would seem to have accepted this situation, at least as far as Soromenho is concerned, because we follow him off to war, sack, pillage, rape, and looting as he spreads fear and loathing throughout the land. In point of historical fact, he had lost his battle to gain control of the lucano and both he and his brother were therefore excluded from the new Lunda confederation which arose after the death of Iala Mácu. Soromenho

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[26]Miller, p. 124.

[27]Dias de Carvalho, pp. 63-64.

still calls these peoples Bungos, as did Dias de Carvalho, but tribal names which go back in "idealized" history some four hundred years are not entirely reliable. Whatever the people called themselves, as related four hundred years later by Lunda and Quioco griots to Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, they were shortly (give or take a century) to become Lundas.

Returning to the plot of our story, Lueji now presides over the government of her peoples with the help of her regents, the tubungos, in the much-enlarged town of Calânhi. Aside from the lucano entrusted to her by her father, she has a secondary authority symbol, a "cadeira de madeira negra, coberta de desenhos alusivos ao amor à fecundação e ao parto" (p. 163). In the above description, the author joins authority symbols, lineage protection and art in one short sentence. To reinforce the nature of Lueji's ephemeral authority, we are told that she ruled "apoiando-se sempre no voto da maioria, porque a maioria sempre tem razão" (p. 163). As much as that might reflect the structure of her regency, it may also have been a subtle indication of the author's own political beliefs.

Lueji, as titular holder of the senior tribal position, owned all the land in her domain, including the palm trees from which wine was made. "Todos os palmares eram propriedade da Senhora das Terras" (p. 168).[28] This did not sit well with

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[28]Miller asserts that the Lunda associate palm wine with males and political authority. See Miller, p. 123.

Quinguri. Not only had Lueji interdicted his supply of palm wine but the mere fact that she could was further reminder of his fall from grace.

The tubungo are anxious to have a king and so remind Lueji that she must marry to carry out her father's last wishes. Her only problem is that she cannot find anyone from among the Bungo nobility to suit her taste. Just at that moment, the Luba hunter, Ilunga, appears, Deus ex machina, in search of game in the forests of Calânhi. In classic fashion, Ilunga and Lueji meet, fall in love, marry, have a son and "live happily ever after." But as our discussion here is concerned mainly with authority symbols and rites of succession, let us examine what now occurs in detail, through the prism of those concepts.

When Lueji meets Ilunga, the first thing she notices is his bow and iron arrow. The Bungos, we are told, were fishermen and hunted only for small game which they caught in wooden traps. In fact, the Bungos were neolithic people and had never seen iron before. The Lubas, on the other hand, were "cacadores da planicie" (p. 180) and used bows and iron-tipped arrows.

Ilunga has in his possession the Luba authority symbol, the chimbuia. That sacred hatchet, we may recall, had been given him, in a public ceremony, by his oldest brother, Cassongo, before the latter departed eastward to find suitable lands for his own descent group. At their first meeting, the Luba prince

and Bungo princess greet one another in the fashion reserved only for sobas: "curvaram-se e apanharam terra que esfregaram no peito" (p. 189). Ilunga puts down his arms to signal his peaceful intentions but does not let go of his "machadinha de luxo." Lueji then offers him a seat next to her on her black wooden chair "que era como o trono dos bungos" (p. 189). In return for so signal an honor, Ilunga lets her hold his chimbúia. Lueji perceives the meaning of the hatchet immediately and shows Ilunga "o lucano que herdara do seu pai, explicando-lhe que aquela pulseira representou para os bungos o mesmo que a chimbúia para os lubas--ambos símbolos do poder dos seus sobas" (p. 190). Lueji then invites Ilunga and his Luba hunters to stay among the Bungos and teach them how to use their iron-age weapons. According to the narrative, it was hard work for the Lubas and took a long time: "Foram precisos muitos anos . . . para os bungos aprenderem tôdas essas coisas" (p. 194). Soromenho understands the meaning of the time lapse in the oral tradition. He correctly interprets the Bungo exchange of stone implements for iron ones as an evolutionary process which brings these neolithic peoples into a "novo ciclo de civilização" (p. 194). As he was not interested in time from an historical viewpoint, his comment on this "new cycle of civilization" is purely ethnographic. The Bungos adopt the gods and customs of their Luba teachers but do not abandon their own gods nor forget their genealogies.

Ilunga, by this time, has decided to stay with Lueji and must therefore relinquish his claim to the chief Luba position. He decides to send his chimbúia back to his oldest brother, Cassongo (whose people, we are told, no longer call themselves Lubas but rather Cassongos, after their chief), because "aquela machadinha . . . já não lhe pertencia" (p. 195). In a very obvious manifestation of fixing new roots, Ilunga plants a leaf from a tree at the spot where he first met Lueji. She pours water on the spot and, in a short time, a new tree sprouts. Their union has now been sanctioned by the spirits although, surprisingly, no reference is made to a melemba. The analogy, though is quite clear. Lueji consults her council of regents as to her plans to marry Ilunga, reminding the tubungos that "foi Ilunga que nos trouxe as armas de ferro" (p. 199). After some discussion as to the propriety of an intertribal marriage, the tubungos give her their consent, in the name of Iala Mácu. On receiving word of his brother's impending wedding, Cassongo returns the chimbúia to him, in a traumatic rupture with tradition. He sends many other gifts, including ivory tusks and more iron weapons. Cassongo wants his younger brother to keep the chimbúia "até que Lueji lhe desse um filho que a usasse . . . como era da tradição dos sobas lubas" (p. 201). Cassongo, it would appear, no longer considers himself Luba but still feels that Ilunga is, even though he, too, has left Luba land and is about to marry into another tribe. The return of the chimbúia to Ilunga and his

forthcoming marriage into a totally different descent group represent a severe breach in the system of perpetual kinship. To Soromenho, the prospective consolidation of disparate genealogies is clay in the artist's hands.

The meaning of the merger is also worthy of note as the entire episode represents much more than the union of two different royal lines. The interpretive data at hand indicate that the threat of the Kinguri descent group to the Lueji descent group and its tubungo allies in the Lunda federation (regardless of who was the incumbent Kinguri at the time), must have been so great as to force the Lueji to seek foreign allies. That these allies had already entered the iron age greatly increased the chances of a Lueji victory over the less well-armed, neolithic Kinguri. The cost of such an alliance, nevertheless, was the acceptance by the Bungos (Lundas) of Luba political authority, as the following scene clearly details.

Some time after Lueji and Ilunga marry, Lueji becomes pregnant. She knows that her pregnancy is the signal for her to transfer the lucano of the Bungos to her Luba husband "para que ele o guardasse para o soba dos bungos que ela ia dar à luz" (p. 203). Thus begins the ritual of indirect and, more importantly, intertribal transfer of authority.

Just as Calenga had to prove his worthiness to lead his Calambas through success in the hunt, Ilunga will have to undergo analogous trials. As he already has the advantage of

being the "greatest hunter of the Luba," his ability to rule will be tested in other ordeals. We may recall that the theme of Calenga's trial was his ability to sacrifice himself for his people, which he did by tracking and killing the most feared animal in the jungle. That same theme is also present in Ilunga's ordeal.

> . . . Ilunga foi submetido às mais humilhantes provações por que pode passar um escravo, sofrendo-as com a maior resignação, para assim provar, pùblicamente que poderiá sofrer . . ., porque . . . só é bom chefe que não teme os seu próprio sacrifício (p. 204).

In Calenga's case, his successful completion of this ordeal will serve him in good stead. His people are threatened with extinction by an unnamed tribe armed with iron spears (the Calambas were neolithic, like the Bungos) and must flee from their villages deep in the jungle. Calenga knows that his only responsibility is the preservation of the descent group and when individuals fall by the wayside during the forced flight, they are left to die. One of those who falls behind is his chief wife, his muata muari, but when alerted to her disappearance, he strikes the informant "gritando-lhe que nunca faltariam mulheres aos homens valentes" (Calenga, p. 55). Even though he had had to uproot his tribe in the presence of foreign enemies, he had violated a mandate of the gods of the jungle. His escape route is cut off by a large, unpassable river but he appeals to the gods ". . . e . . . ofereceu-se-lhes sacrifício, para que os seus homens

fiéis, por ele desgraçados, não viessem a morrer . . ." (ibid., p. 60). He had learned his lessons well and, as a true soba, offers his own life in exchange for safe passage for his people. Not unexpectedly in Soromenho's tragedies, the gods accept the offer. Calenga, in fact, drowns in the River Luia, "The River of Love," in a kind of mythical incest with the river goddess-mother, but his people are saved as a result of his sacrifice.

Returning to Ilunga's sacrifice, we find that he has suffered unspecified degradation for three days, after which time he is ready for the accession. (Because the author's concern here is with the union of two peoples, which in his narration gives rise to a third, this ceremony is underplayed in comparison to the investiture of Calenga.) Ilunga takes a seat next to Lueji on her throne, next to the tree he had planted. That tree, it will be remembered, is his melemba equivalent. Lueji removes her lucano and hands it to the oldest tubungo, who then "solenemente, o colocou no braço de Ilunga, tornando-o desta sorte, rei dos bungos" (p. 205).[29] The symbolism of this indirect transfer of authority bears interpretation.

Lueji never fully controlled the lucano because she was a woman, and could never succeed to the Iala Mácu position.

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[29]Soromenho tells us that thereafter, the Lunda kings would receive the lucano "do Xacala--o soba mais velho," at that very same spot. (Calenga, p. 207.)

She gives the bracelet to the tubungo first, because she could not transfer the authority symbol of a position which she, herself, had never effectively occupied. Finally, the tubungo places the bracelet on Ilunga's arm, indicating the power of the regency. This new form of political authority arose in the vacuum caused by Iala Mácu's death and the ensuing battles for control of the position. We learn from Soromenho that it was the tubungo who wielded the real authority of the Bungos, rather than Lueji, the Senhora das Terras, as the narrative continues: ". . . o mesmo tubungo deu a Ilunga, em nome do povo todos os poderes do soba dos sobas" (p. 206). (In a descent group controlled by a Iala Macu-type position of absolute authority, no councillor would even have been able to speak in "the name of all the people," much less confer on another the powers of "chief of chiefs.") During their act of fealty to the new king, the one exhortation of the tubungo is that Ilunga enlarge the territories of the tribe and enrich its people.

Miller's interpretation of this marriage and subsequent transfer of authority symbols is illuminating. "The danger of the kinguri . . . forced the lueji's Lunda confederacy to offer her lukano to the main Luba title holder in order to consolidate under new leadership the unity which protected them."[30] This meant the abandonment of the independence which

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[30]Miller, p. 128.

was associated with the Lunda up to that point. It also precipitated a movement towards centralization of authority which, in due time, would give rise to that political and social polity that came to be known as the Lunda Empire.

The final episode of this indirect authority transfer begins with the birth of Lueji's long-awaited son. Although Ilunga had become king of the Bungos according to Soromenho, it was his son who would become king of the Lundas. It was not important to the narrative for the author to explain why one day a people are Bungos and the next day Lundas. Such an omission would appear to confirm our contention that most of Soromenho's tribes in Calenga were Lundas, in one stage of development or another. It was not pertinent that they called themselves Calambas, Bungos, or Lundas, they were all part of the same descent group.

The birth of the baby, who will be the living symbol of the union of Lubas and Bungos, sets the stage for his investiture with the title, "King of the Lundas." He is three days old when "Humilharam-se os velhos . . . prestando-lhe vassalagem. . . . Em altos gritos os maiores da Lunda ofereceram-lhe as suas vidas e a vida do povo, os seus filhos e a escravidão do povo . . ." (p. 215). One cannot fail to note the complete inversion of sacrificial subjects and objects in the investiture of the boy-king, as contrasted with that of Calenga. In the latter ceremony, Calenga takes a life as proof of his power, whereas in the former, the people offer

their lives. The power inherent in both positions remains the same: total control over the lives and deaths of the people.

Ilunga, after his son's accession to the title, names him Iânvua. The people add the prefix muata (chief) and "A partir dêsse dia, os reis da Lunda usaram o título de Muatiânvua" (p. 206).[31] The merger of the peoples of the lucanos with the peoples of the chimbúia, retold by Soromenho as a marriage between the Bungo princess Lueji and the Luba prince Ilunga, gives rise, as if by Hegelian dialectic, to a new synthesis: the Lunda and their Muatiânvua, "The King of Lunda kings."

Soromenho's concentration on lucanos and chimbúias comes, as has been mentioned, as a result of his extensive readings of Dias de Carvalho. But as an ethnographer in his own right, the author recognized other authority symbols for what they were. Chief among them in his earlier works is the melemba, the royal genealogical tree. Melembas make their first appearance in Nhárí, as intimately tied to the destiny of sobas and their peoples. The Bângala soba from Cassange, Xá-Caongo, has lost his lands after losing a war. He does not despair of finding a new territory for his lineage

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[31]"Descriptions of the mwata yamvo as a 'son' of Lueji herself come only from non-Lunda sources and are probably not reliable. . . . Abundant comparative data establish the suspect nature of father-son genealogical ties. . . ." Miller, p. 129.

group and seeks it out in the land of the Lunda queen, Mona Capenda. As her vassal, he is permitted to re-establish his people as long as he pays proper tribute and otherwise obeys the laws of the land. Once his new territory is delineated, he plants his melembas, "cujo rápido crescimento confirmou sua soberania" (Nhári, p. 13). In having a second chance at planting these trees after defeat in battle, he will be luckier than the future sobas who cross Soromenho's pages. He had left Cassange when his authority symbol died but the gods now favor him in Lunda. When he is pressed by the Queen to satisfy her sexual appetite, he leads his people into rebellion. She quickly puts down the uprising but, in a gesture of forgiveness, allows him yet another chance to settle his people elsewhere in her domain. The gods, however, are not so charitable. They can possibly forgive one defeat but never two. "Dadas à nova terra as melembas, um sôpro de desgraça pior que a própria escravidão, passou na vida do Xá-Caongo--as árvores da realeza não folharam" (Nhári, p. 21). After two consecutive defeats, the soba has evidently lost his access to the supernatural, from whence he derived his authority, and the dead trees tell the tale. Xá-Caongo has been deserted by the spirits of his ancestors. After an oracle tells him that the tree will only grow when planted by his heir, he hangs himself from the dead melemba. He has accepted his fate. He has protected his descent group with the most extreme of sacrifices.

The use of the melemba as mirror of destiny for sobas and their peoples is enlarged upon in Rajada. When undetermined disease and unprovoked deaths strike a village, one of the tribal elders demands that the tribe leave its land and settle elsewhere. Reminded that "ainda não morreram as melembas" (p. 18), he retracts his words and mumbles that the people should really stay where they are. "O facto de lhes lembrar que as árvores ainda não tinham morrido, significava que não estava tudo perdido. Não só . . . se alimentavam . . . as melembas, mas as lavras se mostravam verdejantes" (Rajada, pp. 18-19). Since the melembas were flourishing and the gardens continued to grow, Soromenho's conclusion is that there is nothing wrong with the land but rather with the people. This is a simplistic understatement of the case by the author. In other stories, when a soba or a tribe sins, the melembas die and the land becomes barren, in divine retribution.

Elsewhere in Rajada, a story that begins in medias res describes the migration of a Quioco tribe. When the soba finally finds a place to his liking, his people lay down their belongings and prepare a temporary camp. The final decision on whether or not the tribe will remain there awaits the planting of the melemba, for if these trees grow, the people will stay; if not, they must move on. During the tribe's long trek, the sacred trees have been entrusted to holy men (sacerdotes), further emphasizing their relationship with the

supernatural. As they belong to the soba, it is he who must plant them, signifying a reimplantation of his own authority. The planting is accompanied by a ritual almost as complex as the transfer of lucanos. It begins with the soba grasping the sacred tree trunks and placing them gently in the ground. Then he raises his arms skyward imploring the gods "para a fecundação das árvores sagradas" (p. 63). The melemba is such an important lineage symbol that its replanting is followed by a purification ceremony of the soba himself. His need for sanctification symbolizes the fact that all his hopes rest on the fate of his genealogical tree. His destiny and that of all his peoples (past, present and future), depend on the rooting of this singular tree. Squatting by his campfire, he awaits the decision of the gods. He is proscribed from touching anything after he has planted the melembas until that decision is rendered. Unable even to touch food, he is fed by his holy men and drinks only from gourds held for him by young virgins and an uncircumcised boy. These children, too, are considered to be pure since they have not yet undergone the rites of puberty (to be discussed later). Night and day, anxiously awaiting word of the fate of his melembas, the soba does not move from his fire. Finally, news comes from the priests that the trees have rooted. The soba leaps up and, shouting loudly, runs to the spot "que os deuses acabavam de sagrar" (p. 65). The careful reader will have noticed that his campfire is in one place, and the

trees are elsewhere, although the author does not specify their exact location. Based on what has already been said about the structure of a village, we may infer that the soba will erect his compound adjacent to his royal trees.

Soromenho portrays the joining of the positional authority held by the soba with the descent group's melemba symbol in another story from Rajada, aptly entitled "A Árvore Sagrada." The plot is simple and the story short. When an old and beloved soba dies, because of a sunstroke according to one woman, his body is wrapped in leaves and housed in a newly-built hut next to his royal tree. What transpires then is a rite of transmigration of the soba's soul into the tree itself. The tribal witchdoctors preside over the ritual. "E amanhã, e sempre, os lundas . . . dirigir-se-ão aos . . . seus antepassados, por intermédio do espírito do soba, cativo dessa árvore de culto por amor do seu povo" (p. 80).

While the melemba was the sacred genealogical tree and symbol of the destiny of the soba and his people, its successful implantation was followed by yet another ritual that presaged harmony between soba and spirits. This was the ceremony of the fogo puro, which has oblique analogues in the Judeo-Christian traditions of the west.

After the melembas took root, if they did, and indicated the blessings of the gods and the fertility of the land, the very next thing a soba did was kindle the "pure fire." He did so by rubbing two sticks together, using the

first sparks to then ignite the first fire in the new village. (For the people of Lunda, this fogo puro symbolized the light and warmth of the sun.) After the fire is started, the soba gives each and every man in the village some of its burning embers. They run to their own newly-built huts and ignite their braziers with the embers from the fogo puro. The fire is "pure" because "não foi ainda profanado ao contacto dos alimentos" (Rajada, p. 66). Yet another reference is made to this "eternal light" in Noite de Angústia, when a young slave boy walks carefully into a hut and does not disturb the fire "que não pode morrer porque é 'fogo puro'--chama que alumia o destino dos homens e símbolo da vida da taba" (p. 23).

Thus far we have examined who the soba was, how he got to occupy his position and what the symbols of his authority were. Before continuing to the next ranking element in the tribal political structure, the elders, let us look briefly at some other features of the soba's life in the pluralistic African universe of Castro Soromenho.

If a soba survived the death of a melemba or was defeated and continued to govern, it was without his former authority. For example, Camba-Camba, the Lunda soba defeated in a war with the Quioco in Homens sem Caminho, "há muito tinha caído do conceito da sua gente" (p. 73). In Rajada, when evil times befall his people, a soba gets sick and calls for human sacrifices to placate the gods. In prior days,

before misfortune fell upon the tribe, this soba could have chosen and made the sacrifices himself without having to call for them to be made. The people blame the soba for their predicament and "Ninguém consentiria na morte do mais miserável dos escravos para salvar o soba, caído em desgraça" (Rajada, p. 20). In other words, when he can no longer fulfill his principal obligation of protecting his people from the supernatural, the soba is deserted because he is lower than the lowest slave. In Nharí, Soromenho tells of a soba who loses his authority because he gets too old. "Ele já era velho . . . e a gente nova não queria ouvir seus conselhos" (p. 20). This particular soba was more fictional than most; the author's later works clearly state that a soba rules until he either dies or abdicates and, further, that old age per se (represented by the elders) was respected generally and even venerated.

In Noite de Angústia, when he defies his councillors and his people, even the powerful soba Xandumba loses his authority, if only termporarily. The issue at hand in this novel is whether the chief should summon a witchdoctor to divine the cause of unexplained deaths decimating his people. Xandumba, "desrespeitado pelos seus vassalos" (p. 38), resists their demands because calling in a diviner would be a tacit admission that not only was he, the chief, unable to ascertain the cause of death (a not uncommon positional responsibility of sobas), but also that the deaths were probably due to

sorcery, the most feared element in the supernatural African world. Rather than face those issues head on, he stops appearing in public and remains secluded in his compound, to meditate. As Xandumba temporizes, he is warned that the people might take the law into their own hands. "Se não queres saber quem é o feiticeiro, o povo fará justiça por suas próprias mãos" (p. 41). The author uses the future tense, fara, but it is more a potential threat of "might" than a statement of volitional "will." Xandumba's indecision erodes his authority even further. He argues with his nephew and heir, Muaquife, who insinuates repeatedly that the man responsible for all the deaths is his competitor, the sobeta, Salemo. In anger and desperation, Xandumba finally dares Muaquife to point out the guilty party. The following scene vividly reflects the decline in the soba's authority as Muaquife responds: "Let the witchdoctor do it!"

> Os olhos de Xandumba arredondaram-se de espanto. O quê? O seu próprio sobrinho permitia-se falar-lhe daquela maneira, apontar-lhe um caminho, a ele, chefe do povo! (p. 42)

Because Xandumba has failed to protect his people from death by unearthing its source, the greatest obligation of any soba (i.e., protection and perpetuation of the descent group), "o soba já quase nada representava para os seus vassalos" (p. 53). As the situation continues to deteriorate, the potential for outright rebellion grows. "A desgraça acordou o povo do seu grande sono de submissão" (p. 53). The villagers assemble

outside the soba's compound demanding his presence and compliance with their wishes. By this time, they are wild with fear at the thought that some sorcerer's black magic is ravaging their descent group through indiscriminate murder.

> A cólera que os dominava e o desprezo pelo chefe que não desafrontava o seu povo das iras de um feiticeriro, levou-os a arrogarem-se o direito de ministrar a justiça, o que só aos sobas é dado. (p. 60)

The people's threat to do justice in this case is more a political tactic to pressure the soba than anything else. Still the soba hides in his compound, fearful of the clamor outside, undecided about what course of action to follow and "desconhecendo o que restava do seu prestígio" (p. 60). As public pressure grows in direct proportion to the people's fear and terror, Xandumba is finally forced to call a meeting of his councillors to decide the question. His nephew, Muaquife, has very deftly played the role of agent provocateur. At the same time that he is encouraging the people in their temper of revolt, he tells them that "o nosso soba esta doente; mas ele vai fazer justiça" (p. 63), thereby protecting the authority position to which he will succeed. By apologizing for the soba while promising the people that he will, in fact, do justice, Muaquife keeps the integrity of the position intact for his own ambitions. In council that night, he again turns the situation to his advantage by pointing out that it had been Xandumba's own hesitation and lack of initiative which caused the people to cry out against him,

"desrespeitando a lei ao exigir-lhe o direito de fazer justiça por suas próprias mãos. Nunca se vira tamanho desa foro" (p. 68). All the other councillors then join Muaquife in blaming the women for instigating the men against their chief. "As mulheres tem de ser castigadas" (p. 68) they shout, neatly absolving themselves from the vital part they played in the incipient treason. The eldest of the councillors apologizes obsequiously for the people's behavior: "Eles não tem culpa. . . . O povo tem sofrido muito, . . . e quando o povo é desgraçado, não sabe o que faz . . ." (p. 70). They are true cowards save for Muaquife who, we are told, is not afraid of "sorcerer-assassins." The elder continues, in a subtle yet flattering reminder to Xandumba of his position and obligations within the descent group: "Tu és o nosso chefe. Só tu é que nos sabes defender. Os nossos homens querem a tua justiça . . . porque tu és o nosso pai . . ." (p. 70). Those last words are one of the few references in all the author's works of an emotional patriarchate also binding a soba to his descent group. Cajolery notwithstanding, Xandumba's dilemma is greater than appears to his councillors and his heir. Salemo, his vassal, had been the first to call for the intervention of a witchdoctor. Xandumba has denied his vassal's request because of his own firm conviction that the deaths in his villages had been caused by the plague, not by black magic. This plague, he believed, has been contracted by his own people during trading missions into Quioco

territory. More importantly, Xandumba's denial of Salemo's request had diminished the sobeta in the eyes of his own descent group. As overlord, Xandumba was sensitive to that fact, because it was his obligation to preserve and protect the authority of his vassals as much as his own. Ruptures in authority, or failures to define and maintain it, could spell disaster for an entire people. On the other hand, Xandumba had lost effective control of the situation since there was no way he could rationally dissuade his terrified subjects with lectures on political theory. If he did not submit to their demands now, "ele morreria . . . e a sua morte seria o motivo de uma guerra entre os seus homens e os do sobeta" (p. 72). Not only does Xandumba not want to die, but he knows the most important factor in his decisional process is his responsibility to protect the descent group, at whatever cost.

Xandumba considers, then, the successive deteriorations of his authority, the highly emotional condition of his people and the ever-present threat of internecine warfare whose consequences are much weightier than a self-inflicted extinction of the descent group (i.e., the devastation caused by an intra-tribal war would make the Lunda easy prey for their Quioco enemies). He capitulates to the situation and calls for the witchdoctor. In an instant, the entire mood is reversed as the councillors bow humbly before their soba and the eldest tells him: "Chefe! Tu és o mais forte e o

mais justo. Acima de ti, só o grande Muatiânvua . . ." (p. 73). Whether these words contain a veiled threat by the councillors to appeal to the Muatianvua if Xandumba's decision had been otherwise, we are not told. What they do express, in the author's inimitable style of combining multiple yet disparate elements in one phrase, is the position of Xandumba in relation to the king of the Lundas. He obviously ranked very high among other sobas of the royal dynasty.

Life was not always a series of misfortunes and divine retributions for the soba; it had its high points too. He had wealth, power, prerogatives and perquisites which accrued to his position. Without these, few would have accepted the awesome responsibility, no matter what the imperatives.

In the main, the soba's wealth was inherited from his forbears, accumulated through tribute paid them by their subjects as well as their vassals. Victory in war always brought enormous riches. The Lunda queen Mona Capenda, in Nhári, was so wealthy that "havia valores que chegariam para cobrir com marfim o chão da dua banza e . . . os seus escravos eram tantos que a vida de um homem não chegaria para os contar" (p. 18). Whether the slaves mentioned are synonymous with vassals or refer to truly indentured individuals is not explained. But if we interpret the word literally, Mona Capenda was rich indeed. The wealth of a male chief, as were all of them except Mona Capenda and Lueji in Soromenho's works,

is succinctly described in the same short story collection. It consisted of a harem of thirty women and "lavras e campos de caça, o que representa a maior capital que chefe negro pode ambicionar" (p. 15). In Rajada, mention is made of special lands reserved only for the soba and his wives (polygamy appears to have been an African institution from remotest times) as the "plantações das mulheres do chefe" (p. 34). This did not imply that the women owned the land but rather that it was theirs to work. In Calenga, we are told that the soba owns everything and everybody, literally. "A terra e os homens, o rio e a caça, tudo era propriedade do soba" (p. 29). Certainly the most enjoyable ritual of all must have been the collecting of tribute. It was institutionalized to such an extent that the narrative explains how and when the time for payment is announced. A special drum beat sounds throughout the realm at the end of the rainy season, advising the people "que viessem a Calânhi pagar o tributo" (Calenga, p. 170). We already know of the gifts that Lueji and Ilunga received from Cassongo on their marriage. The nature and quantity of the gifts, ivory tusks "que pôde cercar a sua grande aldeia" (Calenga, p. 215), indicate not only the wealth of the donor but, in true Soromenho style, simultaneously place his tribe in elephant country, adjacent to the great lakes in the east.

A soba's powers were vast, based as they were on his access to the supernatural world of his ancestors. They were

only valid, though, as long as those spirits were in harmony with the current title holder. And the equilibrium of forces was maintained only so long as the incumbent fulfilled his obligation in accordance with precepts laid down by his forefathers and their living interpreters, the witchdoctors. A soba in Rajada condemns his own son to death for practicing black magic to murder others. That sentence becomes "o mais belo de toda a sua vida" (p. 88) because it confirms, once again, the chief's absolute authority over life and death. It is analogous, of course, to Calenga's ritual murder of his best friend during his investiture. The soba Xá-Caongo, in Nhárí, had been so powerful before his defeat at the hands of an unnamed enemy tribe that "Ñao conhecia limítes de mando" in the lands "onde o poderio de seus antepassados firmara dinastia" (pp. 11-12). In Homens sem Caminho, Camba-Camba, who has lost some of his authority and prestige through defeat in a battle with the Quiocos, is still the incumbent. He tells one of his sobetas: "aqui ninguém mata sem eu mandar" (p. 22), reaffirming his absolute power over life and death. When a dispute arises between him and his councillors over the choosing of a war chief to again challenge the Quioco in battle, Camba-Camba reminds his seemingly reluctant candidate that "quem mandava era ele" and "o soba é sempre o soba" (p. 57). This episode reflects the extent of a soba's power even where he must share some of it, on an advisory basis, with his council of elders.

Just as the soba wielded absolute authority, he expected unquestioning obedience. When Xandumba summons Salemo's descent group for the divination ceremony in Noite de Angústia, they know they must not refuse. "O chefe mandara-os chamar; portanto só restava obedecer-lhe" (p. 131). There are some recalcitrants among the villagers but they are quickly dissuaded from disobeying the chief's orders when they are reminded that to do so is tantamount to a declaration of war. "O melhor era irem todos, em paz, como lhes ordenasse" (p. 131). At the beginning of the same novel the sobeta Salemo hears dogs barking in the night (always an augury of doom). The next morning, when he asks his people if they, too, had heard the dogs howling, their answer is a resounding "yes." In fact, none had heard anything at all but they are too fearful of their chief to dare contradict him. Even Salemo's powers as sobeta, vis-à-vis his liege Xandumba, are clearly defined. He had lost a battle to the latter, and in accordance with the rules of war had become his vassal. Nevertheless, he called Xandumba only by his nom de guerre, Samacata, because he had lost only his autonomy to the warrior chief, not his political position. As a result, he is not subject to Xandumba's successor's orders, as were the other sobas. Salemo "devia vassalagem ao Samacata, mas não ao Xandumba . . . querendo assim significar que a sua sujeição provinha de azares de guerra, não de inferioridade de classe" (pp. 33-34).

When a soba failed to defend his people, he was generally ousted by popular revolt or divine intervention. In Rajada, a Lunda soba named Carumbo, "que foi um dos grandes sobas lundas, veio por terras do Luxico porque teve mêdo dos quiôcos" (p. 100). As bad as it may have been for the positional authority of a soba to flee his own lands in fear, Carumbo commits an even greater crime in the eyes of his people. Apparently, he was a peaceful man who understood the limited, if not non-existent, military capacities of his people in any potential conflict with the Quiocos. His only desire, in the exercise of his obligations as descent group leader, was to maintain that entity intact, even if it meant flight in the face of the enemy. But political theory again comes into conflict with popular expectations, and his decision earns him the disdain of his subjects. Flight, however, is not the solution; the nomadic Quioco marauders pursue him and his people relentlessly. Carumbo knows the nature of his enemy and understands that their only interest is looting and rape. He compounds his crime of withdrawal in the face of the enemy by recommending to his people that they give up their women and their possessions to save their lives and safeguard their liberty. At this moment his subjects, who up to this point had joined him in flight and tacitly accepted his decision, now rise up in revolt, expel him, and do battle against their pursuers. Carumbo had abjured his duty and was overthrown for having betrayed his people.

No ceremony was commenced without the soba's orders, whether it was the beginning of the ritual dance, the batuque, or the beginning of the hunt and nothing was undertaken without his assent. In Nhárí, for example, a little girl asks why the burning of the elephant grass, which signals the start of the hunt, has not yet begun. She gets an early lesson in political authority with the brief and pointed response: "Porque o soba ainda não deu ordem" (p. 46). The soba was also the final arbiter of civil and criminal disputes, as will be detailed in a later discussion of jurisprudence.

The ultimate political authority of the sobas in Lunda was vested, naturally, in the ultimate of Lunda chiefs, the Muatianvua. The origin of the title has been referred to in the discussions concerning Ilunga and Lueji, as has been the importance of consanguinity in defining the relationship between Xandumba and Salemo. Little else is mentioned of the powers of the Muatiânvua, save in a dream-like episode in Homens sem Caminho. We may remember that a disgruntled former slave, Gando, dreams of the coming of a true Muatiânvua, who appears as an almost messianic image. This Muatiânvua will take revenge against the traitor, Xanama, and lead the people to victory over the Quiocos. But Xanama and the Quiocos are not Gando's only enemies. He despises his own soba, Camba-Camba, so fiercely that he spends hours

> . . . sonhando torturas com que lhe daria morte lenta se fosse Muatiânvua, rei do Camba-Camba e de todos os sobas lundas. . . .
>
> "Ah! Se eu fosse esse soba dos sobas, o senhor da Lunda . . . !" (p. 93)

The universality of this dream speaks for itself but the reader is left wondering as to the fate of the Lundas if a man like Gando were ever to become Muatiânvua.

Polygamy was, as has been said, the normal marital institution in Central Africa. The chief's wives were ranked in a certain order, never explained to the reader. What we do know is that there was a primary wife in the chief's harem called the muata-muari. This particular marital concept was evidently not uncommon in polygamous Bantu societies. While she may not have been the first woman the soba married, she is certainly first in his affections. She also has overall responsibility for the domestic life within the soba's compound, as well as for the cultivation of his crops in the field. Although she rarely enters any of the plots, she is ubiquitous and plays an important role beyond that of overseer of her colleagues in the soba's harem. In Calenga, a brief description portrays her thus: "A muata-muari--a primeira mulher do soba e a mãe espiritual do povo" (p. 17). There is more than a little romanticization here, since the position of women was generally a quite servile one, except for Mona Capenda and Lueji. More often we see the muata-muari in the background, as in Homens sem Caminho: "Dois vultos cruzaram o terreiro e perderam-se para os lados das palhotas do soba. Era Caçula e a primeira mulher do Camba-Camba que recolhiam à banza" (p. 86).

Lastly, the soba's sexual appetite does not seem confined to women. Aside from twenty or thirty women in his harem, he also enjoyed the company of young boys, called catumas, whom he used for homosexual pleasures. In Noite de Angústia, the great Xandumba, glorified by his people as being out-positioned only by the Muatiânvua, has a boy lover at his side as he sets fire to the hut in which the young girl Capula had been murdered by voodoo. "Xandumba parou. . . . O catuma, seu pajem e amante, passa-lhe para as mãos um archote . . ." (p. 98). In Rajada, the wealthy sobas who journey to the slave markets of Cassange to buy beautiful Bângala women bring their homosexual lovers with them. These young men are dressed to the nines as they prepare their nightly assignations: "Os catumas, ajaezados com os símbolos da realeza dos sobas, desenrolaram esteiras onde seus senhores e amantes dormem" (p. 114).

We have already touched upon the political and social positions of the tribal elders. Second only to the soba in affairs of state, they are mentioned in all the works analyzed in this study. As opposed to the hereditary authority of the soba, theirs was based on long-standing tribal tradition. It was an acknowledgement and recognition of their having survived to old age in the hostile African environment. It was also rooted in the people's understanding that long life made for great accumulation of experience and wisdom. The elders benefited too from the pragmatic transformation of those

factors into religious and superstitious respect for old age. The eldest of their number was generally the most revered, having survived the longest and, ostensibly, having learned the most. A Portuguese ethnologist who spent much of his life studying the peoples of Angola's northeast, José Redinha, summarized the underlying religious meaning of that reverence as follows: "A senilidade é a idade sagrada do homem do Nordeste."[32] These senior members of the tribe, individually or jointly as councillors of the soba, were in the main an amorphous group. There was no specified age at which one became a velho, nor was there a set number of members in the chief's council. In fact, and as we have seen, the only time Soromenho institutionalizes them is in Calenga where they are portrayed not as individuals but as a group, the tubungos. In that collection, they are the regents, collectively, for the young princess Lueji. Through all the other works they are called simply velhos, conselheiros, ministros, and so on.

Among their many functions, perhaps the most important was the preservation of the descent group's oral traditions. That role is somewhat underplayed by Soromenho because, this writer believes, he was more interested in their political role. He occasionally alludes, as we shall see, to their abilities as storytellers, while recognizing them generally

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[32]José Redinha, Etnossociologia do Nordeste de Angola, Colecção Metropole e Ultramar, 16 (Braga: Pax Editora, 1966), p. 52.

as the "implacable defenders of the laws of the race." In fact, the elders are the respositories of all the tribe's oral traditions as well as its historical record. Oral traditions may be defined conceptually as all the cumulative wisdom of a people, and all their religious beliefs, customs, mores, and so on--literally to be transmitted in spoken words around the campfires of the African night. Theirs was the responsibility to pass on that collective Weltanschauung to succeeding generations. They were also the keepers of the historical epic "which deals . . . with the genealogies, the migrations and the chiefs"[33] of the descent group. Understanding the didactic importance of repetition, the elders tell and retell their stories endlessly. While the hunters and warriors may recount their current exploits around the night fire, the aging "poets of the plains" continually resurrect the past so the people may learn, remember and live by the moral dictates implicit in their tales. An indirect reference to storytelling per se is made in Calenga, when the young prince is told that he should love the elders and never forget their wise counsel or their "historias que ninguem sabe contar como êles" (p. 17).

The principal political function fulfilled by the elders is that of councillor. Having lived by the law, they have

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[33]Daniel Biebuyck, "The Epic as a Genre in Congo Oral Literature," African Folklore, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 259.

gained the favor of the spirits and the protection of the gods. And in a world ruled by the supernatural, the soba needs all the help he can get in meeting his own obligations. In Rajada, the statesmen of the tribe are properly defined as ". . . os depositarios das leis da raca e os ferozes defensores dos deuses na terra" (p. 19). Because of their strict adherence to the letter of the law, they were sometimes resented by soba and tribesmen alike. Yet it was highly unwise to incur their displeasure, as did Quinguri in Calenga. Because he had terrorized the people throughout his father's domains, he had earned the enmity of the king's councillors. "Todos os velhos odiavam Quinguri. Quando um homem tem os velhos contra si, precisa de se defender com tenacidade. Os velhos são pouco generosos e demasiado exigentes" (p. 135). Quinguri apparently had as little interest in currying favor with these velhos as he had with his father, the king. When he is disinherited because in a drunken rage he has almost beaten his father to death, not one objection is raised by the king's council. On the contrary, we may recall that the tubungo accept their dying soba's charge to help his chosen successor, Lueji, govern and to protect her from Quinguri.

The council as a corporate body played a signal role in the life of the tribe. No major decision was ever taken without its advice and consent. When Xandumba, in Noite de Angústia, finally decides to confront the issue of whether or not to consult a witchdoctor, he convenes his council.

> Já os conselheiros estavam acocorados ao redor da fogueira quando o soba entrou na chota. Abriu-se o círculo que os homens formavam como para defenderem a casa do povo . . ., e o Xandumba tomou a presidência. (p. 64)

This short passage tells the reader that the decision was of such moment that it would be taken in the chota. (Lesser questions and mere consultations often took place in the soba's own compound.) The chief's advisors are squatting in a semi-circle "as if to defend the people's house," and, by extension, the people themselves. The only failing in the description itself is one of language. Soromenho uses a Protuguese political term, presidência, as if to equate Xandumba with a European prime minister about to convene a meeting of his cabinet. This word, although by no means a major flaw, comes up more than once in portrayals of a soba's council. It appears as far back as Nhári, for example, where the elders "formavam assamblea [sic] sob a presidência do régulo" (p. 118). But regardless of how the act of presiding over a council was depicted, these homens bons (always italicized by the author) were ready to do their duty. The deliberations of the council were of deepest moment in the life of the people and the decisions taken were usually supported by all the ancestral spirits. Determinations were final and binding on each member of the tribe without exception. Because of the relationship of soba and councillors to the supernatural, their coming together at a convocation became an almost religious symbol of its own. "É a hora solene das grandes reuniões tribais,

em que o destino dos homens é marcado, e ao qual ninguém ousa fugir" (Rajada, p. 23).

Given the nature and significance of the council in tribal life, its members, other than the soba, were exceedingly jealous of their prerogatives. In their view, it was not out of noblesse oblige that a soba convened them for great and solemn debates, but out of necessity. The soba knew it, and the elders did not let him forget it. When a chief took any major action without prior consultation, he practically signed his own death warrant. In an episode in Homens sem Caminho, Camba-Camba made just such a mistake. That soba needed a war chief to lead his people against the Quiocos and chose an outsider, a sobeta from a related, but different lineage group. When the news reached Camba-Camba's councillors, they became outraged, not so much by his choice but because he had failed to seek their advice.

> Revoltavam-se porque se sentiam diminuídos aos olhos do povo. Faziam finca-pé no facto de o soba não ter consultado os conselheiros. . . . Sentiam-se profundamente humilhados porque nunca lhes fizera tamanha ofensa. (p. 62)

Their egos have been damaged in an almost oriental "loss of face," and they do not forgive the soba for having caused them such humiliation. Their anger runs so deep, Soromenho tells the reader, that they reach the verge of choosing Quioco slavery over Lunda freedom. It is the senior members of the group who utter the words of treason: "É melhor a gente ficar nas mãos dos quiôcos" (p. 62). The true impact of those

words will be better understood in light of our analysis of the nature of war among the inhabitants of the savannas. For the time being, let the reader be assured that death was a far better alternative than falling into the hands of the Quiocos as prisoners of war. To avenge themselves, and at the same time increase their authority within the tribe, Camba-Camba's councillors subvert his rule at every turn. Of course, their ability to accomplish this must allow for Camba-Camba's already precarious position, the result of his defeat in the first battle against the Quiocos. His prestige and authority were not at their zenith, to say the least. But because he was still soba, the elders were compelled to weaken his authority even further, and not necessarily in the interests of the tribe. They create a wall between Camba-Camba and his young warriors, whose support he desperately needs in his military campaigns. Their motive is pure and unbridled egocentricity: ". . . para assim ganharem a confiança do povo e levá-lo a apelar para a sua interferência nos destinos da tribo" (p. 73). They eventually succeed in their endeavors, only to find that they themselves are too weak and frightened to lead the tribe in battle. What they have accomplished, on the other hand, is a total disruption in the normal flow of authority. There is now a power vacuum leaving the tribe open to complete conquest. Once the young warriors understand what has transpired, they prepare to take control of the situation themselves. One of their group,

the young and daring Gando, comes to personify their attitude: "sempre pronto a rebelar-se contra os velhos . . ., homens a quem o medo tirara todo o prestígio" (p. 76). They are, unhappily for the tribe, totally unprepared for the responsibility they have won by intrigue and the tragedy moves inexorably to its conclusion.

In more general terms, when sobas convened their councils, a consensus of opinion appeared to have guided most decisions. When there was disagreement, especially between the chief and his elders, his opinion invariably prevailed. A specific example arises in Calenga when Ilunga, the former Luba prince made king of the Bungos, is advised by his tubungos to hunt down and destroy Quinguri. Because the latter had lost his bid for authority and had consequently been expelled from the new descent group, he decides to leave Lunda and start his own tribe somewhere in the west. Young warriors who were either disenchanted with Ilunga's rule or had never accepted the domination of Luba political authority to begin with, flock to Quinguri's side, precipitating the classic lineage fission. The fact is that Quinguri (or the Kinguri descent group) cannot stand up against the iron-age weapons of the Luba prince and his army. He further represents a continual threat to the political stability of the new descent group, the Lunda. Assessing his military prospects, he finds it safer, in terms of descent group perpetuation, to move than to fight. The problem for Ilunga is

whether he should pursue and destroy his brother-in-law or consolidate his own authority. In the narrative, a council is convened to weigh the options. The tubungos, having lived for a long time in fear of Quinguri, advise that he be destroyed once and for all. Lueji overrules them, however, signifying not only the end of their regency but the beginning of a powerful central authority. According to Soromenho, their reign had not been a happy one and change was long overdue.

> Lueji . . . não deixou Ilunga seguir o conselho dos tubungos, êsses velhos implacáveis, que defendiam até ao desespêro todas as leis despóticas que eles próprios ditavam para que o povo fosse submisso e desgraçado, ... (Calenga, p. 223)

This is nothing less than a blunt substantiation of the old political maxim that "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,"[34] whether in an oligarchy or a monarchy.

Elders who were not consulted or those whose recommendations were vetoed by the higher authority were exceptions to the norm. Tribal government generally reflected an equilibrium of forces between councillors and soba. The former were, in the main, respectful and humble in the presence of their chief, as may be seen in Noite de Angústia. The oldest of Xandumba's councillors, at the end of a heated meeting

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[34]As quoted in a letter from Lord Acton to Mandell Creighton, 5 April 1887.

where the decision is made to consult a witchdoctor, gets up slowly, "para se curvar, em seguida, humildemente, os joelhos em terra, a cabeça quase a tocar no chão, . . ." (p. 73). When the Luba king Iala Mácu dies, he is surrounded by his councillors who had helped him govern and "fazer respeitar as leis da raça" (Calenga, p. 34). And when a soba is no longer able to govern, as is the case with one Muaungue in Rajada, the whole tribe deserts him and turns to the elders. "Mas êles não pensavam no soba, nem olhavam para êle. Agora, os velhos, os homens bons da tribo, . . ., é que mandavam" (p. 47). Finally, not all elders spent their lives giving advice or jockeying for imagined or real positions of power and influence. There is one man, Candongo, in the novel Noite de Angustia, who is so independent because of his personal ties to the Muatiânvua that he respects no one save the king himself. He gives advice when it is not wanted, raves about injustice, calumnies his enemies and follows the dictates of his own conscience. Indeed, because of his independence, he does not become enslaved to Xandumba (like the rest of Salemo's tribe at the end of that novel), but goes off to spend his remaining days at the court of his friend, the king of the Lundas.

CHAPTER 7

THE SPIRITUAL MILIEU

Access to the supernatural was the sine qua non of tribal authority. This chapter will attempt to explain why such access was so critical, by detailing the role of the supernatural in Soromenho's Africa.

Entree to the world beyond man was gained simply, through the use of magic and magicians. The function of magic was to bring all the forces of nature and the supernatural under some partial control. Belief in magic flourished in non-literate African societies through the common denominator of mass acceptance--something akin to the Emperor's new clothes. Much like specific kings or events in African epic histories, individual beliefs either disappeared or were adopted by the whole tribe. Over a period of many millenia, man's unending observations of the forces in the world around him led him to a full awareness of their role in his very survival. Understanding the effects of nature without the slightest inkling as to the causes, led man to create a cosmos of the supernatural. With the passage of time, it became more and more difficult to separate the natural and the supernatural, the visible from the invisible. In attempting to cope with all that he did not comprehend, the African

invented the complex of incantations, spells, fetishes, amulets, and so on to deal with his unknown. He lived in a very dangerous and inhospitable environment. In pure self-defense, he desperately sought spiritual as well as material protection from the outside forces so irrationally bent on his destruction. More often than not, of course, material objects proved powerless against the onslaught of the elements. With that recognition came the African's belief that life and death, starvation and plenty and sickness and health all flowed from one form of the supernatural or another. Magic and witchcraft arose to help the African explain the inexplicable, and encourage his belief that he could in fact exercise some form of control over the natural world.

The practice of witchcraft became institutionalized in remote times. It became the vital factor in the African's struggle for survival and was reserved to those who had been trained in its mysteries from early childhood. Usually, only one man in each tribe practiced this art (although the soba, too, had to be familiar with certain basic elements). His job description, as it were, was that of intermediary between the known and the unknown, the visible and invisible, the world of the living and that of the dead. Withal, the people were generally content to let the magician do his work on their behalf.

The African magician or witchdoctor, great and singular practitioner of magical arts, came in two flavors:

good guys and bad guys. The good guys, witchdoctors for the purposes of this study, attempted to defend the people against the ravages of nature and the vengeance of the gods (often one and the same in Soromenho's Africa). There was also a second-degree witchdoctor, the medicine man (Soromenho uses the Portuguese term curandeiro and the Kimbundu word quimbanda interchangeably). The limited access to the supernatural permitted this practitioner to do no more than attempt to cure the sick. The bad guys, sorcerers for the purpose of this study, employed black magic or voodoo to bring pain to their victims, pain to the death. In the narratives, the author often distinguishes between the spiritual good guys and bad guys by calling the former adivinhos or tâhis, and the latter feiticeiros. The monumental fear of sorcerers, so vivid a presence in African life, explains why capital punishment was the only penalty for a convicted feiticeiro.

The implements of the magician's trade, the material representations of African animism, consisted of fetishes, amulets and talismans. These would be made of shells, animals' horns, claws, teeth, birds' feathers or any one of a number of objects from the natural world. Amulets and talismans were always man-made objects, with a restricted value in their deployment. They were used to bring a man luck in certain endeavors or protect him from particular evils. Sometimes they would be worn on the body, other times they could be found in the hut or the chota. Small wood-carved human figures,

or muquixes as Soromenho called them, were believed to house spirits and were found in the little sanctuaries or mahambas scattered in and around the village. Often, they were buried with the dead. Whatever the powers ascribed to magical objects and those who controlled them, they derived ultimately from the gods who ruled over everything and everyone.

The principal god in Soromenho's Africa is Zámbi. He is an abstraction of the entire supernatural and quite remote from the everyday lives of his disciples. Lesser gods, who are concretely identified with the natural elements themselves, play a much more immediate role in African beliefs. They are understood as being the spirits of the elements. Indeed, the elements are incarnations of the gods. There is no direct communication between people and gods. In general, the African can appeal only to the spirits of his ancestors in beseeching divine intercession. If Zámbi is the omnipotent yet neutral prime mover, he is also the abstraction of moral and philosophical Good. Evil, on the other hand, is the tangible manifestation of the displeasure of the gods. It comes upon the people as a result of some transgression of tribal law whose sanctity the African has wrapped in a divine mantle.

The concept of a soul is very much present in Soromenho's works but not as it is perceived in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It has no relation to a deity or deities. On its departure from the body, it is rather another spirit which will

inveigh against the living if custom and tradition, which are the laws of the tribe, are defied. The spirits of the dead, which reside in a nether world, are neither passive nor neutral. Since they are always invoked to lend authority to a new soba, they are prepared to bring either destruction or death to those who break the law. To lessen this eventuality as much as possible, the African must make a proper funeral, mourn the dead thoroughly and bury the corpse correctly. If any one of these precepts is contravened or ignored, the spirit or soul of the dead is unleashed to wander aimlessly through the ether and bring pain and suffering to the living.

For Soromenho the ethnographer, the world of the African supernatural was as absorbing as the political structure of the tribe, and his depiction of that world is just as vivid. This fascination stemmed from his perception of the African man as enveloped by a plethora of fears. The author understands that fear is the essence of life for the people of the jungles, a primal emotion for men whose every living moment carries the threat of death. During the day, men have some limited defense against the visible dangers that menace them. At night, virtually sightless, man becomes defenseless. It is at night, then, that his fears arise to enslave him. "É de noite, . . . que ele ouve, . . . a voz dos seus mortos; que sofre do terror . . .; que é atormentado . . ." (Noite de Angústia, p. 43). Nothing so much impressed Soromenho as the African fear of night. But fear of divine

vengeance wrought against those who have broken "as leis da raça," becomes his point of departure. References to night as the time of terror are numberless, from Nhárí through Calenga, and the author repeatedly uses zeugmas to tie the night with the agony of life. "E os homens inquietaram-se com a noite do céu e com a noite da sua vida" (Noite de Angústia, pp. 42-43). In Rajada, "a noite foi mais negra na terra e na alma dos lundas" (p. 101). Again in Noite de Angústia the reader is presented with the causes of night fear:

> . . . a noite pertence aos espíritos do outro mundo. . . . E de noite, . . . que os espíritos maus vêm vaga bundear, . . . pelos lugares onde viveram e onde têm de errar até à hora suprema em que Zambi, senhor do céu e da terra, o deus dos deuses, os mande reencarnar em homem ou bicho ou os torne cativos em árvores sagrados. (p. 96)

This one description focuses on the evil spirits, a messianic era, a supreme being and reincarnation; it is, in a way, the author's personal amalgam of African beliefs with his own religious upbringing. The African of his novels had little time for such theological speculations. He was too preoccupied with trying to survive in the present. Tomorrow is very far away and, based on all his yesterdays, will be just as tragic, if not more so.

Because the African lives in constant terror of the night, his life is circumscribed accordingly. The fires of the village serve not only to ward off wild animals but to lighten the darkness as well. And sound or sight is immediately

interpreted as the presence of a spirit. The howling of the dog, as we have noted, is the most common but even the chirping of a cricket can fill the night with terror. In Rajada, a falling star puts the villagers in total panic. The people scream in horror because they know that "Aquela estrêla, . . . era . . . mensageira de uma desgraça" (p. 25). When the soba sees it, his jaw drops and his eyes bulge. "Os cãis [sic] começaram a uivar" (p. 25), and all hope for salvation is lost. (By this time, the reader knows full well what that howling means. It has already been defined at least twice in Nhari as well as elsewhere. "O uivo deste cão diz-me de mais uma desgraça . . ." [Nhári, p. 43], and, in an ex post facto comment on the tragedy which had just occurred, "Aquele uivo do cão tinhoso, que apareceu sem se saber de onde veio era bem o aviso de uma grande desgraça" [p. 51].) As if that were not enough, a woman rushes into the middle of the village screaming that she has had a vision, that she has seen Zambi. This scene is yet another foretaste of tragedy because this particular woman had been brought to the village as a young slave girl and, from the day she arrived, she brought nothing but good fortune. "As chuvas começaram a cair e os campos reverdeceram" (Rajada, p. 28) and neither the gods nor the Quiocos threatened the tranquility of the village while she remained sane. Suddenly, without explanation, death is all about and the people have nowhere to turn.

Elsewhere in Rajada, a hunter leaves his village at night to find the encampment of his fellow tribesmen. The fact that he would have even dared to venture out at that hour of the night, "em que o homem só viaja em circunstâncias anormais" (p. 151), causes great wonderment upon his arrival. That proscription had brought upon Calenga the ultimate penalty because he had violated just that taboo. The soba had led his people from his village at night to evade a menacing war party. His obligation to perpetuate his descent group must however take second place to obeying the laws of his gods. Faced with the choice of war and slavery or the possibility of escape, he had chosen the latter and paid for that choice with his life.

Almost all of Soromenho's sobas will be placed in similar predicaments. No matter which choice they make, they are always defeated. As Calenga's people march through the "noite sem fim da floresta" (Calenga, p. 55), anyone falling by the wayside is left to die. No one will retrace his steps to pick up stragglers. The only safety is in numbers. The fact that night was the foremost symbol of fear is evidenced by the opposing elements with which it is usually characterized. Just as the howling of dogs fills the night with fear, absolute silence causes the same reaction. Even the storms which knock down melembas and chotas, thereby destroying the symbols of life, wreak havoc at night. Using yet another zeugma, the author combines the howling of the dead and howling winds as

follows: "O uivo do vento norte, . . . é o conjunto das vozes dos espíritos maus, o lamento feroz das almas penadas. É a musica da morte!" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 195).

One of Soromenho's greatest talents as a writer lay in his ability to create fictive episodes which graphically portrayed the relationships between man and his gods, at the same time that he wove a narrative that could be read as pure flight of fancy. His fiction, even in this period dedicated exclusively to African life unsullied by the white man, was only a means to an end. African man was his subject and all else was secondary. He recreates that man almost always within the premises of classical Greek tragedy. Man is not the victim of any inherent flaws in his character (unless perhaps his propensity to violate the laws of the gods can be considered "hubris") but rather an individual conscious of proscriptions and taboos he chooses to ignore. Divine retribution, on the other hand, does not tarry. Everywhere man turns, he is struck down by the gods. And because his gods are animistic, their revenge is that much more irrational and terrifying.

It is not difficult to understand why fear becomes the singular emotion of the black man of the jungles. His world knows no escape from the mindless persecutions of the universe around him. He can only stand by passively and hope to live another day while the gods assert their will. In Nhári, a young girl is killed by a crocodile. There is no apparent reason for her death. But to the African, there need not be.

If such extreme punishment comes, it must have been deserved because "O jacaré, que é feiticeiro, . . . só castiga aqueles que estão em dívida para com Deus . . . (p. 51). The villagers express no sorrow over this tragedy, merely resignation; the law had been carried out "E os negros . . . curvaram-se ante a maior fatalidade" (p. 65).

As Soromenho's techniques evolve, his themes become much more intricate. For example, the reader is told in Homens sem Caminho that having sexual relations with a pregnant woman is absolutely forbidden. Camba-Camba, the soba, in conscious violation of the law, forcibly takes the wife of one of his sobetas thought to have died in battle with the Quiocos. Such an act is "infamous" because the woman is pregnant and "toda a gente sabe que a mulher prenhe não pode ter relações amorosas sem cair sob a fúria dos deuses, prontos a vingarem-se no fruto que ela traz no ventre" (p. 22). Such an absolute prohibition must have come from the belief that sexual relations with pregnant women would lead to miscarriage or still-birth, a direct threat to the perpetuation of the descent group. Be that as it may, and despite his having a harem full of women of his own, Camba-Camba knows exactly what he is doing. The woman, Cauina by name, probably feels that with her husband dead (as she believes him to be), the birth of her child is meaningless. But it is not meaningless to the gods. As the plot unfolds, her husband, Djálala, still alive, returns to his tribe after escaping from his Quioco captors. He knows

the law and to avoid even the possibility of becoming sexually aroused, he does not return to his family hut even to sleep. The plot becomes more complex when this same man sets his sights on one of the soba's wives. The penalty for even thinking aloud about coveting a soba's woman was slavery at least, if not death. But death was not only reserved for the adulterer; it was also the penalty for the adultress, as Soromenho tells us of Camba-Camba's mistress' reaction to the possibility. She knew that "os sobas mandam matar com requintes de crueldade as mulheres que os enganam" (p. 95). The soba's property was sacrosanct.

The warrior Djalala, having spent months as a slave of the Quiocos, had tried to find release with a prostitute. Soromenho has deftly had all the prostitutes go over to the enemy, and Djalala chooses to turn his attentions again to the soba's young wife, whom he had wanted in the first place. Finally he sets aside his fear of Camba-Camba and arranges a liaison with the woman. All this happens without Djalala ever knowing that his own wife had been unfaithful with Camba-Camba. What Soromenho has done is weave a bizarre fabric of totally unconscious revenge. Furthermore, the reader is forced to speculate on the differing intensities of the two prohibitions. The author does not offer a solution and we are left to decide for ourselves whether, given the choice, Djalala should have slept with his pregnant wife or with a wife of the soba. What is certain is that Djalala knew that as far as

his wife was concerned, "Os seus desejos nunca podiam ir para ela" (p. 87), because that was the law of the tribe. Whether the taboo of sleeping with a soba's wife was tribal law or not remains unstated. Superimposed on this already complex interplay of emotions and judgments of taboos is Cauina's guilt at having, in fact, committed adultery altogether. She can never tell her husband of her infidelity because she knows he is perfectly capable of "taking a knife to her womb." The only characters who need know the whole story are the gods, and they do. Cauina is punished by an excruciatingly long and painful labor and her baby is born dead. Djálala never finds out why the gods have cursed him so. But perhaps he, too, has been punished for wanting to seduce the soba's wife.

The theme of adultery and divine retribution is dealt with in Nhári also. When a Bângala soba dies, his wives are brought before the villagers for a "fidelity ceremony." Although it is now past any concern of the deceased, the villagers must know if their laws were obeyed during his lifetime: "A mulher pode ser infiel ao marido durante a vida . . ., mas depois da morte . . . o destino se encarregara de divulgar seus crimes . . ." (p. 73). Destiny refers to the gods but in this instance retribution is left in the hands of the people. One of the soba's wives has indeed committed adultery, and just as she is punished by the tribe, her lover is punished by the gods. In the story, the lover is a soba from an adjoining village and, in a plot reminiscent of Hamlet,

is haunted by the spirit of the cuckold. "A misteriosa voz do sobeta, dizendo da sua maldição, talhava o silêncio da noite de angústia" (p. 76). (Those last words evidently had a special appeal for the author as they became the title of his first novel, published just a year after Nhárí.)

The tradition of hospitality is one of the strongest among the Africans. Anyone stopping in a village for food and drink is treated with utmost kindness and respect. In Nhárí and Rajada, two stories relate the violation of that tradition. In the former, an old woman suffering from leprosy begs water in a village but is refused and routed. In the latter, the tribe's former soba, dethroned because he lost a war, returns to his village a broken man, pleading for food. He, too, is chased away empty-handed. In both instances, the justice of the gods is quick and decisive. Strong rains inundate both villages, drowning all the inhabitants. Lakes now stand where once there had been villages and the lakes are holy symbols to the people of Lunda. "A canoa . . . não conhece os caminhos do lago. . . . A sua água foi sagrada pelo sacrifício e tocá-la é profanação que os deuses castigam com a morte" (Rajada, pp. 104-105). The origins of the two legends which form the bases for those stories have already been discussed in this study. The interpretation of the gods' interdiction is lost in African pre-history, but doubtless has its roots in some rational danger those lakes presented to the peoples of the region. The people's memory is short

and tradition is precious, so the witchdoctors make pilgrimages to the lake from time to time to listen to the voices of the condemned, living beneath the waters "em castigo pela sua crueldade e para exemplo dos homens" (p. 105).

Whenever major decisions are taken, as we have seen, the protection and sanction of the gods are invoked. As Calenga is about to lead his people out of their village, into the unknown, he goes to the tombs of his ancestors to bid them farewell and pray for their guidance. He is joined by the elders and witchdoctors "e todos oraram à beira dos túmulos dos sobas" (Calenga, p. 51). Soromenho's Africans are constantly praying to their gods and the spirits of their ancestors. Just as the spirits are invoked in times of joy, such as the accession of a new king or the birth of an heir, so are they called upon to grant surcease from the evils that plague the African. Prayers are said before the melembas, the graves of the dead, or at the mahambas, those "exotic temples" which house the idols of the "santos milagreiros" (Nhári, p. 48). The training of a witchdoctor begins with his first exposure to the mahambas when, as a child, he is taken by his mother to ". . . -os santuários . . . quando foi rezar aos seus mortos" (Calenga, p. 18).

Man tries to placate the gods and the spirits of the dead at every turn. His efforts are most often fruitless but he must go on believing if he is to survive. When illness strikes, the medicine man is called. The best he can do,

usually, is leave the patient with some sort of amulet to dispel the evil spirits ravaging his body. A soba in Rajada wears such an amulet suspended from a necklace of multi-colored beads. This particular amulet is nothing more than "um cornicho carregado de unguentos" (p. 11). But this medicine man must be special, because he has been called in from the faraway lands of Luita, "terra de afamados curandeiros" (pp. 11-12). Even the ahistoric, neolithic Africans seem to have had their own version of a medical school. There were also special schools for sorcery, as we learn in Noite de Angústia. Ivenga, Salemo's slave girl, has given birth to two dead babies in succession. She blamed her first husband and henceforth abstained from sexual relations. However, by law, Salemo should have expelled her from his village,

> como lhe competia fazer em obediência à lei tribal que manda escorraçar . . . a mulher que não o alimenta com a dor do parto e não o engrandece com braços para a caça e guerra ou para o amanho da terra. (p. 19)

He fails to do so because he has more important use for her. This act of defiance is only his first challenge to the laws of the tribe. He sends her to another Lunda village to become initiated in the practice of black magic. The author's definition of sorcery follows: "Agora a negra que começara por gerar a morte no seu ventre lancou-se a semear a morte com as mãos" (p. 20). After she returns, Salemo begins to act peculiarly but even that is attributed to the supernatural, as we are told elsewhere that "A locura é um mal dos deuses,

com que os homens nada têm que ver" (Rajada, p. 46). Again Soromenho emphasizes the forces which guided man's destiny. Madness was perhaps the most impenetrable of all these forces and no medicine man, no matter how closely he communed with the spirits, could cure it.

In Noite de Angústia, when death comes to the young Capula, as it had already come to many others, the villagers become convinced that its origin does not lie in natural causes. As their traditions allow funerals and mourning only for those who have died natural deaths, the villagers do not mourn Capula. The gods, however, do not make such a distinction and the law requires that the dead be mourned properly. The villagers have not yet given up all hope, because they summon the medicine men "que em seu saber o povo depositava grande confiança" (p. 37). When the curandeiros cannot ascertain the cause of Capula's death, the people's latent fear of voodoo begins to manifest itself. In the absence of any biological causes, sorcery is the only logical answer. The terror that follows is so great that even the medicine men flee the villages, confirming on yet another level the depth of their fears. The people's first reaction to the possibility of black magic is to also flee the village. But the laws require that the sorcerer be found out and put to death. So much was sorcery believed to have been practiced that, if migrations took place at every alleged act, there would have been massive social and political upheavals among the peoples of the

savannas. The answer to the problem was to find the guilty party and put an end to his crimes. In a sense, the enormous emphasis on witchdoctors and sorcerers indicates how titanic were the struggles fought between them for control of the people's destiny. Each practitioner attempted to manipulate the supernatural for his own ends, except that the witch-doctor appeared to have been content with his position within the social structure, while the sorcerer wanted to reverse his. As was ever the case between two competing authorities, the innocents were those in the middle, totally dependent on one or the other for leadership and survival.

Wherever Soromenho's characters went, they were plagued with their fear of voodoo--from Nhárí, where "o homem negro deita-se a pensar em feiticarias" (p. 56), through Rajada, where a soba sentenced his own son to death for having murdered through sorcery. But it was possible to find and punish the feiticeiro assassino within certain supernatural and juridical processes, as we shall shortly see. On the other hand, there were no remedies for the anger of the gods.

The rituals of death were also intimately connected with the supernatural and its intermediaries. They were very specific and had to be followed to the letter. Time and again, when mourning is interrupted or interfered with, as in Noite de Angústia, misfortune multiplies. When a soba died, it was common for his muata-muari, his chief wife, to take her own life. Slaves and young boys were also buried alive with the

deceased monarch. Their bodies were interred together to bring the soba comfort in death, not unlike their identical counterparts in ancient Egypt who accompanied the Pharaohs on their journey to the Land of the Dead. When Ilunga's father, Mutombu Muculo, the old king of the Lubas, dies, his chief wife commits suicide. She is not mourned by her sons "porque êsse era a seu destino" (Calenga, p. 111). The Africans in Soromenho's fiction also believed that the spirits of the dead needed sustenance and, so the deceased would not lack for food or drink, interred an ample supply of manioc, yams and palm wine with the corpse.

Death was instinctively believed to have come from spirits or from sorcerers. Rarely is it first seen as coming from natural causes or prolonged illness. Natural causes do bring death to the soba whose soul transmigrates into his melemba in Rajada; he dies of a sunstroke. Ascertaining a cause of death is of prime concern to the African because if someone is murdered by voodoo, his soul will know no rest until the perpetrator is caught and brought to justice.

If death does come naturally the funeral rites proceed. As with all ceremonies, they begin with a special ritual dance, the batuque fúnebre. As Soromenho's Africa is filled with death, so are his works replete with batuques fúnebres. The ceremony usually begins with the mourners singing the praises of the deceased. After proclaiming their grief, they then commend the soul of the dead to the spirits. The

mourning itself can last for several days or longer, depending on the importance of the position formerly held by the deceased. The author himself never gives us a specific time frame but in Calenga implies that the mourning for Calenga's father lasted as long as the son's investiture. Singing, dancing, eating, drinking and making love, all the celebratory manifestations of African life, are also the rituals of African death. We may recall that the final act of Calenga's accession, and his final act of mourning, was rushing off to the capinzal to make love to an indeterminate number of women.

Many references have been made to the gods of the African cosmos. Beneath Zambi lay an entire stratum of lesser gods who played very direct roles in the life of the African. Most of these make their appearance in Rajada, which is probably the author's best anthology of ethnography-turned-short stories. Zambi-ia-meia is the cruel god of the rivers and lakes and the god of misfortune "que chama pelos homens . . . para os levar ao cabo do mundo" (p. 141). Perhaps the best description of Zambi-iá-meia, though, comes in Homens sem Caminho where he appears in yet another zeugma, on black and stormy nights "no céu e na alma dos homens." Everybody knows, says the author,

> . . . que o deus da água surge nas noites . . . dos grandes temporais, mas ninguém ainda pôde descrever a sua aparição assombrosa, porque o desgraçado que o vê morre de encanto! Mas todos sabem que ele vive encarnado numa serpente monstruosa . . . e bebe o sangue de todos os homens que morrem dentro da água." (p. 195)

It is not by accident that this god of rivers and death is animistically personified as a "monstrous serpent." Another god, Camuari, reigns in the land of the dead, is present at all funerals and presides over the transmigrations of souls into melembas. Cacone, god of storms, is one of the most feared of all because of the havoc he can wreak. Immediately preceding the final battle scene in Homens sem Caminho, Cacone's storm falls upon the Lunda village with such fury that it uproots the melemba. This is interpreted as the curse of Caçone and decides the battle before it ever begins: "Os lundas. . . . Eram já os vencidos. Vencera-os o delírio da tempestade ao arrancar a melemba do sobado" (p. 205). Of all the gods in African cosmos, the storm god retained a unique duality. As god of tempests, he is also god of rain. In the latter capacity, he is invoked to provide the water necessary to nourish the lands and permit the crops to flourish. Luita is the goddess of love but appears only once, when she seduces Calenga in the episode of mythical incest which brings about his death. The god of madness, Mufua-Mungongue, haunts Salemo in Noite de Angústia (perhaps a subtle attempt by the author to explain why Salemo has to resort to sorcery). The last god to appear in the cosmos is perhaps the most important of all, Mundele. He is the god of the hunt, although he is mentioned only twice. The hunt, however, is life-sustaining and the author's focus is principally destruction, desolation and death.

The position of the witchdoctor in Soromenho's Africa can best be understood by an analysis of his role as intermediary between man and his gods. The authority symbols of his trade, as it were, are fetiches and amulets endowed with special powers which only he can manipulate. Curiously, the author underplays these sacred objects in most of his narrative episodes save one, a divination ceremony to the discussed shortly. Before proceeding further with this discussion of the interpreters of the gods, a note about the author's terminology is relevant. He alternates between the terms feiticeiro and adivinho or táhi, without any distinctions whatever, when writing about the witchdoctor, diviner or oracle. We have chosen the word "sorcerer" for the author's pejorative equivalent: feiticeiro assassino. As often as not, the latter term appears without the modifier and the reader can only determine its meaning contextually. Sorcery is this writer's term for Soromenho's feiticaria, when used to mean voodoo or black magic. The curandeiro or quimbanda is, of course, the medicine man.

Soromenho's African is so totally governed by the supernatural that he is completely dependent on his feiticeiros and adivinhos. Indeed, he could not have survived without them. In Nhári, for example, the Bangala soba, Xá-Caongo, is told that he has been expelled from his realm "by order of the kings in eternal sleep," through his táhi. The oracle goes on to inform him that his melembas will not take root until his

nephew succeeds him. When asked if there is any further message from the world beyond, the diviner responds: "Nao meu senhor. Os sobas mortos nada mais me disseram" (p. 24). In the same anthology, we see an old witchdoctor kneeling by the mahambas[1] in silent communion with the dead. The soba, haunted by the spirit of the man he had deceived through cuckoldry, summons his witchdoctor for help; he need not tell the seer why he has been called because he knows that "O feiticeiro sabia do seu segrêdo! . . . Os feiticeiros sabem tudo!" (p. 71). This soba is cured of his visions for the mere price of permitting the oracle to sleep with his niece.

Prayer rituals were conducted by the witchdoctors at night, naturally, when they were most needed to calm the souls of men. Night is when "os feiticeiros se entregam a estranhas rezas" (Nhárí, p. 58). One woman seer, "uma feiticeira de nomeada," in the same work, after listening to a travelling slave recount his sexual encounter with an old woman, informs the unsuspecting man that he has just slept with his mother. When this African Oedipus, Candala, refutes the seer, she answers: "Deus sabe que eu falo verdade" (p. 63). Knowing full well that she has spoken the truth, Candala rushes out to hang himself. According to the author, suicide precludes reincarnation. "Candala é o único homem que não voltará a nascer" (p. 65).

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[1]Chatelain uses the term ma-bambas and defines them as "os espíritos inferiorers da mitologia banta." Chatelain, p. 85.

The ritual of transmigration was also performed by the witchdoctors. In Rajada, they are seated around the sacred tree mumbling monotonously "numa linguagem que só êles compreendem--êles e os espíritos a quem se dirigem" (p. 78). The use of a secret language known only to them may be linked to their manipulation of sacred fetishes and other objects. Both practices serve to set them even further apart from the lay tribesman, thus enhancing their perceived powers. Elsewhere in Rajada, when death runs rampant through a village, the witchdoctor Calélua, who presides over the rites of circumcision and only visits the villages during times of misfortune, appears. His message is succinct: the villagers must make human sacrifices to placate the gods and lift the curse. His relationship to the rites of circumcision is important in the story because the first to die had been nineteen young men on the eve of this ritual. The witchdoctor has a vested interest in absolving himself from blame by calling for the sacrifice of others. "O Calélua quere [sic] os sacrifícios. Nada podemos fazer. Êle bem sabe o que os espíritos querem" (p. 22). The soba then calls the village elders into council and they all agree that the only course of action is that called for in Calelua's divination. He has shown them the way and they must follow their destiny, because it is "mais forte que a vontade do homem e inexorável como a fatalidade" (p. 23).

Noite de Angústia is, of course, the novel of witchcraft, medicine men and black magic. The unexplained deaths in Xandumba's villages cause the people to feel completely abandoned by the gods, and word of the curse soon spreads far and wide among the neighboring tribes. ". . . a desgraca já andava em . . . cantares, que eram avisos aos caminhantes para não se abeirarem daquela terra maldita" (p. 45). Men from other tribes hunting in the forests avert their eyes in passing the bewitched villages. When a hunter from Xandumba's village accidentally enters the domains of a neighboring tribe, its people explode in terror. That very night they commence a ritual of purification to protect themselves from the evil spirits carried by the unsuspecting hunter.

> . . . os curandeiros queimaram por toda a senzala folhas olorantes, . . . e rezou-se que o cazumbi que assombrara a alma do filho da aldeia amaldiçoada não voltasse a aparecer por aqueles lugares. (p. 45)

Clearly, the people did not fear the man but rather the evil spirits that had taken possession of his soul, a further reinforcement for the reader of the Africans' fear of the supernatural.

The medicine men who were first called to diagnose the illness of the villagers had fled, as we have mentioned. Xandumba, undaunted still and unwilling to admit even the possibility of voodoo (in stark contrast to everyone around him), sends his nephew to fetch yet another curandeiro. The latter has a definite price for his services and it is very

high. But as the people's terror verges on insanity, Muaquife, the nephew, has no choice but to promise everything he demands. He comes to the village and, after examining Capula's body, raises his arms and solemnly announces that she is, in fact, a victim of voodoo. There is nothing left for him to do in the village because, as everyone knows, in cases of voodoo "só aos adivinhos é dado apontar o criminoso" (p. 54). We have now come full circle, to the arrival of the witchdoctor, Samugimo, in Xandumba's village. He will divine the guilty party, in a ceremony that is part and parcel of the African system of jurisprudence. Before our analysis of Soromenho's portrayal, let us briefly examine the African concepts of justice and the nature and structure of judicial proceedings.

The soba historically, like his counterparts in the ancient civilizations of the Near East and medieval Europe, was the chief magistrate of his people. As such, he not only presided over all disputes but had to follow African due process with the greatest of care. He had always to appear impartial to his people in any judicial proceedings. If a man were aggrieved, he could in some cases ask for the appointment of a special mediator. Almost invariably, though, he sought justice from his soba. If he felt the crime had been caused by black magic, he would also request the intervention of a diviner, as is the case in Noite de Angústia. Chatelain described the procedure as follows:

> O medium . . . ouve gravamente a adjuração, ... As vezes a adjuração é, . . . simplesmente uma espécie de juramento, quer para provar a sua inocência, quando acusado, quer para provar o direito de reclamar, quando acusador. . . . A utilização deste . . . em legítima defesa é considerado legal, mas o uso secreto de espíritos para matar ou ferir alguém, e que é chamado . . . (feitiço), constitui a maior crime do que um homem pode ser acusado, e é invariávelmente punido com a morte.[2]

The very existence of judicial institutions implies the presence of a whole corpus of long-proscribed actions, accumulated over the course of centuries. In due time, these actions came to be legally defined as crimes. The major felonies, as described by Cadornega as far back as 1680, were normative among all the Bantu peoples of Central Africa. They were, in Cadornega's classification:

> . . . conspiração contra a pessoa do rey ou senhor, . . . ou alevantamento contra seu senhorio, querendo algum dos seus vassalos despossuilo delle ou perdendo o respeito devido á sua caza e banza, entendendo com alguma dama de seu serviço, . . . ou mulher concubina, do sova seu senhor; estes que são quebrantar a lei ou pragmatica, perde a cabeça, com a vida, que logo se lhe manda cortar em terreiro á vista de todos, sendo convencido primeiro do crime ou delito que lhe imputão, por testemunhas verbalmente; e sendo de trayção ou conspiração lha cortão por detraz como a traydor, . . . nos mais cazos que não estão estabelecidos por lei ou pragmatica, se ajuntão os principaes macotas, que são os do conselho, assim nos casos crimes como civeis, e os rezolvem entre si summariamente, com testemunhas presentes . . ., assistindo presente o senhor da terra, que como juiz, ouvidos as partes e testemunhas, promulga a sentença, não havendo mais appellação. . . .[3]

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[2]Chatelain, n. 97, pp. 483-484.

[3]Antonio de Oliveira de Cadornega, História Geral das Guerras Angolanas, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (Lisbon: Agência-Geral do Ultramar, 1972), III, 252.

In the case of alleged voodoo, after the oracle had made his divination and pointed out the accused, the latter had to undergo the final trial of the so-called "poison oath." Cadornega continues:

> Há paos e ervas de tanta força e virtude, . . . que dá este gentio huns a outros, para descubrirem alguns furtos ou dividas que negão, ou crime que hajão feito, de que nao ha prova bastante. . . .
> . . . e he feito . . . de uma fructa . . ., que he . . . um veneno . . . e se tomar muito arrebentara com elle qualquer pessoa; e . . ., dão a beber por um . . . cabaço, ...[4]

We learn from the following, though, that even in the mid-1600's witchdoctors could be bought for a price before the administration of the poison.

> E por onde aquelles mestres diabólicos alcanção os que estão comprehendidos, se são mestres jubilados naquella arte, he porque têm pacto com aquelle aquem adorão e venerão, . . .; vai se então á vazilha onde está aquella bebida, . . . e dão ao que quer que caya no juramento, . . . e aos mais culpados; elles vendo que os apahnou o negro juramento confessão . . . o feito e o por fazer, para lhe darem a contra, se não arrebentão pellas ilhargas; e a muitos deixão morrer por não quererem confessar suas culpas, que tal vez não hão commettido.[5]

With or without poison oaths, the proper administration of justice was key to the preservation of the descent group. Justice was so important that, when dispensed equitably, it enhanced a ruler's authority over his people. The princess Lueji, in Calenga, ruled according to the law and

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[4]Ibid., pp. 319-320.

[5]Ibid., p. 321.

"em breve ganhou os favores do povo, que acima de tudo ama a justiça" (p. 163). If a soba did not carry out his responsibilities in this sphere, he inevitably lost the respect of his subjects and ran the risk of encouraging rebellion. That is exactly what happens to Xandumba in Noite de Angústia, where his terrorized people keep screaming: "Queremos a tua justiça, Samacata" (p. 69). Their appeal to his obligation to mete out justice by using his nom de guerre, Samacata, is also an appeal, on a much subtler level, to his manhood. We see that he is a man of integrity as he ponders and agonizes over the case before him, concluding that "nada de concreto se tinha dito, que todo não passava de insinuações. Não se acusa sem provas" (p. 69). He is also acutely aware that the penalty for falsely accusing another soba or sobeta of voodoo, is death. If his nephew publicly indicted Salemo and could not substantiate his accusations, "lá estaria o soba para o entregar ao carrasco" (p. 53). That may have been one more consideration in Xandumba's final decision to summon the diviner; he did not wish to destroy his lineage group by being compelled to execute his nephew.

There is yet another side to the entire question of justice in this novel, to which we have only alluded. We may recall that Xandumba had originally refused Salemo's request for a diviner, and that this refusal had outraged Salemo's chief councillor, Candongo. The latter rants and raves in the chota that: "Quando a nossa gente morria, era

por causa da peste, mas agora que a morte anda na senzala de Xandumba, já se fala em feitiços" (p. 88). Candongo claims that this is highly unfair, reminding his listeners that he and Salemo had asked that a diviner be summoned from the very beginning because they were convinced that voodoo was to blame. He asks, almost rhetorically, why Xandumba has not treated his vassals equitably and continues:

> Eu estou velho a conheço muitas terra mas nunca vi uma coisa assim! Onde está a justiça? Já não há lundas . . .!
> . . . . . .
> A Lunda acabou! Agora os quiocos podem vir cortar a cabeça dos nossos sobas e levar os seus homens e mulheres como escravos. Os quiocos podem mijar em cima da gente! (p. 88)

Soromenho is telling the reader that without due process and justice, the descent group loses its cohesion and can easily be subjugated by its enemies. Candongo ends his peroration ominously as he concludes: "Já não ha lundas, minha gente! Acabou tudo! Tudo!" (p. 89). Candongo would attend the divination, as required of all Salemo's people, and, like everyone else, would not discover the identity of the guilty party until the very end of the ritual.

The ritual of divination is the dramatic high point of the entire novel. Soromenho calls it the cusambula-mezambo, "essa estranha cerimonia de adivinhação" (p. 121). Chatelain informs us that "Mu-zambu é o substantivo, adivinhação; kuzambula é o verbo, adivinhar, ou, . . . consultar um oráculo. Mu-zamb-u e ku-samb-ula parecem ter o mesmo radical

que N-zamb-i, o nome de Deus."[6]

Salemo's entire village moves into that of Xandumba, with the women carrying food and drink in the event the ceremony is extended. The ill will between the two villages is manifested once again because Salemo's people know they will be refused food in their enemy's camp. There is already an air of resignation and an augury of things to come as "A horda marchava . . . como se tivesse deixado para sempre terra maldita . . ." (p. 129). Nevertheless, Salemo's people have done nothing wrong, nor do they suspect their chieftain. They do intend to return home after the ceremony because they leave behind all their material possessions while only bringing requisite nourishment. They are unafraid of divine justice because "os bens que possuíam não era fruto de rapina e não haviam semeado males para males colherem" (p. 130). Xandumba's people, however, have their sights set on sacking Salemo's village and look forward to his being convicted. The ceremony begins late in the afternoon in front of the assembled descent groups. The witchdoctor makes his appearance wearing a feathered headdress. His kinky hair is smeared with ritual red clay, his naked chest covered with tattoos, and a necklace of shells filled with poison herbs is tied around his neck by the claws and teeth of animals. His genitals are covered with a black lion's mane. Behind him walks his lackey, carrying the gombo, his magic gourd. Chatelain tells us that this vessel usually contained

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[6]Chatelain, n. 444, p. 528.

> . . . ossos, unhas, farrapos, cabelos, etc., que o adivinho agita no seu cesto de adivinhação. Da posição tomada pelos diferentes objectos, êle adivinha o que os visitantes desejam conhecer.[7]

Slowly, the diviner lifts his copper-braceleted arms in greeting. "Os homens fecharam os olhos, dobraram-se sobre si mesmos, rosto colado aos joelhos" (p. 136), in a gesture reminiscent of the homage paid Calenga after he had transferred the lucanos from his dead father to himself. The similarity of the two episodes is not lost upon the reader. The diviner, during the practice of his art, is treated with the exact same deference as a king upon his succession. The witchdoctor has come at the order of the two chiefs. As the ceremony begins, the attendant fear becomes a rising crescendo: "Os homens . . . juntaram-se uns aos outros, apinharam-se, presos pelo medo. Cerraram os olhos, os dentes a baterem . . . e ficaram sem poderem falar, abismados no seu pavor" (p. 136). The two tribes then form a semi-circle and the witchdoctor sits down in the center, on a leopard's skin. Again Soromenho equates the powers of the seer with those of the king. There is not a man or woman among the assembled multitude who does not understand the symbolism of that leopard skin. All eyes fix on the gombo, that "gourd of miracles" filled with amulets. Samugimo's magic gourd differs little in contents from that described by Chatelain. It contains children's bones, semi-precious stones, heads and feathers of different birds, lion's

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[7]Ibid., n. 441.

claws, small antlers stuffed with herbs and hyena's teeth among other items--the typical African objects of the supernatural. Slowly the witchdoctor begins to rattle the gourd, eyes fixed and half-closed. He stops suddenly "a ouvir vozes reveladoras" (p. 137). His eyes scan the crowd briefly and then return to the gourd. This procedure is repeated many times. Finally, he looks up and fixes the perpetrator with a long, hypnotic stare. The guilty party, now publicly exposed and no longer able to return the oracle's gaze, falls to the ground screaming, "Not I, not I," and loses consciousness. The witchdoctor then orders the criminal marked on his forehead with a clump of dirt.

Once the criminal has been identified, "o povo ergueu-se . . . cego de ira, ululante, na boca a mesma palavra de maldição: Feiticeiro!" (p. 140). The people demand that the sorcerer be burned alive in accordance with tribal law but he has yet to submit to the ordeal of the poison oath.

Chatelain, in discussing judicial procedures among the Kimbundu points out that: "Em assuntos vitáis, como feitiçaria, eles são resolvidos pela prova de veneno, sendo neste caso o feiticeiro o juiz e também frequentemente o carrasco."[8] The poison which the sorcerer will have to drink is called muaje by the author and is defined simply as a "poção venenosa, usada especialmente nos julgamentos dos

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[8]Chatelain, p. 84.

criminosos."[9] That night, the accused is given his last meal. It is a dish of manioc mush mixed with narcotics, which has been specially prepared by the witchdoctor. The use of narcotics probably served to prevent the victim from violently resisting or interrupting the poison oath ceremony. The witchdoctor remains at the scene until the meal is finished. The next morning, the accused is again partially drugged with água opiada. The author then explains the purpose of the poison oath ceremony.

> O condenado estava preparado para receber o muaje--o veneno terrível que lhe arrancaria a vida em breve segundos, a assinalar o seu crime de feitiçaria, ou sairía num vómito, provando que ele estava isento de culpa! (pp. 144-145)

A Portuguese ethnologist of the early 20th century, David Magno, describes a similar ceremony as practiced by the Dembos, a people living to the south of the Lundas, as follows:

> The effects that this drink produce in the individual vary according to the dose . . . and the weakness of the stomach. . . . Those who show no symptoms of poisoning and suffer nothing after drinking the drug are . . . innocent; those who survive intoxication, but do not die, are considered to be accomplices; and . . . those who die instantaneously . . . are considered to have been sorcerers.[10]

This second part of the divination ceremony, the taking of poison by the accused, protects the innocents from a witchdoctor's

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[9]Castro Soromenho, Noite de Angústia, 2nd ed. rev., 1943, glossário, p. 231.

[10]David Magno, Ethnografia dos Dembos (Porto: Imprensa Portugueza, 1921), pp. 21-23. Writer's translation.

"malpractice." Soromenho says: "O adivinho também pode enganar-se, porque é um homem sujeito a ser tentado por espíritos de mortos, . . . que se aproveitam da cusambula-mezambo para o arrastar a uma injustiça, ... E por isso que se dá a beber o muaje, que é infalível" (p. 145).[11]

Both tribes move down to the stream for the second and final act of the divination. The battle lines are drawn, with Xandumba's people on the near bank and Salemo's on the opposite side. The witchdoctor appears, wearing a wooden mask, also called muquixe, "de aspecto feroz." His whole body is painted with red and white stripes. In one hand he holds an antelope's tail, in the other a gourd filled with poison. The accused barely notices his arrival, so drugged is he. He drinks down the poison in one gulp. On the near side of the stream, Xandumba's people shout: "Vais morrer! Vais morrer porque és feiticeiro!" (p. 147). On the far side, Salemo's people rejoin: "Não morres, não, Salemo! Tu não és feiticeiro, não!" (p. 147). The witchdoctor then gives Salemo some water to drink "para apagar o fogo que lhe devora as entranhas" (p. 147). The reader knows, of course, how the drama will end, the lines of the plot having been laid out at the beginning of the novel. Salemo goes into convulsions and dies without a sound. Xandumba's people rush to Salemo's

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[11]For the same ritual as practiced among the Mbundu, see Miller, p. 229.

village to loot it completely and burn it to the ground because "terra de feiticeiro é maldita e nunca mais pode servir de abrigo a ninguém. . . . Nem leproso ousará passar por ali" (p. 151). Salemo's people, on the other hand, run to Xandumba's side shouting and screaming in the knowledge that they are now his slaves. Thus ends the emotional peak of Noite de Angústia.

A discussion of African religious beliefs and customs would not be complete without a brief mention of the African's perceptions of the white man's religion. The white man as active participant is totally absent from this phase of Soromenho's fiction; he appears only occasionally in oblique references to the filhos do mar. His role is ever so slightly expanded in the characterization of Candongo, who had travelled to the ocean and fought with the white men against the Bangala of Cassange. We may recall that, in Noite de Angústia, this irascible old man used to regale his people at night with stories of his exploits. On one particular occasion, he tries to explain the white man's religion and customs to his incredulous listeners. He tells them that the white man dies differently from the African, and does not believe in feiticeiros. Neither do the white men believe in voodoo, explains Candongo. They say they do not believe in it but they are lying. "Voodoo is everywhere, as everyone knows." Candongo goes on to criticize white men because they do not sing or dance at funerals like the African. All they seem to know is how to cry like

children and say that God has taken the deceased. Someone asks what "God" is. Candongo responds: "É como Zambi. Ninguém o viu. Os brancos dizem que esta lá em cima" (p. 90). "Ah," the other says, "Esse é que é o feiticeiro dos brancos" (p. 91).

CHAPTER 8

LIFE IN THE BUSH

Planting and Fishing

Soromenho has thus far shown us his characters' lands, the structure of their villages and the political and religious institutions which ruled their lives. In this chapter, we shall analyze how the African fought his day-to-day battles to survive the onslaughts of a world seemingly bent on his destruction.

From remotest times, the African subsisted on the fruits of the land, when and where he could find them, and on the fish of the rivers and lakes. This was particularly true of the neolithic tribes in Calenga, the Calambas and the Bungos. Even with later refinements in hunting techniques (appearing in Soromenho's narratives with the arrival of the Lubas and their iron weapons), these peoples continued to cultivate their staples on plots of land called lavras. Subsistence agriculture was more dependable than the yield of the hunt. Fishing techniques, however, were already quite refined by the time the ancestors of the Luba migrated from the great African lakes in the east to the tributaries of the Congo in Central Africa.

The staple crops of the savannas were manioc and millet, brought from Brazil by the Portuguese, and yams, native to the African soil. Of the two, manioc was certainly more widely cultivated as it was "o regime econômico de subsistência."[1] Its proper husbandry insured that even if fishing and hunting were unsuccessful at any given time, the people would survive until conditions improved. The principal advantage of manioc to the Africans was its ability to resist the not-uncommon droughts of the savannas. And if it were left standing in the fields too long, there were even techniques for belated harvesting and preventing further decay. Djalala, one of the main protagonists in Homens sem Caminho, warns his people that the manioc is, indeed, rotting in the fields and "É preciso arrancar a mandioca e pôr tudo dentro de água . . ." (p. 107). The arrival of manioc in Africa probably freed the people, to some extent, from their agricultural dependence, allowing them more time to search for other sources of food. Before the arrival of manioc, in other words, African survival was tied to an agricultural system which had to produce enough to last not only through the rainy season but through the dry season as well. Manioc freed the African from that dependence and the rapidity with which its cultivation spread throughout Central Africa was proof positive of its particular value to the people.

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[1] Redinha, p. 88.

We may recall that the one lesson Calenga learns from his people (as opposed to all the others he gets from the tribal elders, the witchdoctor and his father), is that "starvation is the greatest rebuke of the gods." His first responsibility, perforce, is to feed his people. Likewise, the entire lineage diffusion of the Lubas takes place because of starvation brought on by prolonged drought. "Mutombo Muculo, the "Old Tree"[2] of the Luba peoples, sends his sons away to resettle their descent groups in more fertile and hospitable lands. The situation had deteriorated in Luba territory to such an extent that the people had started eating "as últimas lagartas verdes e pretas das árvores" (Calenga, p. 95). In response to his father's wishes, Cassongo, the eldest son, has taken his people eastward. Canhúica goes west with his group and Ilunga, with twenty hunters, proceeds south in search of game yet planning to return to Luba with his quarry. Ilunga, as we know, did not return but stayed in the land of the Bungos and married Lueji. The author's description of starvation in Rajada tells the whole story quite simply: "a fome . . . voltou a martirizar o povo" (p. 28).

Starvation was more than just the result of a prolonged lack of food. In descent group terms, when a king's subjects were forced to leave both their liege and their lands to

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[2]Dias de Carvalho, Ethnografia, p. 59, Castro Soromenho, Calenga, p. 90.

search for food elsewhere, that departure implied for the people an abandonment of his title, "since the imagery of food and feeding stood as a metaphor for one of the most basic beliefs about their relationships to their chiefs."[3] That is, in fact, what happened to the Luba of Mutombo Muculo. His eldest son had even relinquished the sacred Luba authority symbol, the chimbúia, to form his own descent group, the Cassongos. Soromenho tells us that once his people were resettled in their lands in the east, they stopped calling themselves Lubas and took on the name of their new chief. In similar fashion, the next in line for the throne, Canhúica, leaves his father's lands and establishes his own tribe, the Canhuicas. Ilunga becomes king of an entirely different people, the Bungos, because he had not yet started his own descent group (i.e., he was a bachelor when he arrived in Bungo country). Mutombo Muculo knew that the only hope for the survival of his people lay in migration at the moment he was reduced to eating stolen meat given him by some of his foraging tribesmen. As holder of the title and supreme symbol of the tribe's laws and customs, his shame at having stooped to such a moral nadir is too great to bear. He screams: "O soba dos lubas comeu carne roubada! . . . A Luba acabou!" (Calenga, p. 100).

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[3]Miller, p. 172.

Most of Soromenho's other peoples enjoyed slightly better living conditions, although unexplained and attenuated droughts could well have fallen on them as it had upon the Lubas. The people who lived best off the lands were the Calambas in Calenga. And there is even a certain irony that these people are juxtaposed with the Lubas in the same anthology. The Calambas had been expelled from their original territory by the Bungos of Iala Mácu (or his predecessors, as was most probable) as a result of defeat in the so-called "War of the Stones." The Bungos, we are told, were experts with the slingshot, atiradores de funda, and easily defeated the Calambas whose meager arsenal consisted in the main of wooden spears. The Calambas migrated to a great rain forest from which, as has been stated elsewhere, they were forbidden by divine proscription to leave. And, as we may recall, they never did leave nor did they do much exploring within the forest itself, because they had no idea where it ended. Thinking themselves safely resettled and protected from their enemies by the density of the forest, they laid aside their weapons of war, such as they were, and took up the pastoral life of the jungle. They lived well from fishing and cultivating their plantations. In their forest, "cresciam raizes e frutos, frutos ácidos e raizes doces. . . . Nas margens da ribeira azul verdejavam as lavras de massangano e inhame" (Calenga, p. 29). (Massangano is a variety of millet and inhame, the African yam.) The phrase "verdejavam as lavras"

appears through all the author's works as an indication of the flourishing of agricultural pursuits. There was also the natural African division of labor where "as mulheres cavavam a terra das plantações e os homens caçavam na planície e pescavam na ribeira e no rio" (Rajada, p. 29).

The planting was a ceremony in its own right, there being special fertility rites for the land. After the women of the tribe had planted seeds for the next year's crops, they and their men would go to the fields that night and have sexual relations on the newly-seeded ground. "Amavam-se para que na terra a semente pudesse germinar" (Rajada, p. 138). That ritual, obviously, was designed to encourage the germination of two kinds of seed, and was a metaphor for bounteous crops as well as descent group perpetuation.

> The seeds symbolized both females and the agricultural economy. . . . The Lunda closely associate women and seed on a mundane level, since their wives customarily plant and harvest most crops.[4]

In certain agricultural and fishing societies, men would also till the land and harvest the crops. We see, for example, two fishermen returning home in their dugout with "paus de mandioca e um cesto de peixe" (Rajada, p. 85).

Because manioc was the staple of the African diet, it appears throughout the literature under analysis. In Nharí, the slave Candala comes upon an old woman grinding

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[4]Ibid., p. 147.

manioc in a mortar. She is the same woman with whom he spends the night, only to find out later that she is his mother. In Rajada, the preparation of a dinner is narrated as follows: "Velhas escravas . . . pilam mandioca, fazem chiar pedaços de abóbora sôbre brasas escarlates e aloiram ao fogo espigas de milho" (p. 114). After the manioc had been harvested, it had to be dried before it could be ground into flour. (For later milling, it was stored in water.) Elsewhere in Rajada, a man returns home with a bundle of manioc which he leaves outside his hut. His wife totally disapproves although she can say nothing. She is afraid the impending rains will ruin the plants. It would appear in these same agriculturally-oriented societies that even the sobas took part in the planting and harvest. Mention is made of one chief who is so old "que já não podia ir às lavras com as suas mulheres" (Rajada, p. 136).

Seasonings are mentioned rarely, although salt plays a crucial role at the initial meeting between Ilunga and Lueji. Salt is also significant from an historical and economic perspective. "Salt appears to be among the very first commodities which a community requires when its economic activity grows beyong the point of local subsistence."[5] The valley of Cassange was settled early, as has been mentioned,

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[5]David Birmingham, "The African Response to Early Portuguese Activities in Angola," Protest and Resistance, ed. Chilcote, p. 14.

because of its proximity to large salt marshes. (Miller affirms that salt ranked just behind iron in importance to the emerging iron-age societies of Central Africa.[6])

While out on a hunt, men might eat "nacos de carne afogueado, com muito sal e malagueta" (Calenga, p. 178). Back in the village, the meal was more substantial, consisting of manioc mush (pirão) and pieces of meat dipped in hot red pepper. Men ate with red-stained hands, "moldando o pirão em pequenos bolos, que ràpidamente atiravam para a boca" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 88). Finally, the meal would be washed down with the ever-present palm wine (when it was not being imbibed to drown out the tragedies of life outside). When Ilunga and his hunters come to Lueji's forests, one of her servants asks them the purpose of their visit. They tell her they have meat but no salt with which to eat it. The servant tells them to wait by the banks of the river, the outer perimeter of Lueji's village. That night, one of the Bungo tribesmen brings them "três quindas com alimentos, dizendo-lhes que era a Senhora da Terra dos bungos que lhes enviava aquele presente" (Calenga, pp. 185-186). In Dias de Carvalho's rendition, Lueji called one of her councillors "e disse-lhe que, estando do outro lado alguns caçadores estrangeiros que traziam caça e pediam sal em troca, providenciasse . . . tudo que fosse preciso. . . .[7]

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[6]See Miller, p. 36.

[7]Dias de Carvalho, p. 68.

Ilunga, a stranger in a strange land, does not completely trust this benevolence, most especially because it has come to him at night. Before he or his hunters touch one piece of food, he has the Bungo emissary eat from each of the three baskets. When the latter does so with no ill effect, Ilunga concludes that the food has been sent as a gesture of friendship.

This one story of "Lueji e Ilunga na Terra de Amizade" in Calenga, is charming indeed. The man and woman meet, exchange gifts (meat for salt), fall in love, marry, and have a son to succeed to their throne. The symbolism attached to this seemingly elementary exchange of staples, salt (Lueji) and meat (Ilunga), was as important in the Lunda histories as the exchange of explicit authority symbols, the lucano and the chimbúia. The dual exchange, in Lunda epic history, reinforced the idea of Lunda acceptance of Luba political authority at a very early period in that people's historical development. The importance of the story is further supported by the clarity and ease with which it was recounted to Dias de Carvalho by his Lunda and Quioco sources, approximately three hundred years after the fact.

Hunting for Game

With the refinements of agricultural techniques and the massive expansion of manioc cultivation, African man had more time to pursue his carnivorous instincts through the hunt

for game. It was, in fact, the most important responsibility of the men of the tribe. Success in the hunt provided new sources of food, immense self-esteem for the hunters and it became the foundation for descent group expansion.

None of Soromenho's men were born to the hunt. They were trained in it through two all-important rituals: circumcision and initiation into the "cult of the hunters," the hunter's society.

Circumcision was the dividing line between early youth and manhood. It was not, as in some societies, a mere physical alteration which changed a boy, ipso facto, into a man. For Soromenho's peoples, circumcision was a long process of educating the young men of the tribe in all the ways of their people. It was almost a form of renascence, as the uncircumcised boy entered the circumcision rite or mucanda with the name he had been given at birth, and left it, if he survived, with a completely new name. This name change was, then, a metaphor for the transformation of identities.

In purest physical terms, the mucanda was a fertility rite, as circumcision was believed to insure perpetuation of the descent group. "Only . . . circumcised men could marry and thus provide legitimate heirs for their wives' lineages."[8] Its importance was noted as early as Cadornega, who wrote:

> Todo o gentio destes reinos uza da circuncizão, . . . e sendo os filhos de cinco ou seis annos, . . .

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[8]Miller, p. 229.

> os levão ás fazendas e arimos e de lá os trazem fanados; e não se tem por homem perfeito o que nao he; . . .[9]

Although Soromenho describes the didactic portions of the ritual in Rajada and Calenga, he says nothing about the origins of the practice in his fiction. We could stop here and proceed to an immediate study of his portrayals in those works had he not written an ethnographic monograph specifically on the rites themselves: Mistérios da Terra (Mucanda-Cangongo).[10]

We know that the author had become interested in this custom very early in his career, as his postscript to the monograph indicates.[11] Although he gives no bibliography, he does cite writers on the subject from Herodotus to the Portuguese ethnographer Jose Teixiera Rego. He ends his introduction with the citation from Genesis confirming Abraham's covenant with Jehovah. That, in fact, is where his trouble begins. He affirms that circumcision was introduced into Africa, "pelos judeus e difundida pelos egipcios, ..."[12] This assertion is an indirect allusion to the

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[10]Castro Soromenho, Mistérios da Terra (Mucanda-Cangongo), Colecção Forum, Estudos Coloniais, no. 1. (Porto: Editora Educação Nacional, 1944).

[11]"A . . . meus antigos companheiros nos sertões da Lunda, agradeço a contribuição que trouxeram a este estudo, quando em 1932 recolhíamos material etnográfico na região do Dala." Mistérios da Terra, n., p. 83.

[12]Mistérios da Terra, p. 13.

the commonly held European belief about African state formation known as the "Hamitic Myth" and later the "Sudanic State Hypothesis."[13]

As was ever the case with Soromenho, he was most comfortable with primary sources, or secondary ones which reinforced his own experiences. We learn from the monograph, for example, that the circumcision ritual among the Lunda lasts an entire year, a fact which finds its way into Rajada, as we shall see. The monograph goes on to claim that the general age limits for participation in the ritual were between eight and eighteen. The author then explains the fundamental meaning of the rite: "Durante . . . [a] mucanda, . . . os rapazes aprèndem tudo quanto lhe [sic] vai ser preciso, tanto no campo material como no espiritual . . ., para se orientarem em toda a sua existência."[14] We learn that there is often great shame and even greater danger for anyone who does not submit to circumcision. These "unclean" men either have to flee their villages and lead a miserable life of wandering celibacy (no African woman will have sexual relations with an uncircumcised man), or they remain as outcasts and pariahs among their own people. Some of them even commit suicide. Not unexpectedly, there is a supernatural connection

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[13]See Miller, Chapter 1.

[14]Mistérios da Terra, p. 24.

between the evils that might befall a tribe and the presence of an uncircumcised man in that village. The Quiocos, Soromenho's "bad guys" from the beginning to the end of his African fiction, "castigam com toda a sua tradicional crueldade, castigos que chegam a ir até à morte, os homens incircuncidados, a quem atribuem todos os males que o povo tenha sofrido."[15]

As the monograph becomes more exactly a work of pure ethnography, minutely detailing each particular aspect of the ritual, we turn back to Soromenho's fiction for an appreciation of his overview. The importance of the mucanda is transmitted to the young boys of the tribe in their earliest years. A child accompanies his older sister to her mahambas. When she has finished praying, the following dialogue takes place: "O que pediste às mahambas . . . para mim? Pedi que fôsses brevemente para a mucanda, para seres homem" (Nhári, p. 48). One of the objectives of the mucanda is to inculcate the tribe's religious beliefs and practices in their male young. A warrior remembers that his fear of evil spirits began during the time of his initiation. "Eu lembro-me--. . .-- que quando era rapazinho, foi no tempo da minha mucanda, . . ., eu ia tremer e falar em voz alta, para não pensar nos cazumbis" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 85). The most complete fictive description of the mucanda, however, comes in Calenga. The entire ritual takes place in an enclosed clearing called

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[15]Ibid., p. 26.

a bamba,[16] far from the village and planting grounds. "Ali nasciam os homens novos do clã, onde só é homem aquêle que for circuncidado" (p. 24). (That last phrase is reminiscent of Cadornega's "e não se tem por homem perfeito o que não he.") The circumcision camp itself is sacred ground and if defiled in any way, may never be used for the mucanda again, as we shall see shortly. Presiding over the ceremony in Calenga is "o mais velho de todos os velhos da tribo . . ." (p. 24), while in Rajada, priests (sacerdotes) administer the rites and guide the boys in their learning. "Os segredos da raça e os mistérios da terra" (Calenga, p. 24) are "revealed" to the initiates during their year-long retreat in the jungle. In Calenga, the religious aspect of the ceremony is intensified. It is in the mucanda that Calenga learns "que os homens e os seus segredos e a terra e os seus mistérios dependiam da vontade dos deuses" (p. 25). Finally, it is during this rite that Calenga loses all his youthful innocence and childhood fears, only to have them replaced by more fundamental preoccupations "que o haviam de inquietar durante tôda a vida" (p. 25). The boy prince turned man says farewell to his lost youth in one final act: "E o rapaz chorou . . . com saudades da sua vida de caçador de borboletas e . . . grilos" (pp. 25-26). To deal with the world at hand,

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[16]"-chão nu feito ara onde os rapazes se sacrificam para ganhar direitos de homem" (Rajada, p. 13).

he and his companions are taught all the legends and stories of hunting and war, "e sentiu um louco desejo de se lançar na estrada da aventura" (p. 26).

One of the most important side effects of the mucanda was the bond created among the members of a specific "class." Calenga learned to become "o irmão de todos os rapazes que, na sua companhia, foram iniciados no rito da circuncisão" (p. 26). When he left the ritual, he knew all the things known only to the men of his tribe and, above all, "aprendeu de ser o companheiro, que é mais que irmão, dos moços que a seu lado foram sacrificados aos deuses da mucanda para ganharem o direito de serem homens" (p. 26). That was one of the most valuable of all lessons and would have its analogue in the hunter's society, which will be discussed shortly.

The end of the mucanda comes "após um ano de vida na floresta" (Rajada, p. 13). It is announced, like all other important news, by a special drum beat. Back with their families for the first time in over a year, the young men begin a dance (batuque) called the ualécua ("êsse estranho batuque dos circuncidados," Rajada, p. 13). This final act is exclusively for the new "men" (as opposed to all other batuques in which everyone participates), who sing and dance in special praise to the gods "que lhes abriram os caminhos da vida" (Rajada, p. 13). The rituals of the mucanda themselves are so sacrosanct that, according to the ethnologist

Redinha, each "graduate" must swear to obey one final proscription: "'Nem à mulher com quem dormires tu poderás contar o que viste na Mucanda! Esconde, deturpa e nega, de contrário morrerás! . . .'"[17]

In the village, there is great rejoicing for those who have successfully completed these first rites of passage. However, the graduates did not always return in the best of health. Soromenho alludes to that fact in a metaphor from Noite de Angústia: ". . . os moleques, magros e doentes, como se viessem da circuncisão" (p. 119). Nor did everyone survive the circumcision. From a purely surgical point of view, there were probably more casualties among the neolithic Africans than among their iron-age successors. For instance, Calenga, the heir-apparent to the Calamba throne, had been circumcised with the only metal knife his tribe possessed. Sharpened stones were used on his companions, although there is no mention of any fatalities among them. Rajada, on the other hand, begins ominously with the death of nineteen of the twenty-nine boys who had gone off to the mucanda together, including the soba's eldest son. Outwardly, their death is attributed to physical weakness but the real perpetrators, as everyone in the village knows, are the gods of the mucanda. For some yet unstated reason in the story, the gods are displeased, for they have brought death to sixty-

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[17]Redinha, p. 74.

five percent of the class. The only way to placate the gods is to offer them more human sacrifices. Tragedy is heaped upon tragedy, as death is seen as the only remedy for death. Worse still is the fact that the dead boys will neither be mourned nor buried, in direct contravention of all the other burial customs of the tribe, because they have died unclean. On the contrary, their bodies are cast out from the tribal lands in a special purification ritual.

> Estavam envolvidos em fôlhas impregnados de óleos olorantes e dentro da casca das árvores, semelhando cortiços; e, assim, foram lançados ao rio, que é a sagrada sepultura dos que morrem durante a mucanda, depois de perederem o nome com que vieram da aldeia e antes de obterem o direito de usar o de homem. (Rajada, pp. 13-14)

It was as if their souls had been condemned to the limbo of unbaptized Christian babies. Not only are their bodies swept away for being unclean but they lose their names and, by extension, their identities. Nor is the river a "sacred grave" as its currents will wash the bodies away from the village. In the life of the tribe, these boys had ceased to exist, had become non-persons and, by not being buried properly, would never be missed.

Soromenho ennobles the mucanda by referring to it repeatedly as the "school of life." What he never mentions, directly or otherwise, is that whatever else it may have been, the mucanda was also a very simple application of the most basic law of the jungle: survival of the fittest.

Initiation rites were not reserved only for boys. The girls of the tribe had to undergo their own puberty rites, which would bring them, full-flower, into womanhood. These began, usually, at the first signs of menstruation. Their objective was to insure fertility and thus descent group continuity through certain surgical and didactic procedures. As the mucanda taught the boys of the tribe all they would have to know to become men, the puberty rituals would teach the girls what they needed to know to become women. The author, however, never mentions the specific name of this ritual, referring to it simply as the "girls' mucanda."

In Homens sem Caminho, the warrior Gando takes the soba's young and beautiful slave girl, Caçula, off into the night for a liaison with another man, his friend Djalala. Gando has always coveted the girl and will not waste the opportunity to take her first. When they arrive at a small clearing, he says: "Foi aqui a vossa mucanda" (p. 131). As frightened as the young Cacula is in contemplating the betrayal of her lord and master, the soba Camba-Camba, her anxieties heighten when she is told that they are standing on sacred ground, forbidden to men. In a very brief description of the puberty rites that follow, the author describes how the girls dance and sing under a full moon before beginning the sacrifice of the virgins. "Foi ali que se fizera mulher. . . . Ali, ela . . . como já havia sucedido a todas as mulheres do seu povo, aprendera com as velhas a arte de amar"

(p. 131). This deflowering ceremony was supervised by the old women of the tribe. Upon completion of the surgical procedure, the initiates were tatooed around their pubic areas, with specific patterns believed to have supernatural links with fertility.[18] Soromenho, while never failing to mention these tatoos when describing individually desirable women, seems not to have understood their meaning, as we shall see. The area of this "deflowering camp" was not only prohibited to men but to anyone who might profane it. Gando tries to soothe Cacula's misgivings by reminding her that the particular clearing on which they are standing is no longer used for girls' mucanda because it had been desecrated by a leper, "aquele feiticeiro de Carumbo" (p. 131). (Soromenho once again manages to include references from previous stories in Nhári and Rajada into this novel.[19])

The mucanda as circumcision is mentioned often and in detail while puberty rites are touched upon only twice--yet another reflection of the position of men versus women in the life of the tribe. (This will be discussed further in the section on women.)

Sometime after circumcision, the young men had to undergo another initiation more important to their immediate survival. Successful completion of the rituals of this

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[18]See Redinha, p. 76.

[19]"A Lagoa Maldita" in Nhári and "O Lago Enfeitiçado" in Rajada.

second initiation admitted the men to the hunter's society. Calenga's initiation took place, for example, after the death of his tribe's witchdoctor. That man's death had been very significant to the young prince because it was the witch-doctor who had given Calenga his first fetish. Let us now look at the position of the hunter in tribal life.

As authority has been defined as "access to forces obtained through special objects," so also was skill at the hunt. Because Soromenho spoke only in broad terms about a "hunting chief" in Rajada, we must look elsewhere for a more detailed explanation of the role of this chief or master hunter, as well as how he acquired his title and position. Almost all the sobas of the tribes who depended largely on the hunt for food had to be master hunters. But as they took care of the daily matters of government in the life of the tribe, other highly skilled hunters had to be able to lead hunting parties in the endless quest for food. According to Miller, their existed among the inhabitants of the savannas from the "Lunda in the east to the Mbundu in the west an 'association of master hunters.'"[20] He calls the master hunter a "kibinda." Like the soba, a "kibinda" needed super-natural powers to effectively carry out his responsibilities. These powers were usually controlled by a fetish given the hunter by a witchdoctor. Calenga's fetish, or magôna, was

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[20]Miller, p. 51.

"o fetiche que lhe abrira todos os caminhos da vida" (Calenga, p. 16). It must be remembered that his mucanda was supposed to have opened up "all the paths of life" so we may infer that the magòna served still another purpose and that there was more than one path of life for a young prince. Calenga's fetish was "um cornicho de corça pintado de vermelho e cheio de tôda a sorte de coisas milagradas . . ." (p. 15). Among those things were objects also found in the witchdoctor's gombo, or magic gourd. The similarity of objects cannot be dismissed lightly in view of the functions they performed for their holders. In Calenga's case, these objects included lion's teeth, and a leopard's claw (he who controlled the symbol controlled the object), feathers, birds' beaks, seeds from the melemba, a piece of human ear, herbs and so on. With this fetish he could stalk and kill not only the natural beasts of the jungles but the supernatural ones as well. The people believed that the master hunter knew how to make himself invisible, fly through the air and employ other supernatural elements to kill his prey. "Calenga tinha um fetiche que o defendia de todos os males do mundo" (p. 15). This fetish was so powerful that just touching it could dissipate Calenga's fear of a howling dog in the night. Naturally his people were exceedingly respectful of his skill and went about "pasmados por ele nunca ter sido ferido por feras ou antílopes" (p. 34). Magic was all the more necessary since the African believed that spirits and phantoms often disguised

themselves as real beasts in order to haunt the living. In Nhárí, for example, shortly after a powerful soba died, "apareceu, na senzala, um leão bastante velho . . . mas de corpulência fora de vulgar" (p. 152). The people were highly distressed because no one could ever remember a lion having come near the village. At first, this lion was seemingly content to feed on small prey caught on the outskirts of the village. One night, however, he came into the village itself, to the hut where the deceased soba had lived. The next day all the villagers "afirmaram que naquele leão, que não queria matar homens, vivia o espírito de Muenha-Luanda" (p. 153). Muenha-Luanda was the name of the dead soba. Such an animal could only be killed by the magic weapons of the master hunter, not the spears and arrows of mere mortals.

The training of hunters was long and arduous. They had to be highly skilled both in magic and the art of the hunt. In Rajada, Soromenho describes just what skills they had when he describes what the old master hunter, Matambele, had taught his apprentices: ". . . conheciam os bichos pelas pégadas e sabiam escutar a música dos ventos" (p. 158). The master hunter had taught his charges everything they needed to know. He had also recommended his own successor to the soba. That man was the "Lion of Cuilo," who had proven to be the most able of all his "class."

The master hunters themselves were united by bonds which appear to have transcended descent groups, tribes

and even whole peoples. "To meet another kibinda in the forest was said to be like encountering a kinsman. . . . These strong ties facilitated the movement of hunters. . . ."[21] We are reminded of this fact in Nhárí, where talk focused on the selling of the young girl to "o ganguela, seu irmão na nobre arte de matar feras" (p. 90). (The girl's brother, of course, was a Quioco.) These bonds were analogous to those of the mucanda. For example, Ilunga's hunters in Calenga were his "antigos companheiros e irmãos da circuncisão" (p. 176). The concept of a brotherhood of hunters was most important for the survival of all. In the hostile forests of Central Africa, a man needed to know that he would not be attacked by hunters from other tribes. The nature of his profession was dangerous enough. Properly armed, the hunter could and did go everywhere in search of prey. Hunting, according to the author, was the only profession that "enslaved" the black man and gave him a sense of nobility. Before earning the title of master hunter, each and every man had to demonstrate his prowess. The candidate invariably had to kill a jungle cat, one of the most feared of all beasts. Calenga, as we may recall, had to kill an ocelot and bring its skin to his father, "atravessando-lhe o corpo com a lança de madeira" (Calenga, p. 33).

Weapons, as we know, depended on the degree of evolution of the tribe. For example, Calenga's Calambas had no

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[21]Ibid., p. 52.

metal save the sacred circumcision knife and were still living in the neolithic age. Their spears were made of wood and were used only to kill antelopes and other wild animals. On the other end of the African time spectrum, Matambele, in Rajada, had taught his hunters how to use their rifles. (The mention of a firearm is an oblique reference to the existence of the white man, who had to have been the supplier.) Ilunga's Lubas appear in the land of the Bungos with their bows and iron-tipped arrows. The Bungos, themselves experts with the slingshot, had, in times long past, defeated the Calambas in the "war of the stones" and hunted only with those weapons and wooden traps. But, as evolution is unavoidable, even they were willing to exchange old weapons for more modern ones when shown their effectiveness. Quinguri, Lueji's brother, exchanged his fisherman's basket for the iron-tipped arrows and bows of the Lubas and subsequently used them in battle. He had remained within his sister's domains after her marriage to the Luba prince probably to learn the use of his brother-in-law's new weapons. Having become a military threat to the new king of the Lundas, he was forced to leave the lands of his ancestors. Now however, he also knew how to make spears and arrows as good as those made by the Lubas. The tubungos had wanted to destroy him, as we know, but they were overruled and it was decided to let him leave the kingdom instead.

A hunter's self-image was his principal concern. Murique, in Nhárí, tells us that "a Quioco hunter cannot lie." A hunter's position was so exalted that he could not even be punished or enslaved by his chief for misfortunes which occurred on the hunt. But he would go to any lengths to protect his position and his self-image. During one of Dumba-iá-Cuilo's hunts in Rajada, he was chased behind a tree by a pursuing lion. Unfortunately for this young master hunter, the scene had been witnessed by one of his companions. To prevent public exposure of his apparent cowardice, Dumba-ia-cuilo, after the lion disappeared, "lançou-se sôbre o companheiro e abateu-o com um golpe de catana. . . . E, assim, . . . o chefe dos caçadores salvou o seu prestígio" (p. 155). This act, like Calenga's sacrifice of his best friend during his accession to the Calumba throne, served to inspire fear in the other hunters and thereby increase the master hunter's authority over them. It also reflected a tragic flaw in this particular master hunter and, coupled with his irresponsible desertion of his colleagues to make love to a woman, eventually brought divine retribution upon him. He died a violent death in the jaws of a crocodile. This particular episode is multi-faceted. It shows firstly Dumba-ía-Cuilo's true bravery in the face of death. It also details the extent to which his mentor, the old Matambele, would cover up for him to protect his image and perpetuate the necessity for fearlessness in the face of danger. Dumba-ía-Cuilo was

cornered by a leopard and found himself backed up against the edge of the river. He had dropped his weapon and had only a knife with which to defend himself.

> Quando a onça formava o seu último salto, êle sentiu que os pes áfundavam na terra mole da borda do rio. No momento em que o seu braço se levantou e a lâmina do facão luziu em frente dos olhos da onça, ouviu-se um tiro e, simultâneamente, um grito de horror. (Rajada, p. 173)

The shot was fired by Matambele just as Dumba-ía-Cuilo fell backwards into the river and into the waiting jaws of the crocodile. The old master hunter felt exceedingly guilty for not having allowed the younger man to do battle with the leopard and earn the only death that brings glory to a hunter. He tells the others, who had not witnessed the scene, that Dumba-ía-Cuilo had killed the leopard before falling into the river. However, he makes no mention of how his chosen successor had died because he was totally unaware of what sins the young man had committed "para que o seu corpo jazesse enfeitiçado no . . . rio" (Rajada, p. 176). That episode, of course, brings the reader full-circle to the story, "Gando-O Feiticeiro," the crocodile-sorcerer in Nhárí. (We may recall th t the crocodile had swallowed a young girl for unstated sins she must have committed.)

Matambele decided to make a martyr of Dumba-iá-Cuilo, for didactic as well as personal considerations. The death of the young master hunter was of such moment that it completely precluded any of the celebrations which normally

followed a successful hunt. There was no batuque of welcome for the returning hunters laden with game and the soba even refused the skin of the dead leopard for which he had sent Matambele to the hunters' camp in the first place. Instead, the most extraordinary funeral ceremony found in any of Soromenho's works takes place.

The soba ordered the body of the dead leopard wrapped in melemba leaves. That night, no one in the half-starved village was permitted to eat of the meat brought back by the hunters. The next day the dead leopard, now considered to embody the spirit of Dumba-iá-Cuilo, was buried as if it were the hunter himself. The only one who knew the truth, of course, was Matambele but his responsibility, as surviving master hunter, was to recount to his people the glorious death of Dumba-iá-Cuilo. The leopard's body was placed on a bier and carried to a grave by the roadside to be interred in the sacred burial grounds of the tribe's dead sobas. Having thus honored his former apprentice, Matambele underwent a ritual of purification so that he might remain immune from danger and Dumba-ia-Cuilo's soul could finally find rest and protection with the gods of the hunt.

Soromenho paid great attention to the hunt itself throughout his works. He tells how hunters did not like the confinement of the forest because it forced them to crouch down among the trees "movendo-se com pés de lã para poderem atacar à queima-roupa como ladrões de cabras de curral.

Sentem-se mesquinho caçando assim" (Calenga, p. 179). The African's most preferred method of hunting was to burn massive areas of elephant grass on the plains, thus forcing their quarry into prearranged ambushes. This the author calls the caçada a fogo. This method was as much a sport for the Africans as an instrument of survival. "Êles só gostam de caçadas a fogo, tôda a planície a arder. . . . Isso sim é caçar. É a grande aventura dos homens da planície. . . .O resto é só matar para comer" (Calenga, p. 180).

The most important element for success in the caçada a fogo was the wind. In all of these hunts, the men wait impatiently for the winds to come up so that they can get on with the job. During hot spells, and in spite of the blistering heat, they burn fires all day so that the direction of the smoke might signal a sign of wind. Let us follow the author as he details one of these hunts.

Upon arriving at a propitious spot on the plains, hunters staked out a square-shaped perimeter of elephant grass. Then they cut down the grass around that perimeter so that the fire, once ignited, could not spread out of control. Each man was assigned a station outside the perimeter. There he lay in wait for the game which would flee before the advancing flames. Beaters were sent to the far side of the perimeter to start the fire as soon as the winds came up behind them. With the first sign of wind, the fire was ignited and started to roll across the grassland. Butterflies and birds were the

first to take flight before the advancing flames. As the wind's force grew and the fires advanced steadily, the hunters' shouts of joy could be heard everywhere. They waited patiently at their posts along the strips of land they had cleared and along the river where some of the animals would finally have to seek refuge. Because wind direction was uncontrollable, the hunters had to be ready to move from one station to another at a moment's notice. At this point some gazelles and a buffalo stuck their heads out of the tall grass but quickly turned back when they caught sight of the hunters. A lookout was perched atop a tree to watch the progress of the flames and the direction of the wind. He caught sight of a herd of buffalo thundering towards the river and advised his companions accordingly. Those stationed there lifted their rifles in preparation for the slaughter. As the heat became increasingly unbearable, rabbits and small gazelles fled the growing inferno. Still not a shot was fired. The hunters waited patiently for the big game. "A planície ardia de lés a lés e resfolgava pelo seu pulmão de fogo" (Rajada, p. 171). The smoke became so dense that the men could no longer see one another. They kept contact by shouting out their positions. Suddenly, the smoke was cleared away by strong gusts of wind, rajadas. The antelopes and buffalo ran wild-eyed and crazed into the fusillade of the waiting hunters. What followed was mass carnage.

After the fire had burned through the entire perimeter and the men were soaked in the blood of their quarry, all that was left on the blackened earth was "the charred remains of the animals that had not made it out of the grass." The hunters cleansed themselves of the blood, smoke and ash in a nearby river, quartered their kills and broke camp for home. Their return was hastened by the fact that none of them wanted to share the rewards of the hunting "party" with the lions and hyenas who quickly picked up the scent of blood and started following its trail.

Elsewhere in Rajada, a particular group of Quioco hunters returned to their village singing happily that they were valiant warriors with no fear of death. Their arrival was greeted by shouts and applause because only a successful hunt could inaugurate the fertility rites for the land. The success of the hunt implied that the tribe had been blessed by the gods and its other endeavors would also bear fruit. On the other hand, the resultant destruction of the land by fire is well-described in Nhárí where the last wave of flames "lambeu uma árvore, mas deixou-a de pé, hirta e nua, negra e apavorante, muda e fantástica . . ." (p. 103).

Traveling to and from the hunt was also an institution unto inself. The hunters always marched "Indian-file," "em silêncio, . . . em passo de caminheiros treinados nas longas jornadas do pampa, gente que parece não apressar por saber poupar canseiras para chegar mais depressa" (Noite de Angústia,

pp. 105-106). These men were usually accompanied by young porters who never seemed to be able to keep up the pace. On a particular march described in Noite de Angústia, the young boys (moleques) lost sight of the men ahead and started to cry as they dropped to the ground in sheer exhaustion. The older boys among them at first tried to calm their fears. This did not seem to help as the cries only got louder. In a little ethnographic note, the author tells us that the unhappy boys deliberately muddied their feet as they continued on the march "como usam fazer para que a marcha se torne menos penosa" (p. 108). Not unexpectedly, the boy in charge threatened the stragglers with being eaten by lions if they did not keep up. As night falls, the youngsters seem to lose all hope of finding the men ahead. One of the older boys had anticipated the possibility of losing sight of the hunters and came prepared to make his own light. By grinding two stones together to make sparks he is able to discern the footprints of the men up ahead. Arriving at the encampment, the boys fell utterly fatigued to the ground. The camp had been partially cleared but everyone had to collect enough dried grass and twigs to keep the fires burning all night. The boys were then sent to a nearby stream to fetch water and, when they returned, the encampment "já estava defendida do assalto das feras e repteis por muitas fogueiras, umas ligadas às outras a formarem . . . cortina de labaredas"

(p. 110). Their next task was cooking dinner because, we are told, "os moleques fazem em viagem o serviço que nas senzalas pertence às mulheres" (p. 110). In this same narrative the author gives the reader another piece of information about man-made brush fires. It appears that during this particular march, the men had been held up by a fire started by hunters from another tribe. They became angry and cursed the latter for hunting out of season. The author implies that there was a specific time of year for the hunt although he never tells us when or why. There were other customs attached to the caçada a fogo besides seasonal restrictions. When, for example, Ilunga arrived in Lueji's domains, his hunters had wanted to start their own brush fire. Ilunga forbade it because the land did not belong to them. Yet another custom peculiar to the night marches was loud singing. These brave hunters were so afraid of lions that "só tem vontade de falar e de correr muito" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 85).

Of course hunters had to eat on the march and their food usually consisted of manioc mush and whatever small animals they might kill in and around their encampment. They always ate first when accompanied by porters, the latter having to content themselves with leftovers. On a long march in Nhárí, the hunters ate the only thing they had brought with them, peanuts. These, the author tells us, were to "deceive hunger" ("enganada a fome com amendoim . . ." p. 106).

(Chatelain explains a similar use for cola nuts: "As nozes de cola são tão nutritivas e tónicas que os nativos levam grande quantidade delas quando têm que fazer longas jornadas . . ."[22].) After dinner everyone sat around the fire telling stories of feats of bravery in the jungle and heroism on the field of battle. One hunter even recounted how, after killing a gazelle, he had to then fight and kill a lion to defend his spoils. Bringing down a gazelle and a lion enhanced this man's position among his peers, especially when the author reminds us that another less fortunate hunter had been eaten by a lion not too long before. (This was an oblique reference by Soromenho to one of his earlier stories, "Para Além da Vida" in Nhárí.)

In all his references to the caçada a fogo, the author most stressed the long wait for the wind. For example, in Rajada, the hunters had been waiting so long for a break in the weather that "já não tem historias para contar" (p. 153). Given the African's almost inexhaustible wealth of stories, the implication here was not a wait of weeks but rather months. These particular hunters spent their nights dreaming about their women and the wind. While waiting, they stalked antelopes at the banks of a river. In that episode, Soromenho created the opportunity to give his readers an indication of African marksmanship. It was not too good, he tells us, because the African "só atira a pequena distância, quási [sic] colado ao bicho" (Rajada, p. 156). All the training and all the

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[22]Chatelain, n. 32, p. 477.

waiting finally paid off, however, when the wind came up on the plains. The caçado a fogo was always successful and the hunters, having sated their egos and their appetites, were given heroes' welcomes upon returning to their villages.

Training for the hunt, as we shall see, had a dual purpose. It created a skilled cadre of men capable of feeing the tribe and it prepared the African to fight against the greatest of all his natural enemies, other men.

Hunting for Men: War and Its Aftermath

The Africans believed that war was the ultimate judgment of the gods. Some of the author's peoples were war-like by definition (i.e., the Quioco and Bungos) while others were peaceful hunters, fishermen and tillers of the land (Lundas and Calambas). Most peoples though, no matter what their inclination, could and did defend themselves from attack.

Wars were either fought for the acquisition of territory (e.g., Bungos against Calambas) or for material aggrandizement (e.g., Quiocos against Lundas). Whatever the causes of war, it was control of the supernatural which determined its outcome. The Quiocos, for example, believed themselves to be invincible. "So pela traição e que os quiocos se julgavam vencidos na guerra" (Nhári, p. 88). These beliefs led to strong pre-battle preparations invoking both magic and divine intercession. The more bellicose peoples armed themselves with their most potent charms and looked to their

witchdoctors for advice on the most propitious moment for attack. Psychological warfare was more important than the battle itself. The first sign of defeat meant that the gods had taken sides and chosen the victor. Further resistance in those cases was fruitless. The classic example of a divine "tilt" comes in Homens sem Caminho (the war novel of Soromenho's fiction), where the storm god, Caçone, having uprooted the soba's melemba, determines the tide of the battle. "Os lundas . . . eram já os vencidos. . . . Vencera-os o delírio da tempestade . . ." (p. 205). When the Quioco finally entered the Lunda village (with the help of two Lunda traitors) not one man lifted a hand to resist. On the contrary, the Lundas threw their weapons to the ground in acceptance of their divinely wrought defeat. In this battle, as in most others, "victory turned less on force of arms than on supernatural revelation of truth."[23] This emphasis on the supernatural as predetermining the victors and the vanquished is wholly consonant with other African beliefs discussed previously. As the gods decided which individuals lived and died, so too did they decide which tribe or descent group survived or perished. The people's attitude towards signs and omens in war was perfectly analogous to their reaction to the divination ceremonies of the witchdoctor. The revelation of truth resided only with the gods.

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[23]Miller, p. 239.

Those peoples who showed a predilection for war were at a great tactical advantage over their more peaceful neighbors. They were in a constant state of readiness and were relatively well-disciplined on the field of battle. Pacific peoples, on the other hand, had to take great pains to leave their sedentary ways in preparing for war. For Soromenho, the Quioco were the paradigm of warriors and the Lunda were the archetypes of all the peace-loving peoples of the savannas. In Rajada, the author defines the Quioco as

> . . . gente aquerrida e aventureira, descendentes dos expatriados da Lunda que, à voz de Quinguri--o Lunda rebelde que se tornou quiôco--o apátrida--seguiram todos os caminhos da aventura para, muitos anos depois, regressarem ao chão do Muatiânvua e se imporem pela dura lei da lança. (p. 113)

(By this time, 1943, Soromenho is well-versed in Dias de Carvalho and will expand even more fully on the origin of the Quioco in Calenga.) The Quioco are described everywhere as the "cruel enemies" of the Lunda. But Soromenho only came upon the latter years after Quioco war parties had brought death and slavery to the dominions of the Muatianvua. From the very beginning, the author sided with the peaceful Lunda against their bellicose Quioco enemies. In fact, the imperatives of Quioco expansion had not really been understood by Soromenho. According to Redinha, the Lundas controlled the broad expanses of hunting ground in the central savanna and imposed heavy tributes on Quioco hunters. The latter resented these taxes and, having no current descent group relationship

with their Lunda overlords, finally went to war to alleviate their fiscal exploitation.[24] Whatever the causes of war, there is no doubt that the Quioco were responsible "for the overthrow of the traditional patterns of life in the western half of Katanga, in Kasai and in the southern parts of the Kwango-Kasai area."[25] Before the 1850's the Quioco were hunters and traders; their main stock in trade being wax and ivory. But they controlled little land. After 1850, they expanded very rapidly probably due as much to the decadence of the Lunda rulers of the time as to their own skills at war.

Quioco superiority in battle is mentioned repeatedly in Soromenho's works. In Rajada, the Lunda chief Carumbo had fled in the face of one Quioco threat "e nunca mais pensou em guerras. As lanças deixaram de ser envenenadas e enfurrajaram" (p. 100). By this time, evidently, it was not only the Lundas' poisoned spears which had rusted but their survival instinct as well. The reference to poisoned spears is repeated by the

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[24]See Redinha, pp. 12-13. There is a question among contemporary historians as to whether, in fact, the Quioco were tributaries of the Lundas at the beginning of their great expansion, circa 1850.

[25]Jan Vansina, Kingdoms of the Savanna (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 216. He further localizes the original Quioco homeland as "limited . . . in the northeast by a point on the upper Luajima and in the east at the sources of the Chiumbe. . . . From there the boundary ran across the Kasai to the sources of the Lwena . . . and then westwards to . . . the upper Luando, from which it ran to the springs of the Kwilu and along the upper reaches of the Tshikapa. . . ." Vansina, p. 218. In modern terms, the Quioco started out in the southern Lunda district.

author and subtly tied to the supernatural, as he tells of the Lundas having to prepare for yet another battle: "Os homens afiaram as lanças, de novo envenenadas pelos feiticeiros . . ." (pp. 100-101). In this brief statement, the author confirms the importance of the supernatural, magic and witch-doctors even within the practice of war. In this particular narrative, Carumbo was, by Western standards, a seemingly responsible chief who recognized the futility of resistance in the face of superior Quioco force of arms. He did not wish to spill his people's blood wrecklessly. On the other hand, the people themselves decided for war and removed their soba. They were unwilling to follow his advice to surrender their women and their property to the pursuing enemy. In Homens sem Caminho, the Quiocos are so callous and cold-blooded that "Chorar saudades não era próprio de homens de sua tribo" (pp. 100-101). The Lundas, on the other hand, were constantly crying and bemoaning their fate. This tribal characteristic served to further heighten Quioco scorn for their hapless victims. Another tribal characteristic that seems to have weakened the Lundas was their tendency to argue endlessly before deciding on a particular course of action. In Noite de Angústia, Salemo's old councillor, Candongo, makes that point quite clearly: "-Sempre questões. Os lundas não fazem outra coisa--. . . .--É por isso que os quiocos estão com mais força do que nos. Os lundas ja não prestam para nada. Só arranjam questões" (p. 86). The Lundas spent hours in council

giving vent to their proverbial loquaciousness by constantly changing the subject under discussion. This attitude is quite understandable and probably originated from the Lundas' having lived peacefully on their land for generations. They had tilled their fields and only used their spears on the hunt. They were "gente simples, entregue à vida descuidosa" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 12). By contrast, the Quioco had turned to war early to augment their principal stock in trade, slaves. They had begun as hunters and, as such, traveled a great deal. Trade was a natural outgrowth of that travel and the items bartered were slaves, wax,[26] and ivory. In Homens sem Caminho a brief mention is made of Quioco ties with Arab slavers in the east. Nowhere in that novel, directly or indirectly, is any mention made of European slavers or white men for that matter.[27]

The Quioco traded primarily for guns as they needed superiority in weapons to compensate for their smaller numbers.

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[26]The wax trade between blacks and whites is detailed by Soromenho in Terra Morta and will be discussed in Part Three of this study.

[27]Professor Russell G. Hamilton of the University of Minnesota claims, in a recent article which discusses Soromenho briefly, that: "Since 1942, when he published Homens sem Caminho, Soromenho has turned to the clash of cultures as his preferred theme," and that this novel dealt with "the contradictions of Lisbon's colonial policy." Had Professor Hamilton read Homens sem Caminho, he would have been dissuaded from such a judgment. He would have noticed, on the contrary, the total absence of any white men in that novel of war between the Lundas and Quiocos. See, Russell G. Hamilton, "Black and White and White on Black," I & L: Ideologies and Literature, I, 1(December 1976 - January 1977) 39-42.

They seemed to have assimilated the Lunda tribes they conquered by settling around them. "Gradually, the enclosed groups began to . . . see themselves as Cokwe. . . . This was the case with Lunda . . . of northeastern Angola."[28] By the time Dias de Carvalho arrived at the capital of the Muatianvua (in present-day Katanga), the Lunda had undergone a cultural cross-pollination and had absorbed some of the Quioco epic history as their own. The well-armed Quioco began to intervene in the internal affairs of what was left of the Lunda empire, further aggravating a process of tribal fission which had begun among the Lundas in the early 1800's. By 1887, the Quioco had destroyed all the Lunda chiefdoms (sobados) between the Cassai and Cuilo rivers and by 1898, "only a small fraction of Lunda . . ., was not occupied."[29] So well-armed had the Quiocos become because of their successes in the slave trade, that they were even able to sell guns to other tribes.

What were these invaders like that they were able to conquer the Lundas so quickly? Soromenho tells us repeatedly that they were cruel and barbarous, that they even killed women and children. He deftly interpolates that such a thought was repugnant to the Lundas as one of them asks "Onde e que se viu matar mulheres?" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 12). Whether the Quiocos actually killed women and children was not nearly

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[28]Vansina, p. 220.

[29]Ibid., p. 225.

so significant as the fact that the Lundas of Homens sem Caminho believed that they did. It was one more weapon in the Quioco armory of psychological warfare. In Noite de Angústia, a more realistic depiction of the Quioco is given. They are mysterious men dressed in lions' skins (the fear symbol) who attacked Lunda villages to steal Lunda children and sell them as slaves in the Belgian Congo. This is probably much closer to the truth, although the Quiocos were known to kill children for ritual purposes (another symbol of absolute authority) as well as for the abolition of descent groups.[30] It is highly unlikely that the Quiocos killed women and children captured in war, as they represented the victor's most valuable asset in trade. Lunda fear of the Quiocos was as constant as their fear of the gods and the sorcerers. In Rajada, for instance, a dog's bark causes Ivenga, the slave girl, to pause and look carefully around the village because "os ladrões quiocos não largavam os povoados lundas" (p. 12). Even the Lunda fear of sorcery in that novel is tangentially related to the Quiocos. They knew that the Quiocos were watching their villages carefully and only needed a hint of sorcery to justify further aggression against the Lundas. (One more reason for the Lundas

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[30]Miller affirms that the Kinguri of the Quiocos were able to expand their numbers through the assimilation of neighboring tribes. This could only be done by destroying the descent group concept in theory and practice. Thus, "the murder (or denial of the social significance of a physical birth) of children . . . eliminated the ties of kinship." (Miller, p. 166) For further discussion of the ritual murder of children, see above, pp. 163-165.

to ferret out the sorcerer in the plot of that novel before the Quiocos swooped down to attack.) According to the author, the Lundas had been at war against the Quiocos for an interminable period. Candongo, Salemo's old councillor in Noite de Angústia remembered "os caminhos que percorrera . . . de azagaia em punho, nessas intermináveis guerras contra os quiocos" (p. 89). In fact, in all Soromenho's works one has the feeling that the Quiocos have been at war with the Lundas since Quinguri was expelled from Lunda land at the beginning of the reign of the first Muatianvua. For the Lundas, the only thing worse than a Quioco was an African who had fought with the white against his own race.[31] (This element was touched on briefly when reference was made to Salemo's councillor, Candongo, who had been in the land of the white man and allegedly fought with them in a war against the peoples of the Cuanza.)

The Quioco threat was so pervasive in the life of the Lunda that it gave rise to royal marriages between the tribes specifically designed to cement military alliances. In Nhári, the Lunda soba of Cuilo offers to marry the daughter of the king of the Luchaze, a people far to the south, "se êle me ajudar na guerra contra os quiôcos" (p. 59).

The Quiocos did not have a monopoly on war in Soromenho's fiction, although they are the ones most oft-mentioned as

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[31]This theme is reiterated by the author in Terra Morta when he narrates the story of the heroic soba, Xa-Mucuari.

bellicose peoples. In Calenga, the peaceful Calambas became the analogues of the Lundas while the Cassongos played the role of the Quiocos. Historically, the Cassongos were Lubas (and therefore ancestors of the Lundas) but the author uses them to tell his tale of the Calamba king who had violated the dictates of the gods and had paid with his life to save his people. The Calambas had long ago been forced out of their land by the Bungos but in the endless jungle, their new home, "não tinham guerras, porque não viviam outros povos naquellas terras" (Calenga, p. 28).[32] The Calambas had lived in peace for so very long that they had neither war stories to recount nor heroes to glority. Their first contact with the outside world comes when a metal arrow is shot into the canoe of a Calamba fisherman. The victim of this assault looks down at the metal arrow in shock, beaches his canoe and runs back to the villages carrying the strange new weapon. It appears that one of the elders of the tribe had, in fact, been out of the forest because he recognized the arrow as being of Cassongo origin. A Calamba reconnaisance party is sent out later that day to search for signs of the enemy. Their only weapons are wooden spears. The author puts wooden spears into the hands of the Calambas to indicate an immediate disparity in arms and stages of development. No sign of the enemy is found and the scouting party returns happily to the

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[32]Only page numbers of quotations from Calenga will henceforth be indicated in the text.

village to boast of having scared off the intruders. Calenga and his councillors are not fooled. They understood that the Cassongos would return once they found the path to the village. And, as predicted, the Cassongo war party does come back: "Duzentos guerreiros, com lancas de ferro apontadas ao sol surgiram do rio e . . . comecaram a construir jangadas" (p. 49). The river had been another line of defense for the Calambas, aside from the vastness of their forest. It, too, was about to be broken by enemy warriors armed with supe-iror weaponry and superior tactics. The Cassongos not only came with iron spears but were prepared to build rafts to ford any body of water in pursuit of their human prey. Calenga, advised by his councillors, decides that flight is the only solution. But the Calambas, before leaving their lands, embark on an African scorched earth policy. The woman and children are sent to their gardens at the river's edge to tear out every last vegetable and tuber. "Os cassongos não comeriam um só pedaço de inhame . . ." (p. 50). Back in the village, the men kill all the chickens and livestock. In this story, the supernatural plays as important a role in determining the ultimate fate of the Calambas as it does in determining the fate of the Lundas in Homens sem Caminho. After a forced march at night through the impenetrable forest and against the proscription of the gods, Calenga and his people arrive at a very wide and unfordable river. At this point

> O rei dos calambas estava vencido. Trouxera o seu povo por um caminho errado, que sempre os feiticeiros lhe disseram não poder desvendar sem ofender os espíritos protectores da floresta. (p. 59)

Unlike the Lundas of Homens sem Caminho, however, Calenga was able to save his people by sacrificing his own life to the river goddess. While she is taking the Calamba tribe downstream in gourds, the Cassongos continue their hot pursuit.

Having concluded the plot of the story, Soromenho went on to attempt a fictional portrayal of the warrior mentality. The Cassongos finally arrive at the river but find no trace of their intended victims. They search the river bank as if possessed because "tinham vergonha de regressar às suas terras distantes de maõs vazios. Vergonha e mêdo porque o seu soba não lhes perdoaria aquela aventura sem saque e escravos" (p. 67). Worse than incurring the wrath of their chief would be the endless derision they would suffer at the hand of their womenfolk. The elders of the tribe, who are venerated for being brave warriors, would spit at them in disgust. Worst of all, if they returned empty-handed, what tales would they be able to tell their children "para que o exemplo da sua vida de guerreiros fôsse por êles seguido e respeitado como uma nobre tradição" (p. 67). The "noble art of war" among Soromenho's characters was predicated upon taking booty and slaves. The warrior who returned with neither was a total failure in the eyes of his family, his friends and the tribe. These men had an image to preserve--that of brave

warriors who risked their lives in war and on the hunt and thereby became exalted in the eyes of their people. In this story, however, only the chief of the war party was lucky enough to find one lone Calamba and kill him with a poisoned spear. As proof of his kill, and in a custom reminiscent of scalping among certain American Indian tribes, the war chief cut off the Calamba's ear and tied it next to others which he wore proudly around his neck as a symbol of his prowess in battle.

So determined are some of the less fortunate Cassongos to bring home at least one ear or one slave that they dove into the river in pursuit of the Calambas they thought had escaped to the other side. Once again, though, the supernatural intervenes (as a deus ex machina to finally finish the story) and the strong current takes them to a point on the far shore where they are devoured by cobras. Recognizing this to be a sign that the Calambas were now under the protection of the river goddess against whom even iron spears were useless, the Cassongos accepted the final verdict of the gods and started their long march home. Soromenho had given his warriors the one excuse which saved them from shame and was acceptable to their people, divine wrath.

The war novel of Soromenho's entire pre-colonial period, as has been mentioned, is Homens sem Caminho.[33] The

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[33] 4th edition, Lisbon, 1966. Inasmuch as all subsequent references are to this edition, only page numbers of quotations will be indicated in the text.

novel begins shortly after the Lundas have lost a major battle against the Quiocos and it ends when they lose the war. The Quiocos, it appears, have been hired as mercenaries to subjugate those Lundas who would not obey their despotic king, Xanama.[34] In exchange for insuring Xanama's rights to continue as Muatianvua and wear the Lunda lucanos, the Quiocos demanded their usual price: Lunda women. Lunda men were also thrown into the bargain as they were to be sold as slaves, "moeda de grande valia" (p. 14). The Lunda tribes had been in open revolt against their tyrannical muatiânvua and the Quioco were brought in to supress the rebellion. The battle itself, according to the author, went on for days and nights amidst cries of hatred and despair. Thousands of Lundas took up arms to defend their lands and their families but only a few hundred of them managed to flee to the mountain village of the Lunda chief, Camba-Camba. The overwhelming majority of those who did not escape became the victims of war, either dying on the field of battle or going off into slavery. Camba-Camba's people were the only Lundas left and the location of their village guaranteed their safety, at least temporarily. The best the Quiocos could do under the circumstances was lay siege to the village and wait for the gods to bring them final victory. Night after night, Lunda drums carry the message of

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[34]For an historical description of this episode, see Vansina, pp. 222-223.

their predicament to their brethern and cry for help in lifting the siege. As all the Lunda protagonists in the novel repeatedly violate the proscriptions of the gods, no help will be forthcoming. After the first engagement, the battlefield itself was reduced to ashes, "era tudo terra morta" (p. 16). (These last two words were prophetic and would come to have a different meaning in a later novel, as we shall see.) Hyenas stuffed themselves on the cadavers of the dead who were left rotting on the field of battle. One of Camba-Camba's chieftains, Djálala, was a brave warrior who had been presumed dead in battle. His people tried in vain to recover his body "que ele fora um valente e bem merecia sepultura à beira de caminho público--chão reservado aos grandes da tribo" (pp. 34-35). (Ethnographic notes such as sacred burial grounds reserved for the great men of the tribe have little to do with the plot of the novel but the author cannot help but include them.) The fires started during the battle made recovery of the bodies of the dead impossible. The survivors could do nothing but flee to their redoubt on the mountain. Djálala had, in fact, been taken alive and later managed to escape from Quioco slavery[35] and return to his people.

Djálala's personal experience during the battle is presented by the author in narrative form after the warrior returned to his village. It appears that he had fallen wounded

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[35]Slavery will be discussed in the following section.

in fierce hand-to-hand combat. He had passed out but when he regained consciousness, he found he could not move. The Quiocos had tied his hands and feet. Thinking his people totally defeated, his first thoughts turned to his young son, who would have either died or have been captured by the Quiocos. "Essa ideia atormentava-o mais ainda do que a sua miserável condição de prisioneiro de gente profundamente odiada, do mais cruel inimigo do seu povo" (p. 38). Soromenho describes the battle scene through Djalala's eyes. We see burning huts and men brandishing spears and torches running back and forth in the villages.

Actual battles did not, in fact, last very long. With the Quiocos always claiming invincibility, the Lundas had little stomach for prolonged resistance. More often than not, scouts were sent out to probe an enemy's location and thereby prepare the invading army for the attack. A typical battle among Africans was a mass of confusion, with each side wearing special markings to distinguish friend from foe. The weapons used are spears, knives and hatchets; no mention is ever made of guns.

As we know, magic and its influence on the supernatural predetermined victors and vanquished just as it decided all other aspects of African life.

> The emphasis on magic accounted in part for the lack of attention to more mundane matters such as battlefield discipline. Both sides enter the foray in hopes that their magical preparations had given them invulnerability or had disarmed their opponents' charms.[36]

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[36]Miller, p. 239.

The naming of a war chief was vital to every tribe going into battle. We may recall that the elders in Homens sem Caminho were exceedingly resentful that they were not consulted on the choice of a new war chief to command them. Soromenho dwelled on this issue and it is worthy of attention here. Apparently, Camba-Camba's war chiefs had been killed in the first battle against the Quiocos. As the Lundas sat around bemoaning their fate, an elder remarks: "E não temos chefes de guerra. Isso é o noss maior mal" (p. 50). The soba, fully cognizant of this immediate danger, chooses Djalala, in spite of the fact that he was from a different descent group. The threat of Quioco encirclement was imminent and no one else from Camba-Camba's village could do the job. Djálala was a sobeta, a brave warrior and had even performed the miraculous feat of escaping from the Quiocos. This in itself was noteworthy as we are told: "Nunca, nunca um lunda fugira do acampamento de guerra dos quiocos" (p. 54). He was the only logical choice for the position, the only man capable of forcing the Quiocos to lift their siege and opening up a path across the plains. The public reaction to the soba's choice was a mixture of anger and jealousy.

> Se o Djálala nem da senzala era, como é que o Camba-Camba o podia escolher para seu chefe de guerra?
> . . . . . .
> . . . ele não passava de um sobeta sem importância, que nem libata tinha. Mais do que isso: ele fora escravo dos quiocos. . . . sabe-se lá por que preço comprara a liberdade . . . (p. 54)

The elders were rejecting him out of hand because he was not from their descent group, he was a sobeta who did not even have a compound and they were even dubious about his escape from the Quiocos. Because no one had ever fled from a Quioco war camp, as far as they were concerned he might even have bought his way out. An argument ensues between these elders and the young warrior, Gando. He remonstrates against them and asks rhetorically whether they want their chief to lead them against the Quiocos. The question drips with sarcasm because everyone knows that Camba-Camba is old, sick and tired, "e se ficasse nas mãos dos quiôcos, que é que nos aconteceria? . . . Todos se calaram. Eles bem sabiam que se o soba fosse morto ou prisioneiro tudo acabaria" (pp. 58-59). Without a chief, their fate was sealed. They would have to surrender to the enemy and go off into captivity, "que essa é a lei da guerra" (p. 59). And Camba-Camba was still soba in spite of the fact that his prestige and authority had been severely diminished after losing the first battle against the Quiocos. Nevertheless, only he could choose the new war chief. And although Djalala was not adverse to taking on this responsibility, he did so reluctantly and only at Camba-Camba's insistence. In raising lukewarm objections to the soba's offer, Djalala hoped to minimize the elders' resistance. He knew full well that his success depended on their eventual cooperation.

If a war chief prepared his forces correctly by following the prescribed magical rituals and invoking the proper

gods, the largest portion of his task was completed before the battle ever took place. Djalala failed at this, his principal responsibility, while paying too much attention to the deployment of scouts, raiding parties and so on. He spent a great deal of time discussing tactics with his friend, Gando, who had become his chief lieutenant. Together they decided to use every able-bodied man in the village for their escape from the besieging Quiocos. In planning for the recruitment of even the edlers, Gando reminded Djalala that they were too afraid to go into battle: "Os quiocos são os cazumbis deles" (p. 85). This mixed metaphor is not lost on the reader as it indicates the transfer of fear of evil spirits to fear of the Quiocos.

On the other side of the river separating the opposing forces, the Quiocos waited impatiently for the Lundas to come down from their mountain and join the battle. The younger warriors had no stomach for spending endless days waiting by their fires. They all missed their homes and their women. In the final analysis, even the Quiocos were human beings, thinking of home and hearth while anxiously awaiting the inevitable confrontation. Nevertheless, their humanity was somewhat limited in light of the fact that they did not mourn their dead. On the contrary, they spent most of the time thinking about the rewards of victory.

> . . . iriam cravar a lança no terreiro da aldeia da montanha, empilhar caveiras de lundas junto da molemba [sic], beber vinho de palmeira e dançar o batuque de guerra. (p. 100)

Back among the Lunda, Djalala is viewed as a king or messiah by the younger men. "Tu vieste para nos libertar. A gente estava sem um caminho, e tu chegaste para mudar o nosso destino" (p. 89). Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of these younger warriors, Djalala was Camba-Camba's vassal and still owed fealty to his liege. Another ethnographical note creeps into the narrative when Djalala wants to discuss his plan of battle. He approaches Camba-Camba's muata-muari for permission to enter the compound. "Leva-me ao soba, mãe--pediu lhe Djalala, . . . rogando-lhe . . . protecção, porque ela é a mãe espiritual do povo, venerada como um ídolo" (p. 162). In spite of the siege and their deteriorated tactical position, the Lunda continued to obey their customs and traditions. The muati-muari, the soba's chief wife, continued to be respected, even by Djalala. By this time, Camba-Camba had retreated into himself once he had handed the responsibility of defending his descent group to someone else. Deep in his own subconscious he knew that the tribe's strategic position was hopeless. To obliterate reality, he had taken to drinking wine and smoking opium.[37] Soromenho intensifies this image of defeat by having the soba's wife inform Djalala that her husband has exchanged his women for opium just like the other helpless old men of the tribe.

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[37]Two customs prevalent among the Africans, they will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

Djálala finally gains entry to the compound and the author uses this episode to paint a full description of its interior. Nowhere else in all his works do we ever get such a detailed view of the inside of an African hut.[38] Djálala is admitted into Camba-Camba's inner room and finds the soba, totally drugged by the opium, lying on top of a mat covered with a leopard skin (one of the symbols of his title).

Mention has already been made of the fact that Djálala, as war chief, had not sought the proper protection from the gods. He and his people would be punished accordingly. One of the tribal elders, in protest at Djálala's having been named war chief, goes off to the tribe's melemba and hangs himself. Unfailingly, the dogs bark and a sense of impending doom pervades the village. Everyone knew that the suicide

> . . . chamava sobre o povo a ira dos deuses. Os homens já não tinham vontade própria. Por isso eles sabiam que a vida ia mudar. Os deuses iam ditar a sua lei aos filhos da terra. (p. 148)

The "law" of the gods was death, as each and every man knew. Rhetorically they ask: "Não estava o Muatiânvua Xanama a

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[38] Camba-Camba's hut, the author tells us, was "a maior de todas as cabanas, com duas quadras em chão de terra batida, ambas aquecidas por braseiros. O primeiro compartimento estava cheio de cabaças . . . de panelas de barro negro, armas, troféus de guerra e de caça, estateutas de madeira, balaios com fuba, pequenos montes de milho e de amendoim, cestos com mandioca, bilhas com óleo de palma, instrumentos de música e esteiras enroladas, tudo espalhado pelo chão ou pendurado nas paredes de colmo" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 163). It would appear that this soba's two-room hut became the composite for every hut the author ever saw.

beber o sangue dos lundas, dos seus filhos?" (p. 149). (In italicizing the word "children," Soromenho tells the reader how the Lundas perceived themselves in relation to their "king of kings.")

The suicide of one of the elders had frightened Djalala too, but not enough for him to give up either his position or his battle plans. However, when he finally penetrated Camba-Camba's opium stupor to inform him of the suicide, the soba's reaction terrified Djalala. The fact that a councillor had hanged himself from a melemba was enough to bring the soba back to reality. He got up slowly from his mat and, without a word, took his lucanos off his arm and threw them one by one into the fire. The die had been cast: the gods had already determined the victor. There was nothing left to do but await the inevitable. In one last tragic act, symptomatic of even the war chief's total and complete resignation, Djalala sent his trusted lieutenant, Gando, as an emissary to the Quiocos. He offered to surrender in return for his and Djalala's personal freedom. The Quiocos agreed but before this final act of betrayal, Caçone, the storm god, wreaks his final judgment upon the hapless Lundas. He strikes Djalala's son dead with a lightening bolt and uproots the Lundas' melemba, sealing their destiny forever.

Whether a people lost the war on the field of battle or at the hands of the gods (which was, as had been stated, often the same thing),

> . . ., it marked only the beginning of the damage inflicted on the losers. The defeated side . . . sustained serious losses as the victorious pursued the fleeing remnants for days, stealing supplies, kidnapping the women and children . . ., and taking as many prisoners as possible for sale as slaves.[39]

This is what had happened to many of the Lundas after their first loss to the Quiocos but their betrayal by Djálala and the final judgment of the gods was to enslave them to the last surviving man, woman and child. Slavery, as an institution, was prevalent throughout Africa and Soromenho's fictive portrayals are the next subject of this study.

Slaves and Women

Slavery is almost as old an institution as man himself. It existed before the earliest recorded histories and, in the view of many, exists even today. There was, and is, no reason for Africa to have exempted itself from binding men to other men in involuntary servitude. In Soromenho's Africa, a slave was the property of his master. Eventual manumission was possible in certain cases but generally a slave remained with his master until one or the other died.

People became enslaved for a variety of reasons. Bondage was a statutory penalty for people whose leader had engaged in sorcery, as Salemo's people in Noite de Angústia automatically became Xandumba's slaves upon their sobeta's

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[39]Miller, p. 239.

death. A convicted sorcerer himself was enslaved (when not burned alive or poisoned to death) to his intended victim or the victim's relatives. A people defeated in war were enslaved to the victors (e.g., Homens sem Caminho) but could buy their freedom through ransom. Indebtedness or simply poverty also caused families to sell some of their own into slavery. Chatelain summarizes Angolan slavery as follows:

> A escravatura e os seu inevitável companheiro, o comércio de escravos, são praticados em toda a Angola. Baseia-se em tres factores: (1) O direito que tem o tio de dispor dos sobrinhos e sobrinhas como mercadoria; (2) A falta de penitenciárias; (3) A guerra. Se um homem não pode pagar um débito, ou cometeu um crime e não pode de outro modo pagar a multa, é vendido ou vende e seu sobrinho ou sobrinha em seu lugar. Os prisioneiros de guerra são reduzidos à escravidão e vendidos a quem der mais.[40]

Chatelain also asserted that the slaves of the nativos selvagens were not poorly treated and had an opportunity to ransom themselves. However, only once, in Calenga, does Soromenho describe a certain equality between slaves and masters. We may remember that he mentioned that if slaves went hungry it was because there was no food for the soba either. Further, being a slave was, in fact, only one small step below being a free subject of a soba. His powers of life and death were exercised equally over slaves and subjects. On the other hand, all slaves had to be fed and clothed and males had to be provided with women. Slavery was a very well-established, highly-

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[40]Chatelain, p. 83. See also the folktale reproduced by Chatelain in the same work, "O Rapaz e O Rio," pp. 435-437.

defined institution for thousands of years before the arrival in Africa of the "children of the sea."

By far, the author's best portrayal of buying slaves comes in the story "Samba," in Rajada. Perhaps the oldest slave market in Angola was the town of Cassange. It had been the center of the slave trade since the last 1500's. It was a Bangala town where the women of that tribe were famed for their beauty and their special abilities at cultivating the land. They were sold by their people to wealthy and powerful sobas from throughout Angola. Cassange was also the market for slaves from the east. In that town "se acurralavam os rebanhos de escravos, tocados a chicote, desde as senzalas de lubas, cassongos, lundas, quiôcos, e outros povos" (Rajada, p. 110). Cassange was, according to the author, an evil place which reeked of the blood of slaves. He described this particular town as a way station between black slavers from the interior and white slavers from the coast. Soromenho, in characteristic fashion, did not dwell on the commercial aspects of slavery but rather on the fate of human beings sold into bondage. (We may also remember his opinion of slavery in Imagens da Cidade de São Paulo de Lunda[41] as that "great stain on humanity.") In Rajada, he described Cassange as follows:

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[41]Lisbon, 1939.

> . . . Cassange . . . fica no fundo do boqueirão do abismo onde pairam os espíritos de todos aquêles que, como escravos, morreram na terra longe, para lá dos rios e do mar, cortados pelo chicote do senhor branco. . . . Ali vivem os seus espíritos, ... Estão ali, na terra de onde partiram para o cativeiro, ... Cassange é terra de assombramentos! Mas os seus filhos, que ficaram para la do grande mar . . ., no chão americano, nascidos e medrados nos engenhos, vêem-nos, . . . nas noites de céu aberto, transmudados em estrêlas. . . . (pp. 110-111)

"Samba" relates the story of a Bangala girl of the same name who was so ugly that no one would buy her. Yet the author could not resist the opportunity to enlarge upon slaving as it related to the depopulation of Africa and the building of the Americas.

The principal theme of the story is the buying of slave women who will serve their masters as sex objects and tillers of the land. The slave fair is inaugurated with the usual batuque. The prospective slaves are displayed before the buyers in a seductive and sensual dance. To help them sell themselves, the women are given palm wine as a stimulant. As the drums beat faster, they wriggle their hips and shake their breasts. They move seductively "a imitar o jeito ondulante do rastejar das cobras, lançando aos homens olhares lânguidos" (p. 116). This entire procedure filled with the sensuality of the slave girls themselves is designed to excite the buyers into offering higher and higher bids. But the sobas want more than just a look at the goods they are about to buy. The women must undergo a degrading physical inspection which seems to disturb them not at all. The men get up

to feel their hips, inspect their genitals and breasts "para melhor se certificarem da rijeza das suas carnes" (p. 117). Satisfied with the quality of the merchandise, they raise their bids and bargains are struck.

At this particular slave market, given the renown of Bangala women, prices are fairly high. The poor men cannot affort the first lot and have to await the sale of the second class goods which takes place the following night. "Amanhã os pobres poderão ver as mulheres que se apresentam pela segunda vez ao mercado que ricos recusaram na época anterior" (p. 117). The slave girls sold the first night leave the dance circle one by one to thank the men who have bought them and, in so doing, have literally saved their lives. That same night the ugly Samba cannot sleep because she knows that if she is not sold by the third day of the market,

> . . . ela teria de pagar com a vida a crime da sua fealdade . . . porque escrava bângala recusada na terceira feira é uma alma apagada, filha espúria da raça, maldição do povo, cuja vida trará castigos aos homens. . . . (p. 123)

This was Soromenho's way of telling his readers that slavery as a way of life among the Bângalas had become a religion. As the Bângalas had become slave traders, they merely transferred their beliefs in the supernatural to their commerce. They no longer needed gods of the hunt, gods of agriculture or gods of war. They needed and created gods of slavery. As if to reinforce this radical departure from portrayals of other tribes, Soromenho tells us of Samba's religious practices as they

relate to her being sold. She spends hours praying to the idols in her mahambas, goes to the witchdoctors to implore their intercession with the gods and even begs the other women of the tribe to pray for her. She knows what her destiny will be if she is not sold: "Apagar da terra é da memória do povo a presença dessa mulher impura, é velha lei bângala" (p. 124). This law of the tribe is carried out by the priests who throw the body of the unfortunate into the waters of a river sanctified by such sacrifices. In other words, it is a religious offense to be spurned by the slave buyers and the criminal must be irradicated from the face of the earth by priests, not sobas, councillors or warriors. It is analogous to the fate of convicted sorcerers and young boys who might perish during the mucanda. They have all sinned against the gods and their physical presence, as well as the memory of their existence, must be eliminated. By inference, Bangalas are the most cruel of Soromenho's tribes because the greatest crime among them is ugliness.

The author's ability to inject foreign elements into a plot is proven once again when he makes subjective value judgments about the Lunda and Quioco. Samba remembers for us her first lover who was a Lunda warrior, one of those "dreamers who love adventure." On the heels of these lovers of adventure comes a quick contrast with Soromenho's whipping boys, the Quiocos. Samba, we are told, despised the Quiocos because they were violent and did not know how to make love.

The second day of the slave market comes and goes and the day of judgment is upon those unfortunate women who have not previously been sold. The buyers are no bargains themselves, tending to be "pobretões, servos dos sobas" (p. 122). Not unnaturally, they are the most demanding of all. These men force the women to get up and walk around so that they may verify that they are not crippled. They also smack their hips and pinch their breasts. After submitting this flotsam and jetsam of Bangala women to the most exhausting and humiliating physical examinations, the last of the buyers contemptuously rejects the merchandise. Soromenho shows us in this brief episode the caste system operative even among the wretched of the earth.

The treatment of slaves varied and was principally dependent on the manner of indenture. Usually only sobas had slaves and, if they paid for them, took care of them. Women were acquired primarily through purchase. The Luena slave Cauina, in Rajada, had been bought by a soba and was beloved by all the people of his tribe. When she ran into the center of the village screaming about her visions and then passed out, her master immediately ran to her side. One of the elders then gently reminded him that public expression of grief for a slave was unthinkable. The soba loved Cauina so much however that he would not leave her. He is finally ordered back to his compound by the elders.

As slaves could be bought, so too could they be resold provided the owner was willing. One of the lesser tensions between Salemo and Muaquife in Noite de Angústia turns on just this issue. Ivenga had become Salemo's slave when her first master had fled after killing one of the sobeta's subjects. By tribal law, she had to pay for her master's crime and so was indentured to Salemo by his soba, Xandumba. But Ivenga was the sister of Muaquife's wife and the latter wanted to buy her for his wife's sake. Salemo refused to sell. The only way Muaquife could get Ivenga, the elders told him, was in a war against Salemo. Such a war was unthinkable, however, because "ninguém se desajuizaria . . . numa guerra que visava sòmente a libertação de uma mulher, de uma escrava" (Noite de Angústia, p. 35). Xandumba asked his nephew, Muaquife, if he had ever seen a war fought over a slave. The fact of the matter was that Ivenga was Salemo's slave. Only he had the right to dispose of her life. Even though Ivenga was no longer used for Salemo's sexual needs, and even after she had obeyed her master by using sorcery to kill the young girl Capula, Salemo would never give Muaquife the satisfaction of selling her to him. The right of ownership is enlarged upon as Xandumba reflects on the matter "Como é que ele podia exigir . . . pelas armas ou pelas palavras, uma coisa que não lhe pertencia" (p. 36).

A slave's life was not an enviable one even under the best of circumstances. As victims of war, Soromenho tells us,

slaves were nothing more than "human meat." As early as Nhárí we get the first insight as to just what kind of a life slaves led. Two men are seated in front of a hut conversing. One is a slave who says, "I am a slave. I obey my master." The other, a freeman, has no response because "He well knew how much the miserable life of a slave was worth." The slave adds only that he lives "under the cruelty of free men."

The soba who was defeated in war had the option of buying his personal freedom by selling his entire tribe to the victor, as Xá-Caongo tried to do in Nhárí. The Lunda queen, Mona Capenda, rejected his offer and instead "dava como castigo a obrigação de a servir na qualidade de capinge" (p. 19). (We are told by the author in a footnote that capinge was a domestic servant.) This former soba, then, for having rebelled against his sovereign, had been reduced to the lowest form of slavery. Elsewhere in Nhárí, Candala, who unknowlingly committed incest with his mother, had come from generations of slaves. But freemen also became indentured for nonpayments of debts, as has been mentioned. Murique, who was about to sell his sister Nhari for a rifle, owes a debt to his hunting companion, Xassuana. Realizing he may not be able to pay that debt, Murique says: "Ah Xassuana, queres a minha escravidao se eu nao te puder pagar" (Nhárí, p. 95). The latter responds simply, "It's our law." Aside from obeying one's master, a slave's life in the village was what one would imagine. They did only the most menial tasks within the hut while

caring for all their masters' physical needs. In Noite de Angústia, for example, a young boy even had to light his master's pipe. Within the slave system however there was also a hierarchy. In the same novel the slave Ivenga has a slave to clean her hut. She treats him with utter contempt: "O moleque . . . foi por cuidados domesticos para a cubata de Ivenga que . . . lhe diria palavras desagradáveis, recriminando-o pelos servicos que não fizera e pelos que havia feito mal" (p. 27). Soromenho does not let this opportunity go by without commenting on the situation. The boy, he tells us, mumbles angrily to himself about "a slave calling others slaves." Ivenga's case was probably not atypical, just as sobas had their favorites and treated them differently from other slaves. Ivenga herself had gained such a position of prominence that not even the villagers would complain of her maltreatment of the boy. They knew that she would take no guff from slave or freeman alike and many of the villagers had already spent nights in the village prison because of her.

Of all Soromenho's works of this period, none deal with enslavement as a result of war better than Homens sem Caminho.[42] The title itself describes the Lundas as the "men with no way out." As it is the author's novel on war between the Lundas and the Quiocos, its sub-theme is the treatment which will be accorded the vanquished by the victors. The

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[42]Only page numbers of quotations will be indicated in the text.

novel begins with a description of the Quioco slave trade. These nomadic marauders sold their flocks of slaves to the Bângala of Cassange in the west and to the Arab traders in the east, "às hordas do famoso aventureiro arabe, Tipo-Tip" (p. 13).[43] As the Quiocos expanded their hegemony, they gained control of the slave trading routes and monopolized them completely. They did not go to war primarily because of conflicts over territoriality but rather to take slaves for their burgeoning markets in the east and west. We may recall that they had developed such a "scientific" enterprise that none of their enemies believed in the possibility of escape. Only Djalala had escaped successfully (albeit there is some vague reference to the possibility of his having bought his freedom). He is described as a "very different slave" who preferred the whip to taking orders from his masters. He had also previously escaped from Bangala enslavement. The story of his flight was known throughout the jungles because "os povos desgraçados e todos os escravos contavam-na" (p. 78). In this novel, escape

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[43]According to Vansina, Arab traders were present in Central Africa as early as the mid-1700's. A century later they were firmly established and "would remain in contact with one another and ally themselves with powerful local chiefs . . . to carry the slaves away." Vansina, p. 235. Tippo Tib, as Vansina calls him, became the most successful and powerful of all the Arab traders in southern Africa. He built up armies of his own and even became the chief of one African tribe. His main stock in trade was slaves and ivory. The territory under his commercial control stretched from Lake Tanganyika in the east to the Lualaba River in the west, not very far from the mussumba or royal court of the Lunda Muatianvua.

from the Quiocos was not really rooted in a desire for individual freedom but in the need to flee mindless Quioco savagery. The Quiocos forced their slaves to work the lands from morning to night which, we are told, the Lundas never did because such labor was for women only. The slaves had to clean the villages and fetch water from the river. Quioco women, relieved of their daily chores, could sit by and laugh disdainfully at the Lunda slaves going to and from their labors. The Quiocos constantly beat their captives although that was not surprising "porque andar debaixo de vergastadas é o destino dos escravos" (p. 41). What was intolerable to the Lundas was hearing how the Quiocos had made Lunda slaves do women's work. They felt that having to do women's work was degrading not only for Lundas but for Quiocos as well "porque ninguém pode esquecer-se da sua condição de homem (p. 41). The Quiocos, in other words, were degrading and debasing their own male images by submitting their Lunda captives to women's tasks. (The author's view of machismo among the Africans had already been expressed in his articles on "A valorização do homem negro"[44] in the late 1930's. In Homens sem Caminho he expanded upon the premises of those articles.)

The degradations of tilling the land, cleaning the villages and bringing water from the river were nothing,

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[44] Diário de Luanda, 6 March 1937, p. 1 and "A instituição do trabalho indígena," Humanidade, 5 June 1937, p. 10.

according to Djalala, compared to what followed. Safely back in his village, he recounted that "os quiocos amarravam-nos aos troncos das árvores da senzala e serviam-se de nós como se fôssemos mulheres ou catumas" (p. 42). To be abused homosexually was the final humiliation.

Lunda women were sold immediately and boys captured in battle had their right hands cut off so they could never fight again. Stealing among slaves was encouraged and a good theif was rewarded for his expertise. If a slave was caught stealing from the Quiocos however he was whipped viciously.

Of all the men captured in the first battle between the Lundas and Quiocos, Djalala and one other Lunda warrior were the only two who even contemplated escape. Fear of betrayal among these slaves was so great that the two could not even trust one another. The Quiocos encouraged spies among their slaves so as to minimize the possibility of escape. In one instance, "um homem do Luita denunciara o seu companheiro de cubata. . . . Os quiocos rebentaram-lhe a cabeça . . . e ao denunciante deram melhor ração e nunca mais trabalhou nas plantações . . ." (pp. 44-45). This method of punishment and reward was highly successful and was the main reason why no one ever escaped from the Quiocos. One man before Djalala had tried but was caught. Even the Quiocos could not believe what had happened. They thought the man mad and asked rhetorically, "Have you ever seen one of these

dogs flee from our villages?" Punishment for escape was, naturally, public and all the Lunda slaves were marched out to bear witness. The man who had tried to flee was particularly brave and in one final, futile act he attacked the Quioco chief. Because of that, his inevitable death was made doubly painful. When one of the elders asked Djálala whether any of the slaves had pleaded on the escapee's behalf, the response was, "Who would plead for the life of a slave and an escapee?" What developed finally among the survivors was a typical slave mentality. After watching one of their own brutally whipped to death, the remaining Lundas simply capitulated psychologically to their condition and abandoned all attempts at flight. "Nunca pensaram em fugir proque tinham medo do chicote dos quiocos e medo da vida" (p. 49).[45]

As we know, Djálala did not free his people and, in the end, even betrayed them to the Quiocos. The latter entered the shattered Lunda village, lined their captives up and marched them off, down the road "dos homens sem caminho" (p. 211). Before setting the Lunda village ablaze however the Quiocos made sure to kill all the aged and infirm whose resale value on the open market was nil.

So many of the slaves in works analyzed in this study were women that it is almost impossible to separate the one

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[45]For a theoretical discussion of slave mentalities, see Stanley M. Elkins, "The Plantation as a Concentration Camp," Slavery, ed. Robin W. Winks (New York: New York University Press, 1972), pp. 87-105.

from the other. More importantly, the distinctions between the two were almost nonexistent in Soromenho's Africa. Whether one bought a wife at the slave market in Cassange or took a wife in marriage, women had only four functions: farming, domestic service, sex and procreation. Just as the author's males are characterized by their positions in the tribe (i.e., soba, witchdoctor, hunter, warrior, etc.), his females are also personifications of their roles.

The best that was ever said about any woman was that "she worked her husband's lands well." An oft-repeated reference to this farming is "as mulheres fazem luzir as enxadas" (Rajada, p. 64). The women's world alternated between the village where they did their domestic chores and the river. The river's edge "was the world of women." They rose at the crack of dawn to go down to the river and fetch water. One of the rare characterizations of women comes during just such a trip in Noite de Angústia.

> As mulheres despertavam com a luz da manhã. . . . E . . ., de cabaças à cabeça, . . . tomaram o caminho do rio . . . e jogavam umas às outras ditos zombeteiros onde ressaltavam alusões às noites de batuque e às noites de amor, trocando das companheiras que tinham homens velhos. (p. 22)

The women are always marching to and from the river "Indian file" (Soromenho's hunters marched the same way) and upon their return are expected to light the first fires and cook the morning meal.

> . . . uma rapariga transpôs a porta trazendo dentro de uma casca de árvore algumas brasas e uma mancheia de capim. Ajoelhou-se ao pé do braseiro, arrumou os cavacos, juntou as brasas à palha e por entre as mãos assoprou. Serpentearam as primeiras labaredas. . . . (Homens sem Caminho, p. 67)

Their men sit around in the chota smoking their pipes and waiting for the women to feed them. In Homens sem Caminho, the women return from the river with "cabaças cheias de agua e balaios ajoujados de mandioca à cabeça" (p. 59). Indeed, whenever they come back from the river, they are always depicted as carrying gourds or jugs on their heads. As we see in another description from the same novel: "As mulheres. . . . De balaios a cabeça . . . meteram-se, em fila indiana, a caminho do rio" (p. 53). Their portrayal is almost the same in Noite de Angustia as we see "uma a uma, as mulheres regressaram as lavras, quindas à cabeça" (p. 41).

Perhaps the very best description of the African woman's place within the tribe comes in Nhárí, where the young girl whose name is the title of this short story collection is to be sold into slavery by her own brother. As he is about to offer her favors to his companion, we get an insightful glimpse of the author's view of the African women: "Com o olhar posto nos olhos do irmão ela esperou uma ordem . . . vendida à passividade que é condição das mulheres da sua . . . raça" (p. 106). For Soromenho, being a woman and being a slave were, even if subconsciously, one and the same: "Nhárí, talvez inconsciente da sua própria escravidão--'tu és o símbolo das mulheres da tua raça'" (p. 109). Soromenho's depictions of African women were not to change drastically from this first portrayal of Nhárí as "the symbol of the women of her race." It is clear that Nhárí and the rest of the women in Soromenho's

fiction were no more or less slaves to the natural condition of their sex than were their menfolk "slaves of the gods." In relation to the world around them, their position in the hierarchy of the tribe was just below that of their men.

In the village, the women were responsible for feeding their men and cleaning their huts. "As mulheres, debruçadas sobre braseiras . . . preparavam a refeição da noite. E as mocinhas andavan numa roda-viva, em cuidados pelas cabaças de vinho de palmeira" (Noite de Angústia, p. 97). In the same novel we see women working their primitive mortars and pestles to grind manioc into flour.

Aside from farming, preparing and cooking food and cleaning, women were the absolute sex objects of their husbands and masters. We have already discussed puberty rites for girls but the author is always ready to differentiate even those practices between Lundas and Quiocos. The latter, we are told in Nhárí, deflower their young virgins "by repugnant and immensely painful practices." We may recall that no such reference was made to the initiation of the Lunda girl Caçula in Homens sem Caminho. In Soromenho's Africa, girls underwent puberty rites purely for the sexual pleasures of the men who either bought or married them. One particular initiation rite employed men to deflower the young girls of the tribe. After this first sex act, one girl cannot sleep "porque ainda há pouco acordou para a vida! Sente o sangue a borbulhar-se no sexo aberto em flor" (Rajada, p. 138). (The author is so

keenly attuned to the sexuality of African women that this writer has no doubt that in his youth, Soromenho had a very active sex life in the Angolan bush.) Not only are his descriptions of the slave dances of Cassange explicitly sexual and provocative but he returns to the same theme repeatedly. His eyes are constantly glued to the tattooed genitalia of African women as he watches them wriggle their hips seductively. In Homens sem Caminho, the chief's slave girl, Caçula, attempts to seduce Djálala ever so subtly:

> Caçula . . . regressou . . . com on cachimbo-de-água e um rolo dé tabaco, . . . e ofereceu-o, . . . ao Djálala. E o sobeta seguiu-lhe, . . . os movimentos demorando-se a mirar-lhe os seios, pequenos cones erectos e trementes, e a curva suave do ventre tatuado. . . . (p. 68)

(The significance of the tattoos will be discussed in the following section.) The author refers to breasts to a lesser extent than private parts but in his descriptions we can see his own sexual captivation. One of the tribes mentioned repeatedly for the beauty and sexuality of their women, other than the Bângalas, is the Luena, as we see in a short dialogue from Nhárí:

> -Ouve, moço, as mulheres do teu povo são bonitas?
> -Sim, as luenas têm fama de serem as rainhas do amor . . .
> -Assim tenho ouvido dizer. (p. 43)

The object of this discussion is a beautiful young virgin with "hard, trembling breasts." Nhárí herself, on the other hand, was flat-chested (not an uncommon phenomenon among ten-year-old girls) "o peito estreito, onde mal despontavam os bicos do seio . . ." (p. 99). Returning to tribal distinctions,

Soromenho tells us that the Luena were prostitutes, too. Cauina, for example, in an interior monologue in Homens sem Caminho, bemoans her own beauty which has made her desired by all the men of the tribe "como se ela fosse qualquer rameira leuna" (p. 20).

Soromenho carefully lays the groundwork for creating beautiful women to bring to the reader a greater appreciation of the sexual acts that follow. At times, sex is portrayed from a purely male point of view: "Candala . . . gozou o corpo da velha" (Nhari, p. 61). In Rajada, the male point of view is reiterated: "Não havia homem que não tivesse gozado das suas intimidades" (p. 35). There are also occasions when sex is brutally forced upon an unwilling woman. Ivenga, in Noite de Angústia, was deflowered by a Quioco in just such a fashion. In a flashback she hears

> . . . vindo da noite funda da sua vida, o seu grito de angústia quando o homem a quem a entregaram, um quioco cruel, como só um quioco sabe ser, a tombou sobre uma esteira e lhe esbraseou as entranhas. . . . (pp. 17-18)

As this "cruel Quioco" was her master, she could only resign herslef to her fate by tolerating his sexual advances.

The only woman of position in all Soromenho's fiction, the Lunda queen Mona Capenda in Nhárí, takes the upper hand in her sexual relations with the soba whom she had defeated in battle, the hapless Xá-Caongo. She calls the Bângala warrior to her bed offering him "her body in delirium." She appears to use him only as a sex object because when he attempts to caress her she whips him furiously.

More often than not, sexual relations are mutually desired and enjoyed by men and women. In Nhári, "men and women live their hour of love . . . in abandon, on the grass." Even Xá-Caongo finally encounters a willing young woman and Soromenho depicts this liaison with obvious relish:

> . . . a negra . . . entregou-lhe, mordida de desejos, o corpo nu e febril. . . .
> Ela passou-lhe um braço pelo pescoço e com o outro envolveu-lhe a cintura, estreitando-o mais ainda para que ele sentisse a tatuagem. . . .
> A sua boca entreabriu-se, . . . para ciciar palavras de carinho: . . .
> Extenuado, o Xá-Caongo abandonou-se àquele corpo jovem, poema de carne negra, ... (Nhári, pp. 33-34)

Promiscuity is mentioned in different works but the author seems somewhat ambivalent about it. On the one hand, he describes Capula in Noite de Angústia with evident disdain as a woman "who had already slept with many men." On the other, he tells the reader in Homens sem Caminho that a man has the right to give his woman to anyone for the sake of friendship or profit. In that novel, Djálala desires to make love to Camba-Camba's slave, Cacula. We may recall that Djálala's own wife Cauina was pregnant, so he could not have sexual relations with her because of the tribal taboos. He had also just escaped from the Quiocos where the only sex he saw was homosexual abuse of his fellow Lunda prisoners by their captors. His drive then, was totally unfulfilled and Cacula seemed willing to oblige him. Cacula was attracted to Djálala because he was a hero, a successful escapee from the Quiocos. He had

also just been made warchief by her master, Camba-Camba. Most importantly, her own sex drives had been thwarted, as the author tells us: "A vida de Caçula era triste . . . ao lado de um homem que, na sua própria cara, a trocava por um catuma" (p. 96). What Caçula did not know of course, was that Camba-Camba was also enjoying the favors of Cauina, Djálala's wife. Sexually unsatisfied then, Caçula is very receptive to a liaison with Djálala. In the meantime, he has decided to approach her through his friend Gando's wife but has second thoughts. In just two sentences, Soromenho gives us an insight into the Africans' power over the bodies of their women and their scruples about seduction without proper payment for pleasure. Such reimbursement, of course, would never go to the seducee but rather to her owner or husband.[46]

> Que ele . . . ou outro qualquer fizesse o que quisesse da sua própria mulher, oferecendo-a aos amigos ou mandando-a para os caminhos a entregar-se aos viajantes, aumentando-lhes a fazenda, . . . ninguém via mal nisso, que cada um manda no que é seu. Mas oferecer a mulher de outro, . . . sem cobrar uma mancheia . . . de sal, era de mais, o mesmo que entrar às escondidas na casa alheia e roubar. (p. 91)

Soromenho's attention to sex as a theme in Homens sem Caminho appears to have raised eyebrows in Lisbon, in spite

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[46]Cadornega took note of such customs even in the 17th century. "Uza muito este gentio de opandas, que vem a ser ter a mancebe ou concubina de algum delles ajuntamento com outros, . . . e lho paga com dinheiro, quando não he com seu consentimento e amizade; . . . mas o geral se contentão com a satisfação pecuniaria; . . . ." Cadornega, III, p. 269.

of the fact the novel had been awarded first prize for literature by the Agência-Geral in 1942. A cryptic reference to the possible literary abuse of sex in this novel was made in a small note entitled "Moralidade," in Vida Mundial Ilustrada:

> O romance de Castro Soromenho intitulado Homens Sem [sic] Caminho, considerado por alguns um livro imoral, acaba de obter o 1° premio da literatura colonial. Diz-se, não sei com que fundamento, que Castro Soromenho pôs no seu volume um "cache-sex." Será assim?[47]

If the writer of this piece had been familiar with Soromenho's other works, he would have known that because sex was an inherent part of African life it naturally belonged in Soromenho's African novels. Another ill-informed Portuguese literary critic, Arnaldo Saraiva, writing a review of this novel's fourth edition in 1967, considered Soromenho "um dos primeiros responsáveis pelo levantamento literário de uma problemática tìpicamente moçambicana. . . ."[48] (Soromenho seems forever to have been caught between Portuguese literary critics who studiously avoided writing anything at all about his works and those who, having perhaps read one or another of his novels, dared to print nonsense such as cited above.) Returning to Soromenho's ambivalence towards promiscuity, we have mentioned Djalala's

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[47]Luis de Oliveira, "Calçada da Gloria," Vida Mundial Ilustrada, 19 November 1942, p. 9.

[48]Arnoldo Saraiva, rev. of Homens sem Caminho by Castro Soromenho, 4th ed., in Colóquio-Letras, 42(February 1967)36. Italics added.

inherent right to give or sell his wife's body to anyone he chose. He could do this notwithstanding his great affection for her. The obverse of a man giving or selling his woman's body was the woman who gave herself of her own volition. Just such a case arises in Rajada where the wife of one of the villagers, Nhacaiongo,[49] was a libertine. Whenever her husband was away from the village she had sex with other men. At first she chose the young men of her own village but slept with each of them only once. Afterwards, she offered herself to every passing traveller and "nos acampamentos . . . os viajantes contavam entre gargalhadas estridentes, os seus caprichos de amor. Depois, referiam-se ao seu homem e ridicularizavam-no" (p. 36). These men had absolutely no scruples about enjoying her favors while laughing at her afterwards. Word quickly spread that she had been had by everyone. She appears to have been quite sultry, with an ability to entrance men with her gaze. It was her desirability however that led to her downfall. She was despised by every other woman in the village, resented by the young men whom she allowed to sleep with her but once and ultimately humbled by the elders whom she had rejected outright. These last she had offended by laughing in their faces when they came knocking on the door of her hut asking for her favors. Their reaction

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[49]Nhacaiongo's maiden name, we are told, had been Ruanda. When she married Caiongo, she became Nhacaiongo, "Caiongo's woman."

was typical: "Did you ever see a woman laugh at men?" The elders finally took their revenge by telling her husband of her adultery. He almost beats her to death before throwing her out of his hut. (Adultery has been dealt with earlier as a major tribal taboo but only in a relationship between one married woman and one other man. Multiple adultery, as it were, was treated differently by the author and in this case, punishment comes at the hands of the offended husband rather than the gods.) Nhacaiongo had demeaned the macho image of the men of her tribe and for that social crime she was expelled. These men were perfectly willing to commit adultery as long as she let them. Once she rejects them after the first encounter and sleeps with the old men not at all, she is a threat to their collective manhood. Soromenho gives us a marvelous insight into the universality of the male experience when he describes the reaction of the rejected older suitors: "Eles ficavam raivosos e muitos entraram nas suas casas só para bater nas mulheres" (Rajada, p. 44).

There are two major prohibitions which reinforced the master-slave status of women vis-à-vis their men. Firstly, women are prohibited from bickering with their husbands or talking back to them in any form whatsoever. Secondly, they are prohibited from withholding their favors. There is a story in Rajada which treats specifically with the first prohibition. A hunter named Caluige had been away from his village for a long time and his neighbor had sold Caluige's son to slavers

from a passing Quioco caravan. According to tribal law, the aggrieved party was entitled to compensation. Caluige was awarded the offender's wife. Apparently he had gotten no bargain however because this woman never stopped nagging. In one exchange, he reminds her of her sex and her station when he asks if she has ever seen a woman shout at her husband. He is so shamed by her action that he determines to kill her. One night, after drinking heavily, he does just that: he splits her open with a machete. In Homens sem Caminho, the foredoomed Cauina has had words with her lover and regrets them. "Who was she to raise her voice? A woman, a poor woman who had forgotten her position as a slave." Shortly thereafter, her lover, the soba Camba-Camba, tries to seduce her. Even as she rejects his advances, having found out that her husband, Djálala, has escaped from the Quiocos and is on his way back to the village, she asks herself, "Onde se viu mulher negar-se ao seu senhor?" (p. 24). Even though she is still Djalala's wife and she knows him to be alive, she still feels that Camba-Camba is her master.

Training girls in sexual pleasures usually began during their puberty rites. But teaching new members of a soba's harem the particular sexual preferences of the master was the task of the muata-muari, the chief wife. She knew what he liked best and was "apta para ensinar àquella que viesse compartilhar da esteira do marido os seus desejos e caprichos" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 107). On the other hand,

if a woman became too proficient in sex or was much prettier than her companions, a conflict inevitably arose. This was the case with Ivenga when she first left her village to "enter Salemo's flock of love." In a touch of non-European tradition, the soba's harem in Homens sem Caminho is guarded by one of his homosexual lovers. As Djalala weaves his seduction of Caçula he is stymied by his inability to communicate with her directly. He angrily complains to his friend Gando: "Ela vive na banza. Quem é que lhe pode falar? Tu não vês que o catuma está sempre a espiar as mulheres do soba?" (p. 90).

Sex does have a function in Soromenho's fiction other than pure pleasure. It is the one primordial act which will ensure perpetuation of the descent group, the tribe. The author's description of children is repeated monotonously throughout all his works. Children are always carried on their mother's hips. In Nhári we read of "uma mulher, que trazia o filho bifurcado numa anca" (p. 30). In Noite de Angústia, Xandumba's men stare lecherously at the women of Salemo's village "vergadas ao peso das quindas e dos filhos escarranchados nas ancas" (pp. 133-134). And elsewhere in the same novel, "uma rapariga que trazia o filho bifurcado na anca" (p. 62). In Rajada, a woman stays home to till the land "com o filho à ilharga" (p. 153). In Homens sem Caminho, a woman runs out of the hut "com o pequeno bifurcado na anca" (p. 106). The fact that this particular scene is repeated

almost verbatim so many different times leaves the writer to conjecture that it was one of the visual images of Africa which most impressed the author. (At the risk of a post-hoc psychological insert, this writer believes that Soromenho must have been very impressed with the strength of the African woman who could be engaged in anything from cleaning house to grinding manioc to tilling the land, with a child hanging on her hips.)

Only rarely does the author stray from his customary definition of the African woman "mulher para o trabalho rude da terra e fêmea obrigada a dar-se ao prazer sensual de seu senhor" (Nhári, p. 110). In Rajada he does so to enlarge the reader's perspective on the humanity of his female subjects as he shows us also that women could be treated humanely. In that collection of short stories, as has been mentioned, the disgraced soba Carumbo was refused food and drink by his former subjects. However, that night a slave woman whom he had owned while still chief steals out of the village with food for the starving man. Her life was spared from the ensuing flood because of her loyalty to her former master. In Noite de Angústia, Ivenga returns to Salemo's hut after murdering the young girl Capula. She was in a state of total shock. She mentions that she is thirsty and Salemo gets up to bring her some water. Her reaction is very revealing: "Ivenga abriu os olhos com espanto, como quem vê sem acreditar no que está vendo" (p. 21). For the most part, these scenes

were exceptions. The rule was that for a woman, as for a slave, "a pancada é a comida" (Homens sem Caminho, p. 80). Beyond that, the worst epithet that could be uttered to describe the depths to which men might sink was "homens que são piores que mulheres" (Noite de Angústia, p. 132).

In summary, we need only to recall the Lundas' righteous anger upon hearing of Djalala's abuse at the hands of the Quiocos to understand the position of women in Soromenho's Africa. The very worst thing which could ever happen to an African man was to be used and abused as a woman, in every sense of the words.

Music, Dress and Other Customs

Life in the African village is everywhere accompanied by music and no ceremony is begun without the ritual dance or batuque. In this writer's opinion, Soromenho's attention to detail in these spheres appears rooted in his personal reactions to the sensuality of the dancers and the rhythmic power of the drums. Before taking a closer look at the batuque itself, let us first review the instruments used by Soromenho's Africans.

Their quissange is the guitar of the bush. It has a short neck and three or four strings pulled tightly over a hollowed-out gourd. Its moaning sounds evoke for the author all the sadness and misery of African life. That misery, of course, is more evident in his earlier works than his later

ones. In Nhári, for example, "o quissange, voz da raça, largou dolentemente, os sons magoados da imensa . . . e misteriosa 'saudade negra'" (pp. 44-45). This same theme is repeated in his last work of this period, Calenga, with less mystery but equal plaintiveness: "Essa fala da saudade . . . é sempre ao som plangente do quissange . . . porque o quissange é como a voz da raça" (p. 178).

Playing the quissange as well as all other instruments was generally a skill reserved to men. And most men knew how to play them whether they were warriors or slaves. The guitar accompanied the hunter and the warrior wherever they went and many of their tales are recounted in song "no embalo da música dolente e saudosa do quissange" (Rajada, p. 112).

Nowhere more than in Nhárí is song given primal importance as a mirror of the African soul. For example, it is the African sunset in the life of the black man "que trazia em cançao saudosa e fatalista o chão eternamente dolente desta raça triste" (p. 45). For Soromenho, quissanges and saudades were symonymous: "O filho da selva que dedilha o quissange parece chorar saudades" (p. 57). For the African, the quissange is the key that unlocks in song all the legends and folktales stored in his memory.

Other African instruments less frequently mentioned are drums of varied shapes, sizes and sounds. The generic term employed by Soromenho is atabaque but his percussion section consists of four or five different kinds of drums.

There are zalumbos, a type of bass drum and the omnipresent chingufo. The latter, after the quissange, is the most common of all Angolan percussive instruments. During the batuque, all rhythms are set by the chingufo players and followed meticulously by the other drummers. The chingufo is made of a hollowed-out tree trunk, closed at the bottom. It is played along the sides with two rubber-tipped drumsticks and its sounds vary, depending on whether it is struck high or low. The sounds of the chingufo can be heard for great distances with the proper winds. It is also used for inter-village communcations announcing feasts, hunts, meetings, funerals and the like. The goma is another drum used by Angolan musicians. Unlike the chingufo, it is covered on one end by a tightly-drawn skin and is played with the hands. "As gomas . . . tinham a bôca tapada com rica e vistosa pele de [lagarto do rio]" (Nhári, p. 25). Soromenho's portrayals of Africa are as aural as they are visual. Wherever he takes his reader, the sounds of drumbeats and the plucking of the quissange are just behind.

The batuque, or ritual dance, is mentioned everywhere. Stylistically, this dance evolves in Soromenho's writing from an orgiastic bacchanal to a very specific ritual celebration of births, deaths, wars, hunts, etc. In Nhári, for instance, the dance is nothing more than exotic entertainment, a "spiral of pleasure." Soromenho describes it so minutely that the reader knows he is being presented with a piece of reporting.

The batuque begins with drums and songs which are "murmurs of sensuality." The men are the first to step into a dance circle, just a few steps from the drummers. In the center of the circle burns a large fire. The drumbeats increase in speed, determining the rhythm of the dance. Shortly thereafter, the women of the village enter the circle and commence their own steps, undulating their sensuous bodies. The master of the dance, described by Soromenho as "the idol of the women," jumps into the circle and begins his own special steps while imitating the beasts of the jungle with his shouts. The complexion of the batuque changes, "há novas tintas, sons diferentes . . . neste batuque febril" (p. 28). The dancers, both men and women, are almost delirious. The latter are overcome by their own sexuality and jut their breasts out at the men around them. They are wearing small gourds filled with dry seeds on their feet and metal bracelets on their arms which jingle at their every move. For the author, this batuque is one of "febre e voluptuosidade . . . onde a carne sangra sensualidade" (p. 34). The dance lasts all night and is followed by the inevitable orgy. The last dance is the pièce de résistance and we can sense the author's own excitement as he describes the final scene.

> . . . surge no terreiro uma mulher, envolta em . . . panos. . . .
>
> Suas mãos, tocadas pelo sonho, faziam ondular, . . . panos que esvoaçam para logo cairem, ...
>
> A suavidade da música emprestou lentidão e abandôno a este bailado. . . .
>
> Num momento, os panos ondularam mais, mais ainda, e o corpo da bailarina . . . mostrou-se em toda a sua nudez." (Nhári, pp. 78-79)

(Can this be the same author who wrote in his article, "Duas literaturas" [Diário de Lunda, 14 February 1937, p. 1] that colonial literature is so poor because it concentrates on the sun, "the sounds of the batuque, blacks without souls and red sunsets, as if Africa were nothing more?")

As Soromenho's themes evolved from superficial accounts of African life to dramatic portrayals of tragedy and death, the batuque changed accordingly. Where in Nhari it was a nightly exotic performance accompanied by drunkenness, lewdness and orgiastic sex, it quickly becomes the batuque fúnebre, the mirror of death in Africa.

The funeral dance is also of great religious significance because without it, the souls of the dead will find no peace. In Noite de Angústia, a funeral dance is finally held for Capula, who has been killed by Ivenga's sorcery. The songs of this batuque "arrastam-se em palavras de tristeza e saudade--imploração a alma dos sobas para que recebam e protejam o espirito" (p. 99). This ritual dance is sacrosanct. Anyone interfering with it does so at the risk of his own life. Such is the case of an old man whose son had been Capula's lover and had been killed by a lion during a hunt. In the midst of her funeral dance, this old man jumps up and starts to vilify the dead girl "pedindo para a sua alma o castigo dos deuses" (p. 101). With that act however he has sealed his own fate. The musicians drop their instruments and the entire tribe "repudiated the offensive words of the

old man." The villagers then proceed to stomp him to death.

The batuque fúnebre takes place outside a circle of elephant grass gathered for a symbolic funeral pyre. The villagers wait for the young boys to finish building the fire and for the soba to give the order to ignite it. Finally, the order comes and thus begins the "celebration of the dead." That ceremony begins in sadness but becomes a celebration of life for the participants.

> Ao redor das fogueiras, as gentes miserandas bailavam, cantavam e bebiam até a embriaguez. . . .
>
> Os homens entregaram-se como possessos a todos os prazeres. . . .
>
> A dois passos da roda . . . velhos e novos, . . . entonteados pelo vinho da palmeira, contorciam-se sobre fofos de capim, nas lutas do amor. (Noite de Angústia, p. 38)

The dead are mourned so that their spirits may find peace; the living get drunk and make love so that their spirits may survive the agony of death and help them face the unknown tomorrow.

The batuque fúnebre is a three-stage dance beginning with two concentric circles of dancers; men on the outside, women on the inside. The rhythm of the drums monotonously follows the same beat and then slackens as the dancers tire. Amidst shouts and demands for palm wine, the men leave the dance circle for refreshments. Thus ends the first stage. The men regroup in a circle after drinking some palm wine brought to them by their women. Now, however, the rhythm of the drums picks up "para entrar no ritmo dos batuques que são gritos vibrantes que entontecem os homens" (Noite de

Angústia, p. 101). The drummers gegin to beat their instruments in a drunken frenzy as the dancers circle the fire, their arms thrusting skywards. This is the second stage of the batuque fúnebre. Finally, the entire village chants a song about the dead girl which recounts her life and loves, thereby commending her spirit to the spirits of the dead. (Even in this emotionally-charged episode, Soromenho cannot resist a small element of ethnography. One of the drums used is a melangue which the author defines in the glossary of the second edition of Noite de Angústia as "um pequeno tambor, que serve para convocar os indígenas e transmitir notícias. É a T. S. F. do sertão."[50] The "T. S. F." is the telefonia sem fios, the wireless of the jungle.)

Songs were mnemonics for events past as well as recorders of occurrences in the present. Salemo's death after his conviction for sorcery is chronicled in a song to be sung "em todos os batuques lundas" (Noite de Angústia, p. 151). This song will serve not only to entertain but to remind all the people of the jungles of the penalties for sorcery. Groups of hunters sing of past successes in their interminable search for game. Warriors sing of feats of heroism on the field of battle and each tribe has its own themes. In Rajada, for example, the Lunda arriving at the slave market in

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[50]Noite de Angústia, 2nd ed., rev. (Lisbon: Inquérito, 1943), p. 232.

Cassange sing a "canto arrastado e dolente" (p. 113). The Quiocos on the other hand sing their own special "barbarous warrior songs."

Singing and dancing were not, however, reserved for death. They were the verbal and physical expressions of success in the hunt or at war. In Calenga, the peace-loving Calambas entertain themselves by singing and dancing "as suas façanhas nas aventuras das caçadas de fogo, . . . imitando o rugir das feras e o galopar dos antílopes" (p. 28). We may recall that there was a batuque to celebrate Calenga's birth as well as a special dance, the ualécula, to commemorate completion of the rites of circumcision. When drought come to the Calambas, Calenga was taught to sing the "song of the hot winds." And when the Cassongos first appeared and disappeared in the Calamba's night-enshrouded forest, "um moço fêz uma canção que todos cantaram sôbre os cassongos que vieram beber ao rio dos calambas" (p. 48). In this same collection of short stories, one of the things that Ilunga's hunters taught the Bungos led by Princess Lueji, was their ritual Luba dance. The Bungos were highly enthusiastic about learning the new dance "porque só se pode dancar êsse batuque quando se é verdadeiramente caçador" (Calenga, p. 193). (We may recall that the Lubas had taught the Bungos how to hunt with new, iron-age weapons.) Learning the hunters' dance was almost a "graduation" ceremony for the Bungos. The songs, music and dance were all allusive to the caçada a fogo. The

drumbeats represented the flow of the fire, the running of the antelopes and the bellowing of the animals. The dance steps themselves were imitative of the stance of the hunters on the attack. And the words of the songs referred specifically to the hunters' society.

Other feats were also memoralized in song. For example, Djalala's escape from the Quiocos was described vividly in Homens sem Caminho.

> Gemeram os quissanges cantando o seu belo feito. E na boca das mulheres andava a sua vida feita canção. . . . E o mistério volveu-se em lenda e a lenda em canção. E a canção fez-se história. (p. 78)

In these few sentences, the author summarized the entire process of history-recording and history-making among the Africans. He had already made prior reference to that very process in Rajada using the death of a beloved soba as the subject of a song become legend. As the soba's people mourned his death, they were already planning his canonization. "Amanha, depois de dançado o batuque fúnebre, os cantadores irão, de aldeia em aldeia, sertões em fora, cantar a canção da sua vida e da sua morte" (p. 77). And even when those who knew and loved him are long gone, his story, refracted through the prism of the imagination of the jongleurs, will be perpetuated in the legends of the tribe. These will be carried in the memory of the people for generations and fathers will sing them to their children accompanied by the "baleful and nostalgic sounds of the quissanges." Wars were also commemorated in music and there are repeated references to songs and war dances.

Perhaps the most joyous batuque, if not the most sensual, is that which takes place on the first night of the slave fair at Cassange. The different tribes arrived, each singing their own songs, and were greeted by the drums of the Bangala king. The air of the whole town is filled with song day and night "spreading the news of the arrival of different tribes seeking Bângala women." The first night of the fair is inaugurated with special drums as the batuque of the flesh market begins.

> . . . cruzam-se . . . os sons dos atabaques e as moças começam a dancar, nuas, só com o sexo tapado por um pedacito de pele, fazendo tilintar as pulseiras e as anilhas de cobre que lhes cingem os tornozelos." (Rajada, p. 116)

The more beautiful and skilled the dancers, the more quickly they are sold. (For the ugly Samba however the beating of the drums was not festive at all but rather "um toque de finados, um batuque dos mortos" [p. 118].) As this batuque continues, the prospective buyers, who had been wined and dined by their host before the slave sale, become hypnotized by the dance steps while getting drunk from the palm wine. None of this is, of course, accidental as the entire atmosphere is deliberately charged with sex and alcohol. What Soromenho is telling us here is that the Bangala slavers of Cassange were masters of marketing even four hundred years ago. We are able to hear the slave girls dancing as we listen to "o bater dos pés no chão duro e o telintar [sic] das anilhas abandonadas nos pulsos e tornozelos das mulheres" (Rajada,

p. 120). This batuque continues for the three days of the slave fair until the last slave girl is sold or, in Samba's case, murdered for having been too ugly.

Some of the instruments of the ritual dances, such as the drums, have more restricted uses. They are used to signal the start of a battle or a hunt. In Rajada, for example, the old master hunter, Matambele, enthusiastically pounds a drum "announcing that the beaters have just lit the fire on the plains." He continues at the drum so that everyone might know that the hunt had begun. He is surprised at his own vigor, a reflection of his joy at the arrival of the long-awaited winds.

Music and dance are truly "the voice of the race," as they mirror not only the African's soul but every important event in his life. Participation in the batuque, whether to commemorate birth, death, war, peace, crime, punishment or any other major life experience, is the African's only temporary refuge from the supernatural forces which govern him. Small wonder then that in the Africa of Castro Soromenho the batuque is ubiquitous.

The author portrayed African life in his pre-colonial fiction as an ongoing series of events. He was principally concerned with the "what" and the "how" of his subjects' lives. As we have seen in the beginning of Part Two of this study, background descriptions are necessary but not all-important. Soromenho's attention to African dress falls into the realm

of human background. He pays major attention to the lucanos not as vestments but as authority symbols. His attention to the headdress worn by the witchdoctor, Samugimo, in Noite de Angústia is a function of the tàhi's position and the ritual of divination. And most importantly, Soromenho was limited in his depictions of African dress because his subjects' wardrobe consisted generally of only one piece of clothing, a rag or animal skin that was worn over their private parts. His characters are either straightening "o pedaço de pele que mal lhe tapava o sexo" (Noite de Angústia, p. 76), or walking around half-naked, "um pedaço de pele de antílope envolvendo-lhes os quadris e caído um pouco abaixo do sexo" (Nhári, p. 26). On rare occasions the reader is given a glimpse of something other than just a lioncloth, as in Noite de Angústia where hunters are on the march and the only sound to be heard is "o raque-raque do saiote de peles" (p. 93). In Nhári, the young girl Caçula who was swallowed by a crocodile, was also dressed in a skirt.

Of all the elements worn on the bodies of his subjects, Soromenho was most intrigued by the tattoos on the lower abdominal regions of his women. In Nhári, he described a woman "habilidosamente tatuada . . . no baixo ventre" (p. 88). Another woman in the same work pushes her lover closer to her so that he might feel "a tatuagem caprichosa que ela tinha no baixo-ventre" (p. 33). In Noite de Angústia, the author's

eyes are riveted to the young Capula's womb at least three different times. The first time, she is described as the young girl with a "womb tattooed like the Luenas." Then she is the young woman with a womb tattooed like the beautiful women of Luba, and finally, with a womb tattooed like the "wanton" Luenas. One would think that the author might have perceived a cultural pattern in all this tattooing. Surprisingly, the one adverb that appears most often with "tattooed" is "capriciously." Soromenho appears to have had no idea that

> Nearly all the peoples of Angola used certain types of bodily mutilation, especially scarification and chipping and filing of the teeth . . . to produce physical distinctions mirroring the cultural and social differences between them.[51]

He recognized that men also were tattooed, as he tells us of an old man "sitting with his hands crossed on his tattooed chest." In Noite de Angústia, he describes Muaquife as being "tattooed like the idols." In that one metaphor he makes the connection between a sculptured religious artifact and human scarification but fails to analyze or explain the phenomenon. He was also aware of the custom of filing teeth, as he described the warrior, Gando, in Homens sem Caminho with "uma fila de dentes amarelos, os da frente com as pontas limadas" (p. 71). He seems to have avoided, either consciously or otherwise, making any ethnographic inferences from tattoos and filed teeth.

The author also makes passing reference to hairstyles, mostly in Homens sem Caminho. Cauina starts to put her hands through her hair in distress "sem sequer reparar que estava a

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[51]Miller, p. 250.

desfazer or penteado, há dias feito para durar um ano" (p. 28). Elsewhere in the same novel, the young slave girl, Caçula, is portrayed with her head "ornamentada por bizarro penteado que se assemelhava a um cofío coberto de borlas" (p. 68). Again, his style here is descriptive rather than analytical.

Lastly, Soromenho does notice the use of body paints but merely describes their application without attaching any other significance to the custom. In Calenga, for example, we are told of young girls who went down to a river to get "barro vermelho com que pintavam, depois de amassado com rícino, o corpo e os cabelos" (p. 44). This red clay was probably a powdered mixture used to ensure fertility in women. However it was given out only by the soba "to safeguard the procreativity of his kinswomen so that they might always bear children and thus guarantee the survival of the group."[52]

As elders were important to the political structure of the tribe, a fair amount of attention is paid to the problems of the aging. Most of the author's old men spend their days smoking liamba or opium. This custom must have particularly intrigued the author because he perceives its significance as early as Nhári. Old men, those who are no longer the elders of the council, are almost invariably portrayed as smoking water pipes filled with the "alucinante

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[52]Ibid., p. 145.

e mortífera liamba" (Nhárí, p. 23). An old man offers his pipe to a young slave with the words, "Smoke my liamba and you'll be happier." He himself continues to smoke, seeking sleep in the stupefying drug. Soromenho even offers a value judgment on the habit by having one girl ask another "Tu não sabes que a liamba é um veneno que torna os homens . . . em velhos . . .?" (Nhári, p. 46). Soromenho recapitualtes the reason for smoking in a simple sentence: "And the old man went back to the poisonous liamba, the dream that makes one forget life." Opium smoking is the last resort for the aged and infirm who can no longer participate in the soba's council. In Homens sem Caminho, young Gando insults "those old men who waste life by getting 'stoned' on liamba." Gando here is speaking for the author, whose old men finally drop off to sleep, completely drugged. Smoking opium also wrought havoc with the bodies of those addicted. It reduced them to skin and bones. In point of fact, when the elders are not active participants as a corporate body in one or another of the author's plots, they revert to ghostly characters in the human background, lost in the dreams of opium or palm wine. And although Soromenho appears mildly opposed to opium smoking, he does show a keen understanding of the psychological problems of the aging.

In Noite de Augústia, during one of the rare batuques of joy in that novel of death, the soba Xandumba is portrayed as too old to participate in the dancing: ". . . os pés ja

não sabem pisar ao ritmo da música" (p. 99). He and his council of elders watch the dancing from their seats of honor in the village chota. The old men can do nothing more than gossip about the young women swaying before them in sensual abandon

> . . . com palavras loucas e ardentes dos velhos libidinosos que, na evocação dos amores da sua mocidade, procuram lenitivo para a tristeza que os assinalou com a morte do seu sexo. (p. 100)

They talk and laugh among themselves, we are told, because they are afraid of death. For them (as for Samba), the songs of the batuque are funeral dirges and they have no intention of listening. The only things left for them in life are idle chatter and opium-smoking.

Death has been discussed earlier but some additional mention of burial customs is called for. We already know that when death approached, every man and woman returned home to die, "porque o homem gosta de morrer no chão que lhe pertence" (Noite de Angústia, p. 89). After death, the cadaver was usually wrapped in fragrant leaves and placed in a mourning chamber (câmara ardente) during the funeral dance. We are told further that the Lundas did not spend much time on this ritual because mourning was particularly painful for them (as opposed to the Quiocos who did not mourn their dead at all). Capula, who had beem murdered by sorcery, is buried by the wayside in sacred ground reserved for the sobas of her tribe. Her family was then obliged to burn her hut to the ground because "that which had died could never again contain life."

Death was very final for the survivors, regardless of where the spirits of the deceased finally came to rest. It brought no joy and no surcease from the terrors of life. Under such circumstances, for those near death, opium-smoking was as good a method of obliterating the fear of non-being as any other. Soromenho shows us "old opium smokers" from Nhári all the way through Homens sem Caminho.

Regular tobacco was smoked alongside opium but was preferred by younger men of the tribes. They smoked from water pipes while conversing about their prowess in war or in the hunt. The cachimbo-de-agua could be found in every man's hut. (One can almost see the author seated around a fire with his Lunda storytellers, taking his turn on the pipe. "Em redor do fogo . . . num grupo de viandantes lundas, ergeu-se uma voz magoada a contar magoada história--reminiscência de épocas de escravidão" [Nhári, p. 58].)

There are some minor customs which appear from time to time and are noteworthy. The rituals of greetings and paying homage are not very varied. Women let fly gutteral shouts when their men return to the village or, upon passing a soba, touch the palm of their hand to their mouths, out of respect. Men always bowed before their chief while wiping a handful of dirt on their chests. Xandumba's messengers, sent to fetch Salemo in Noite de Angústia, "curvaram-se até ao chão, apanharam uma mão de terra e esfregaram com ela três vezes o peito em sinal de saudação" (p. 92). That scene is representative of the standard greeting for sobas throughout the

author's works. There is one final custom which must have impressed Soromenho, and that is the Angolan expression of disgust: spitting to one side. It, too, is a constant as we can see in Homens sem Caminho ("Ambos cuspiram para o lado com nojo," p. 66) and Noite de Angústia ("Muaquife cuspiu para a sua banda," p. 117).

One final reference must be made to homosexuality only because Soromenho and Chatelain seem to differ on the meaning of the word catuma. Soromenho's depictions of homosexuality have already been discussed but whether it was his creation, of a fact of life among the Angolans, this writer cannot say. Soromenho certainly had a cultural bias against homosexuality as we are told in Homens sem Caminho that Camba-Camba's catuma was "o queridinho do soba" (p. 95). Even the powerful yet judicious Xandumba, beloved of the Muatiânvua, in Noite de Angústia had a catuma named Pinda. That is the only instance where Soromenho actually names one of these alleged queridinhos. What raises the question at this point is Xamdumba's use of Pinda. Towards the end of the novel, Xandumba sends Pinda to bring Salemo to the village: "Logo que o pajem do soba se pôs a caminho . . ." (p. 123). Soromenho's use of the word pajem as a synonym for catuma certainly calls into question the meaning of the word catuma, especially in the light of Chatelain's definition of the word as "messenger."[53]

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[53]Chatelain, Contos Populares. In one of the folktales, "A Rã e as Duas Mulheres," Chatelain defines the Kimbundu word

This part of the study has attempted to analyze pre-colonial and tribal Africa as portrayed by Castro Soromenho. What we have seen is the predominance of lore in this period of the author's fiction. His techniques of description are in fact weakened narrations; presentation and characterization are non-existent. Dialogues are very limited as are flash-backs and mental monologues. There are no reflections of "mirrors of consciousness." Soromenho became a master of cumulative techniques. He wrote stories within stories such as "A Lagoa Maldita," which first appeared in Lendas Negras, was reprinted in Nhári, reappeared in slightly altered form as "O Lago Enfeitiçado" in Rajada and is repeated in its thematic entirety in Noite de Angústia. Soromenho is a master of short fiction, and even Noite de Angústia and Homens sem Caminho are nothing more than consolidations, by weak and feeble narrative threads, of previous short story material or ethnographic articles published as fact elsewhere.

Soromenho's three short story collections, Nhári, Rajada and Calenga and the two novels of this period, give us a panoramic view of a free African society (i.e., free from white domination). As has already been stated, the author

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Ku-tuma as "mandar, ou mandar para, mandar palavra para vir." Chatelain, n. 568, p. 551. In the translation of the story itself, we read the following: "Os mensageiros partiram e chegaram . . ., dando ambos recado idêntico." Ibid., p. 415. Italics added. As Soromeno spoke only Portuguese, he might have misunderstood the word catuma from his original source, Dias de Carvalho.

needed to effectively portray the collective psychology, institutions, customs, interrelationships of groups, classes, types and tribes in Angola before he could embark on writing novels of Africa under Portuguese colonialism. He was indeed a living part of that colonialism and could only portray the degradation which ensued from the clash of cultures by building a firm foundation in his own mind, and in the minds of his readers, on the Africa that had been before the arrival of the white man. Once the white man came, "A África perdera o seu destino. . . ."[54]

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[54]Castro Soromenho, A Maravilhosa Viagem, p. 377.

PART III

THE CLASH OF CULTURES

CHAPTER 9

PROLOGUE

> Castro Soromenho ocupa uma posição singular na literatura portuguesa. Foi o primeiro para chamar a atenção dos portugueses para o anti-colonialismo através da literatura.
>
> — Prime Minister Mário Soares[1]

With the following analyses of Terra Morta, Viragem and A Chaga we will study the real subject matter of Castro Soromenho, the novelist. Terra Morta, as has been mentioned, was first written in 1945 but was not published until 1949, in Brazil.[2] The second edition of this novel was published in Portugal in 1961[3] but was seized by the Salazar government shortly after is publication.[4] The third edition was pub- in Lisbon in 1974.[5]

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[1]Prime Minister Mário Soares, conversations with this writer, 19 April 1977, New York City.

[2]Castro Soromenho, Terra Morta, Coleção Gaivota, 1 (Rio: Livraria-Editôra da Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1949).

[3]Terra Morta, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Arcádia, 1961).

[4]See: Relação das obras cuja circulação esteve proibida em Portugal durante o regime Salazar/M. Caetano . . . (Lisbon: Associação dos Editores e Livreiros Portugueses, 1974), p. 130.

[5]Terra Morta, 3rd ed., Colecção Vozes do Mundo, 3 (Lisbon: Livraria Sá da Costa, 1974). This is the edition used in the present study.

Viragem was first published in Lisbon in 1957[6] and escaped the censors, although other reprisals were taken against the author, as we have seen in Part One of this study. The second edition was published in Sao Paulo a year after the author had taken up permanent residence in that city.[7] Lastly, A Chaga, which had been finished in Paris in 1964, was published posthumously in Rio de Janeiro in 1970.[8]

Prior to the writing of Terra Morta, Soromenho was not yet a novelist. Although Noite de Angústia and Homens sem Caminho are novels in length, they are in fact stories within stories dealing with the same legends, lore and ethnography we find in the author's short stories and magazine articles of the late 1930's and early 1940's. In the works of the pre-colonial period. Soromenho created a panorama of African life in fiction. However, he was at best a collector of stories and myths of bygone worlds that he never knew. He recovered the African past. Yet that recovery was essential to his later novels. For example, the degradation of various sobas in Terra Morta, Viragem and A Chaga is

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[6]Castro Soromenho, Viragem, Colecção Atlântida (Lisbon: Editora Ulisseia, 1957).

[7]Viragem, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Arquimedes Edições, 1967). This is the edition used in the present study.

[8]Castro Soromenho, A Chaga, pref. Ruy Coelho, Coleção Biblioteca do Leitor Moderno, 126 (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1970).

heightened by our understanding of the tremendous power and dignity these chiefs had enjoyed in the fiction of Soromenho's pre-colonial period.

Castro Soromenho the novelist was born with the publication of Terra Morta. He is no longer the amateur ethnologist, collector of lore and sometime historian. He now writes about the world he knew personally and intimately. It is the opinion of this writer, already stated elsewhere,[9] that the seeds for Terra Morta were sown, in part, by Soromenho's old friend, João Gaspar Simoes. In a review of Homens sem Caminho dated 14 Jaunary 1943 and reprinted in Gaspar Simões' Crítica III,[10] that critic asserts an apparently white racist view that "só quando o romancista tem o cuidado de associar a vida dos povos primitivos à dos europeus, a sua obra pode ser tratado como um verdadeiro romance."[11] Unfortunately, such a judgment was all too indicative of the Portuguese mentality of the times. But it was probably an honest one with regard to Soromenho's African fiction. What Gaspar Simões seems to be saying in this review is that if a novel

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[9]Gerald B. Scharfman, "Castro Soromenho visto por alguns críticos," paper presented before the Lisbon Geographic Society and summarized in the Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, 91, 7-12(July-December 1973)326-328.

[10]João Gaspar Simões, "Castro Soromenho," Crítica III (Lisbon: Delfos, 1961), pp. 45-52.

[11]Ibid., p. 50.

does not relate to white Europeans, it cannot be considered a novel. Simões went on to advise the young Soromenho to review his own reminiscences as an "Africanist." Soromenho is counseled to try a different route in his next book: "Porque não experimenta Castro Soromenho associar a sua própria vida à dos indígenas? Porque não mostra o seu próprio drama de homem perdido ne meio da selva?"[12] These questions turned out to be prophetic. Soromenho and Gaspar Simões were very close friends at the time and it appears that the author took the critic's advice to heart. The review first appeared in print in January, 1943, and Soromenho finished Terra Morta in December, 1945. What he wrote however was not a Heart of Darkness. His first novel of the white man "lost in the midst of the jungle" was also the first indictment of Portuguese colonialism ever written by a white man.

Terra Morta announces the impending doom of colonialism and is the first part of a trilogy to hammer that message home. We have already seen where the author himself mentions the word "trilogy," although in his opinion it was to have begun with Viragem. He only lived long enough to write three novels dealing with the crimes of Portuguese colonialism and they are the trilogy he has left us. Moser confirmed this view when he wrote: ". . . the novel A Chaga completes a trilogy that presents the strained relations between African populations

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[12]Ibid., p. 51.

and European rulers. . . ."[13] But even if Soromenho had claimed these novels to be independent and he and Moser had not used the term "trilogy," the relationships of the works to one another speak for themselves. Characters walk from one novel into the other. The Chief of post Alberto Sobral appears in Terra Morta and A Chaga as do the mulatoo truck driver Rocha, the merchant José Calado and the African sepoy Cebola. The telephone linesman (guarda-fios) Pedro appears in Terra Morta and Viragem and the aspirante Alves, the white women Joana and Paulina and another truck driver, Maurício, all continue from Viragem directly into A Chaga. The author has effectively broken the walls which separate his novels in the same fashion as did Balzac in the Comédie Humaine and Galdós in his Novelas Contemporáneas. We are presented with an album of pictures all related to one another. In fact, it may be said that the three novels are really separate chapters of one novel. Themes, space, time and characters are the same.

The principal theme of course is the clash of cultures and the resultant dehumanization of both black and white. In broadest terms this might be defined as white colonialism superimposed on the African tribal structure. But because Soromenho lived in that world, he knew better than anyone else that everything is literally not black and white. He subtly

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[13]Gerald Moser, rev. of A Chaga by Castro Soromenho in Hispania, 55, 4 (December 1972) 974.

differentiates the clash between whites, who are divided into colonial officials and merchants, mulattos, who are the children of the latter, blacks who work for the whites, either as domestic servants or policemen in the colonial administration and black Africans still living within their traditional tribal structures. Nor is any one group solidified in its attitudes toward the others. Among the white administrators are those who try to justify colonialism as a necessary paternalistic policy for taking care of the "big children." Lower ranking colonial officials are cruel sadists who believe in beating the African to within an inch of his life in order to continue to assert their own tenuous authority. Still other officials take exactly the opposite view, seeking to treat the African as a human being but, in the end, they are impotent to change the status quo in the face of colonial policies dictated from Lisbon and Luanda.

The merchants are in constant conflict with one another over trade with the Africans as well as being subordinated themselves to onerous colonial regulations. They clash constantly with their black women and their mulatto children. They would never dream of marrying the former and they consider the latter to be useless loafers. The mulattos, for the most part, suffer tremendous identity crises as they are neither fish nor fowl. This is especially true in Terra Morta and A Chaga.

The black domestic servants clash repeatedly with their masters and mock them unsparingly when they can get away with it. It is the only way they can survive Portuguese oppression. The black policemen employed by the colonial administration as sipaios and capitas (assistants of the sepoys) are detribalized Africans who are the agents of Portuguese oppression against their tribal brothers. They are despised by the latter who will do anything to undercut their authority as they are abused by the whites for the smallest infraction. The tribal Africans themselves are divided among those who would rather flee or die than submit to Portuguese colonialist oppression, those who submit passively and those who would betray their own peoples to gain the favor of the new "sobas."

The themes of the physical and moral degradation of the African are everywhere. Blacks working for whites are all given different names which change their external identities immediately. They are often given names of things by their white masters as the final act of dehumanization, although the Africans themselves do not know what their Portuguese names really mean. In Terra Morta, we meet sipaios named Cebola (Onion), Batata (Potato) and Canivete (Pen-knife). The administrator chooses a new soba in a particular episode and calls him Comboio (Train). In Viragem there is the tragic figure of the sepoy Tipóia (Hammock). In A Chaga, Comboio is resurrected as a sepoy and Cebola is also present. The domestic servants on the other hand usually have Portuguese names such

as Amélia in Terra Morta, Mariano in Viragem and Julião in A Chaga. But sometimes even domestic servants are given pejorative names of things or animals such as Ratão (Big Rat) in Terra Morta and Lombriga (Worm) in Viragem. The dehumanization of Ratão is expanded upon when we find out that a dog has the same name as he. Whenever the dog is called, the servant comes running, causing much laughter among whites as well as other black servants. This Ratão is in fact nothing more than a dog in the eyes of his white masters. The black concubines of the white merchants also have Portuguese names (Francisca, José Calado's companion in Terra Morta and Serafina, Gaspar Caldao's woman in A Chaga). It goes without saying that the mulatto children of the merchants must have Portuguese names since they are half white. But these Portuguese names had a negative function also as they served to further isolate the mulattos from their true roots (i.e., João Calado and Maria and Eugenio Anacleto in Terra Morta, Domingos, Firmino and Josefa Paulino, Francisco and Dulce Cardoso, Severino Santana and Jesus Lourenço in A Chaga, and so on).

One of the author's oft-used techniques in the characterization of the clash of cultures is language. The sipaios, capitas and mulattos speak to the whites in what the Portuguese in Africa called Pretogûês. (Preto is a Portuguese word for "black.") The mulattos spoke Quioco to their mothers however. There is nevertheless little differentiation between

the language of the sipaios, capitas and moleques and that of the mulattos. Nor is language characterization used only for blacks. The language of most of the whites in A Chaga is not standard Portuguese since they themselves came from the lowest social classes in Portugal.

Brazil and Portugal appear as sub-themes of the white culture and are employed for the sake of comparison and contrast between the life of the whites back home and those of their counterparts in Africa. Brazil is depicted as a hostile place for Portuguese immigrants and Portugal is a feeble, decadent metropole incapable of supporting its own people, much less its colonies. The political situation in Portugal is first mentioned in Terra Morta with an allusion to the P.I.D.E. (the Portuguese Secret Police under Salazar) listening in on a conversation between two men. In A Chaga, Portuguese fascist opporession at home is depicted at much greater length. The poverty in Portugal is also mentioned first in Terra Morta and, in the later novels, it becomes the main reason for keeping the whites in Africa. There is really nothing to which they can go "home." Everyone seems to believe the myth of instant wealth for Portuguese immigrants in Africa but this is debunked quickly by Soromenho.

The most visible symbol of Portuguese colonial oppression and degredation of the blacks is forced labor. Whether in the diamond mines and cotton fields of Angola or on the coffee plantations of São Tomé, it is the primary raison d'etre

for the Portuguese in Africa. Of course Soromenho was intimately familiar with recruiting forced labor for the diamond mines and he gives us a first-hand detailed description of that institution in Terra Morta on a par with Melville's description of blubber cutting and storing in Moby Dick.

Further degradation of the Africans by the Portuguese is portrayed in the changes forced upon the African tribal structure, the sobado, or chiefdom. We see how the Portuguese chose sobas of their own liking, thereby circumventing the traditional African patterns of authority. We also see how the Portuguese forced other sobas to act as their agents in recruiting forced labor for white economic needs. African chiefs were only tolerated insofar as they met their quotas for the diamond mines and the cotton fields. However, in the final analysis, by dehumanizing the African and treating him like a thing, like goods to be traded, the Portuguese ultimately destroy themselves: "Negamos ao negro o homem que êle é, sem sequer pensarmos que ao negá-lo também nos negávamos como homens" (A Chaga, p. 111). (Those words are reminiscent of the Lundas' complaints of Quioco homosexual abuse of prisoners in Homens sem Caminho where the author tells us that forcing men to serve as women was degrading for the masters as well as the slaves "porque ninguém pode esquecer da sua condição de homem."[14]) Man's inhumanity to man bred nothing

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[14] Homens sem Caminho, p. 41.

but resentment, hatred and the desire for revenge among the Africans in Soromenho's colonial Africa.

In order to properly describe the clash of cultures, the author radically changes his techniques. The locations of the fiction of his African period extended from the great African lakes in the east to Cassange and ultimately the Atlantic Ocean in the west. His rivers were limitless and the migrations of his peoples spanned vast regions. In these last three novels, however, he telescopes his space to a very restricted area within the Lunda district: the circumscription[15] of Camaxilo. Terra Morta and A Chaga both take place in Camaxilo while Viragem is set in Cuango, a post within the Camaxilo circumscription. In fact Soromenho's entire novelistic space consists of these two posts. Luanda, Portugal and even Brazil are ghostly locations which serve only to relate the white man's presence in Africa to the world outside. Soromenho chose the smallest possible section of African life, the localized administrative post, and described colonialism in its most immediate manifestation. Camaxilo is divided between an "upper village" of the administration and the civil servants' quarters and a "lower village" of the merchants and their families. There is constant reference to movement between the two places. In the near background are the shanties

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[15] Administrative divisions of Angola and ranks within the colonial administration will be discussed shortly.

of the sipaios and capitas and farther away, the African villages. While the author had to wax lyrical in the geography of his pre-colonial African fiction, there is little lyricism in the novels of the clash of cultures. There is nothing mythical about Camaxilo or Cuango. The civil servants have precious few luxuries and their houses are nothing more than shacks. The administration office in the post of Cuango is a rotting structure called a "railroad car" and is described in Viragem as a metaphor for decadent Portuguese colonialism.

Soromenho's time is the colonial present, the mid-1930's. References to the Spanish Civil War and the ourbreak of World War II are found in Terra Morta and A Chaga. However there is also constant reference to the prior period of the military occupations which the author calls the guerras negras, the black wars. (This was also a Portuguese term for black mercenary armies which fought alongside the whites during their early penetrations into Angola.) The immediate past is also depicted as belonging to the sertanejos who were "the reality of 'Portuguese presence' outside the coastal fringe."[16] These sertanejos were often accompanied by pombeiros, aviados or feirantes.[17] They were African or mulatto agents from the

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[16]Basil Davidson, In the Eye of the Storm: Angola's Peoples (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 90.

[17]Wheeler defines these various traders as follows: "Pombeiro: 'one who went to a pombo' or slave fair or market in the interior. Aviado: agent representing Portuguese merchants

coast who were hired by the Portuguese to be their trade representatives to the tribes of the interior. Soromenho defined pombeiros in his monograph Sertanejos de Angola.[18] He prefaced that study with the following:

> Sôbre a barbarie dos sertões africanos, umas escassas dezenas de aventureiros ergueram a bandeira do seu país como símbolo da ocupação. São conhecidos por pombeiros e funantes, ... Eles chamavam-se a si mesmos, com orgulho--Sertanejos.[19]

(We must not judge the author too harshly for those words as they were written in 1943 for the Agência Geral das Colónias. His entire attitude changed within two years with the writing of Terra Morta, which he could not publish, and Calenga, where he gives vent to his true feelings in the Preface.[20])

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in the bush. Feirante: 'merchant' or 'one at a feira,' or trade fair." Obviously, these terms could be used interchangeably. Wheeler and Pelissier, Angola, n., p. 49.

[18]Castro Soromenho, Sertanejos de Angola, Colecção Pelo Império, 98 (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1943).

[19]Ibid., p. 5.

[20]"Depois de apagares com as lágrimas da morte a imagem do teu menino branco, muitas coisas se passaram na terra onde nascemos. Muitos fogos destruíram as aldeias negras e os matagais bravios. E encheu-se de uma vida nova a terra triste, aberta a todos os ventos do mar, onde morreste.

A tua aldeia, quando os teus irmãos se revoltaram por amor à liberdade, foi assaltada. As lanças indígenas nada puderam contra a carabina dos civilizados. . . . Foram mortos os seus homens mais valentes e roubado o destino das crianças. E sobre a terra vermelha de sangue, os corpos das mulheres renderam-se de mêdo aos conquistadores. . . .

Nada resta da tua aldeia e dos seus matos bravios. E dos braços que embalaram o menino branco, e do seio em que lhe deste o leite roubado ao filho negro, também nada resta. Só a saudade do teu menino branco ficou entre o teu nada e a sua vida.

Ama, 'mãe negra,' é essa saudade, velha de mais de trinta anos, que invoca a tua memória ao findar êste livro dos

The pombeiros were, according to Soromenho, a mixture of traders, explorers and warriors who

> . . . constituiram entre os sertanejos um escol. Os funantes--[an African corruption of feirantes] pequenos comerciantes do sertão--e os colonos tinham-nos em grande merecimento. . . .
>
> O pombeiro foi o homem que descobriu o sertão, e o funante o que o ocupou.[21]

The author continues by describing how these traders wrought the commercial occupation of Africa. The military occupation began as a result of the need to impose Portuguese trading monopolies on the capitalist-minded Africans and to effectively take possession of lands Portugal claimed at the European conference tables of the late 1800's. "Os funantes foram chamados para o serviço do país como guias das colunas militares."[22] What this "service to the nation" entailed is graphically depicted in Terra Morta and A Chaga where most of the merchants in Camaxilo had been bush traders and had led the Portuguese military columns to the villages of their African trading partners. The latter, as we shall see, never forgave those who had betrayed them. After the wars of occupation,

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homens da tua raça infeliz." Calenga, pp. 7-8. The author's point of view in Terra Morta was first announced in this passage dedicated to his black "mammy" in the land where "we were born." Italics added.

[21] Sertanejos, pp. 29-30.

[22] Ibid., p. 36.

the traders became storekeepers "whose ambitions were limited to owning a taberna or store."[23]

The military occupation itself was carried out through successive campaigns "at Dembos in 1907-1908 and 1918-1919; near Moxico in 1895, 1903 and 1912; and in Lunda in 1896, 1900 and 1906-1907. . . ."[24] Attempted exploitation of the Africans became so widespread that pacification operations were carried on in the Congo region on and off from 1887 through 1916; at Cubango from 1885 through 1896 and again in 1909; in Bailundo from 1903 to 1905 as well as in Bié, Novo Redondo and Caconda. In the south of Angola, in a typical clash of cultures, a Portuguese military colony "was sent to convince the African population that their cattle should be vaccinated."[25] The Africans naturally refused this marvel of Portuguese technology and massacred all the soldiers. (The African reaction to white "medicine" is also detailed in Terra Morta, as we shall see.) This led to a bloody revolt of the Cuanhama peoples from 1904 to 1906. And it was not until 1915 that the Portuguese finally secured the entire region. In the Huambo-Huila area of Angola, there were seven different

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[23]Wheeler, p. 64.

[24]Ronald H. Chilcote, Portuguese Africa (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 74.

[25]Ibid.

Portuguese military operations between 1885 and 1915. It is clear from the above that Africans throughout Angola were still willing to die in battle rather than accept Portuguese civilization well into the twentieth century.

Soromenho localizes past time not only with reference to the wars of occupation but also to repeated mention of the rubber trade. The rubber boom was in full swing in Lunda by 1880 and Camaxilo was its most important trading center. The author describes both boom and bust in great detail. After the occupation came the diamond mines and the cotton companies to exploit the African even further, which brings us to Soromenho's colonial present.

Because of the change in the subject matter in these novels, there is also a radical change in characterization. In pre-colonial Africa, Soromenho could not be a psychologist of historical, ethnic and folkloric characters. In Henry James' words, his characters were "cards," two-dimensional figures with no depth. For example, the author could only guess at how Calenga, Lueji or Djalala might have felt under certain given circumstances. In fact, the fiction of Soromenho's pre-colonial Africa shows a predominance of narration and description. The author shows us his Africa rather than creating characters who can tell us about it. However, as he had first-hand experience in colonial Africa, his techniques came to reflect his personal background. This period represents his only actual attempt to create characters. Terra Morta, for

example, is all presentation, either through dialogues or flashbacks into which the author continually injects himself. Many of his characters reminisce about things they personally could never have known (e.g., Francisca's flashbacks at the end of Terra Morta which show the author, in fact, remembering for her). We see in the three novels of colonial Africa an equilibrium among narration, description and direct presentation, all based on the elaboration of a series of characters.

The European characters of this period are for the most part types, with an attempt at individualization. Each of them carries the burden of his function within the administration of the circumscription. Yet through dialogue, inner monologue and indirect descriptions of behavior, the author attempts and succeeds at creating individuals who stand out. In Terra Morta, we can clearly distinguish between the colonial officials Antunes, Silva, Sampaio and Américo as we can also identify the merchant, Manuel Pancário. The Africans who are characterized beyond stereotype are the sepoy, Calius and the old heroic soba, Xá-Mucuari. In Viragem, the principal European characters are the aspirante Alves and a white woman, Paulina. Among the Africans, Jusa, Paulina's servant, and the sepoy Tipóia are also easily identifiable. In A Chaga, the situation is more complex with the introduction of a large number of European administrative personnel and an almost total obliteration of Africans from the novel. (We will discuss the reasons for that when we come to our analysis

of A Chaga.) Soromenho does characterize the Secretary of the post, Bonifácio Pereira as well as two merchants, Albino Lourenco and José Paulino beyond stereotype. Some of the merchants' mulatto children also appear as distinct individuals such as Josefa Paulino and Severino Santana.

Throughout the three novels, which are indeed three windows looking out on the same scene (i.e., the author's indictment of the Portuguese in Africa), there is a host of minor, incidental characters. Some of them exist only to create a sense of rich humanity and are usually introduced through third-person reference, never by the author himself. In Terra Morta, there are thirty-five different individuals mentioned either directly or otherwise. In Viragem, where the space is limited to the small post of Cuango within the circumscription of Camaxilo, there are twenty-five named characters plus eleven sobas, thirty sobetas, two prisoners, some boatmen, fishermen, Bângala traders and others. A Chaga, of all the novels, is the most richly peopled. It takes place in the seat of the circumscription, Camaxilo, where the Administrator has called together all his chiefs of post for a ceremonial welcome in honor of the expected visit of the Governor-General of the colony. There are ten civil servants, five merchants, three white women, assorted mulatto children and other ghostly characters who number almost fifty in all.

Often, many of the characters in the novels are the same, save for a change of name. They are intensified or diminished depending on the author's needs at the moment. This is most true of his Europeans whom he describes, as we have said, not so much as who they are but where they fit in the colonial scheme of things. Gregório Antunes, the Administrator of the circumscription of Camaxilo in Terra Morta, reappears in somewhat compressed form, holding the same title, in the same place, as Santiago da Silveira in A Chaga. In Viragem, Paulina, the lonely white woman in the totally isolated post of Cuango, is an intensification of D. Jovita, the Administrator's wife in Terra Morta. Jaime Silva, the despicable Secretary of the circumscription of Camaxilo in Terra Morta, reappears as an equally contemptible character in A Chaga, holding the same position in the same place. In the latter novel however his role has been expanded to include his unabashed adulation of fascism. Manuel Pancário, the rapacious merchant in Terra Morta is reincarnated in A Chaga with the name Manuel Santana. Some of the mulattos reappear too, as is the case with Eugénio Anacleto in Terra Morta. He buys some contraband diamonds from an African and heads for the coast. His analogue for this particular escapade in A Chaga is Severino Santana.

The author himself takes many different forms. In Terra Morta, he speaks through the mouth of the aspirante interino Joaquim Américo, through an indirect reference to a ghostly

civil servant named Monteiro (his mother's maiden name) and through the heroic actions of the indomitable soba Xá-Mucuari, among others. In Viragem, he is totally absent, preferring to let his narrations and presentations tell the story themselves. In A Chaga, the author returns in many different characters. He speaks through the merchant Albino Lourenco as well as through the colonial officials Vasco Serra and Eduardo Sales. Serra is his particular favorite because he says little but serves to draw the old pombeiro Lourenco into a final cry of the author's own expiation: I was there, I did it, it was wrong and I am sorry.

In general we may say that since these novels are primarily a series of related episodes and vignettes, the author invented many of the characters needed for each individual scene, let them drop out of sight and sometimes recalled them in later episodes without very much continuity. He invented characters for one or more episodes rather than utilize the ones already on paper more economically. This creates an almost unruly cast of characters which sometimes causes confusion for the reader, especially in A Chaga. However, since the author's primary goal of conveying the crime of colonialism is achieved, his methods can only be faulted from a stylistic point of view. Soromenho minimized his characterizations primarily to establish his much-needed archetypal oppositions among colonial officers, merchants,

mulattos, Africans and so on. The novels themselves are practically plotless but this technique serves to depict the oppression of colonialism as a continuum, through a series of daily routines enhanced by particular incidents. The author uses his characters in confrontations either through dialogue, narration or flashback so that we may follow the clashes of real peoples beneath the human soil that was colonial Angola.

Before beginning our study of Soromenho's novelistic portrayals of Portuguese colonialism, a few words of background on the administrative structure of that system are necessary. To understand the colonial administration so carefully detailed by Soromenho, we turn to a modern Portuguese source so as to avoid any charges of bias. That source is Professor João Pereira Neto's Angola: --Meio Século de Integração.[26]

Modern Portuguese colonial administration, as Soromenho knew it, began in 1913 under Norton de Matos, the fourth Governor-General of Angola to be appointed by the Republic since its founding in 1910. (The first Governor-General under the Republic had resigned in despair, in January, 1912, because he was unable to stop the institution of forced labor even

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[26] João Pereira Neto, Angola: Meio Século de Integração (Lisbon: Companhia Nacional Editora, 1964). When this writer visited Pereira Neto in 1972, he was a catedrático (Full Professor) at the Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Política Ultramarina. Not only was he the youngest catedrático ever appointed there but his book was awarded the Frei João dos Santos prize of the Agência-Geral do Ultramar for best sociological essay of 1964.

after deporting eleven Portuguese convicted of that crime.)

Norton's Regulamento das Circunscrições Administrativas[27] was the first step towards bringing Portuguese civilian control over the interior of Angola. This regulation divided the districts of the Province of Angola into municipalities, circumscriptions and military commands (capitanias-móres), the latter to gradually come under civilian control as circumstances warranted. The circumscriptions and military commands were first subdivided into police precincts or posts according to the size of the local population. Within the circumscriptions, these posts were in the hands of civilians. The ranks within the civilian circumscriptions were administrador, secretário and chefe de posto. Their functions were vast. The administrador was in charge of, among other things, military recruitment, tax collections, judicial proceedings, customs (in regions bordering the Belgian Congo, for instance), trusteeships and guardianships, census taking, licensing of commerce and industry, road building and especially relations with the Africans. He was supposed to be completely familiar with the African social structure, ensure protection for the Africans when necessary and supervise their traditional authorities, the sobas.

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[27]Order no. 375 of 17 April 1913, published in the Boletim Oficial, no. 16, 19 April 1913, as quoted in Pereira Neto, p. 266.

The secretário had to keep all records, make meteorological observations, act as chief of post when necessary, list all taxes paid and fulfill the office of notary public.

The chefes de posto, who were to be appointed by the Governor-General after passing a civil service examination, were responsible for ascertaining the needs of the Africans and reporting them to the Administrator, making the sobas their aides in policing the post and keeping order, informing the Administrator of any and all noteworthy occurrences within the area of the post, preventing any violence against the person of the African, making sure that they were paid the salaries owed them, and maintaining and conserving the roads within their posts.

These functions did not change radically for twenty years. In 1933, the Salazar government instituted the Reforma Administrativa Ultramarina. This "reform" divided the colonial administration by rank as follows: Governor-General, Inspector-General of Colonial Administration, Provincial (formerly District) Governor, Inspector, and District Intendente. The ranks within the circumscriptions were administrator, secretário, chefe de posto and aspirante administrativo. As we are not concerned in our study of Soromenho's colonial novels with the upper-level administration of the colony, let us outline the functions of the Administrators and other personnel of the circumscriptions or municipalities (concelhos).

The Administrators were the supreme civil authority within their circumscriptions.[28] They also carried out judicial and administrative authority, indigena (African) policies, tax collection and economic stimulation. The secretaries, aside from being notaries and keeping all the records of the circumscription, exercised the duties of chefe de posto and took the census throughout the circumscription for the tax rolls. Chiefs of post had specific functions of police and acted as agents of the Adminstrator especially with regard to the enforcement of colonial policies. (The graduates of the Escola Superior Colonial in Huila entered the colonial service with the rank of Chief of post.[29]) Finally, the aspirantes (trainees) were assistants to the Administrator, Secretary or Chief of post and did as they were ordered. They were, in effect, apprentices in the colonial administration.

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[28]A circumscription was usually distinguished from a municipality (concelho) by the number of white inhabitants. The former had to have a minimum number of European residents before it was "elevated" to the status of municipality. Even the latter were divided into 1st class, 2nd class and 3rd class, depending upon white population.

[29]As this was part of the "Overseas Administrative Reform" of 1933, it would seem to refute Moser's contention that Soromenho was a graduate of the Escola Superior. We may recall that the author entered the colonial service as an aspirante provisório (interino) in late 1935 and was only promoted to aspirante definitivo before he left the service permanently. Had he gone to the Escola Superior Colonial, he would have been commissioned a chefe de posto. He did not and he was not, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary by his family, friends and biographers.

Among other functions carried out by the local administrators and their lieutenants were: stimulating the raising of livestock, collaborating with private industry to increase coffee production, supervising the building of irrigation facilities, fighting sleeping sickness and grasshopper plagues and teaching modern agricultural technology to African women.. They also were postmasters and "por incrível que pareça, tiveram também de auxiliar na distribuição de telegramas."[30]

In order to carry out Portugal's mission in Africa, it was only logical to expect that the colonial service would be filled with the most intelligent and well-educated civil servant possible. "Infelizmente, ainda hoje . . . é muito dificil preencher as vagas com funcionarios que reúnam as habilitações literárias minímas exigidas pela lei. . . ."[31] (The "even today" in the previous sentence, of course, was 1964!) Among the reasons that people meeting minimal educational standards could not be found for what Portugal called her "great civilizing mission" in Angola were: the absence of roads, lack of decent foot and almost complete non-existence of sanitary facilities and housing similar to what even the poorest peasants in Portugal enjoyed. Under the circumstances, then, it was not at all surprising that in Norton's regulations of 1913 there was no literacy requirement for entrance

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[30]Pereira Neto, p. 273.

[31]Ibid., p. 274. Italics added.

into the colonial service. In the "Overseas Administrative Reform" of 1933, a minimum sixth-grade education was required. Nevertheless, those illiterate trainees or provisional trainees (provisórios) with seven or more years of service, as well as all other illiterate superior officers who had been commissioned under prior regulations, were grandfathered in under the new "reform." Worse still, in spite of the new law's minimum educational requirements, trainees and other officers who did not have at least a sixth-grade education continued to enter the colonial service. ". . . não poucos foras os aspirantes interinos, não habilitados com o 5° ano do liceu, que ingressaram no quadro."[32] And in fact, from the standpoint of the colonial administration, Angola did not begin to benefit from the graduates of the Escola Superior Colonial until the 1960's. By then it was much too late.[33]

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[32]Ibid., p. 277.

[33]Even in 1955, the difference between graduates and non-graduates of the Escola Superior was staggering as the chart below shows:

Graduates and Non-Graduates of the Escola Superior Colonial on Active Duty in the Angolan Colonial Administration, 1955.

Rank	Graduates	Non-Graduates	Total
Administrador	30 (40%)	44 (60%)	74
Secretário	36 (41%)	51 (59%)	87
Chefe de posto	51 (19%)	217 (81%)	268
Totals	117 (27%)	312 (73%)	429

Under the "Overseas Administrative Reform Act" of 1933, the colony of Angola was now divided into five districts, sixteen Intendências, forty-four municipalities (sixteen of first class, two of second class and twenty-six of third class), twenty-six circumscriptions and two hundred and thirty-seven civil posts. The post of Camaxilo was one of five (the other

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In other words, of a total of 429 administradores, secretarios and chefes de posto on active duty in Angola in 1955, 73% had not been to the Colonial College. The conclusions to be drawn from such statistics are not lost on Pereira Neto. In one of the major understatements of his work, he affirms that the 117 graduates of the Colonial College in all ranks were not sufficient "para contrabalançar largas dezenas de anos em que os lugares de maior responsabilidade estiveram entregues a funcionarios que . . . não tinham a preparação suficiente . . ." Pereira Neto, p. 279. To aggravate matters for those colonial officials who did meet the necessary requirements, their ranks were made equivalent to other civil service positions within Portugal. "Essa pequena categoria funcional, além de pessoalmente desprestigiante, era altamente inconveniente para o prestígio de que aquelas autoridades se deviam revestir. . . ." Pereira Neto, p. 290.

In the 1960's, administrador de 1ª classe had civil service status equivalent to inspectores escolares and oficiais de circulação aérea; administrador de 2ª classe was ranked below directores de aerodromo de 2ª classe and comandantes de secção da Guarda Fiscal but were equated with subdirectores escolares; administrador de 3ª classe was equivalent to ajudante de radio logista, fiscais de obras publicas, mecânicos de 1ª classe, and so on. Secretário was ranked with capatazes de via de 1ª classe, mecânicos electricistas de 2ª classe, pedreiros de 1ª classe and so on. Chefe de posto was ranked with classificadores de frutas, pintores de estacas, etc. Aspirante was ranked below motoristas de viatruas automóveis but equated with encarregados de serviço de palácios, práticos de salsicharia e leitaria, encarregados de reserva de lugares, fogueiros de locomotivos de 2ª classe and other such "professional" occupations.

If this is how the Portuguese government classified its colonial officials in 1960, how then did it classify them in the 1930's? Furthermore, what could this government have possibly thought of the African whom its colonial officials had been sent to "civilize"? It is no wonder that the civil servants in the Camaxilo of Terra Morta and A Chaga were, for the most part, the flotsam and jetsam of Portuguese society, as we shall soon see.

four being Caluango, Cuango, Lubalo and Luremo) within the circumscription of Camaxilo which belonged to the Intendência of Lunda within the district of Malange.[34]

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[34]Henrique Galvão and Carlos Selvagem, Império Ultramarino, III, p. 240.

CHAPTER 10

TERRA MORTA, VIRAGEM AND A CHAGA

The clash of cultures, races and individuals begins with Terra Morta. The location of this most famous of Soromenho's works is Camaxilo, a small town in the north of the Lunda district of Angola. As the following footnote to one of Soromenho's articles tells us, he did not live in Camaxilo but rather passed through there (probably on more than one occasion) and took down the stories recounted to him by two white traders.

> Ouvi, em junho de 1935, na povoação de Camaxilo, os velhos colonos José Bernardo e Anacléto Augusto, e na região do Cuilo, no seu próprio sobado, o soba Caungula, irmão do régulo do mesmo nome, o relato da revolta de Camaxilo, tragédia a que assistiram com risco da vida e completa perda de haveres, os colonos meus informadores. Os depoimentos de Jose Bernardo e Anacleto Augusto são iguais ao do actual soba Caungula. . . . Cerca de trinta anos passados sobre o drama sangrento da Camaxilo, afigura-se-me que os depoimentos que colhi servem melhor a verdade histórica.[1]

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[1]Castro Soromenho, "A Lunda negra: A queda do sobado de Caungula," O Mundo Português, 74(Feburary 1940)65. This further reinforces our belief that Soromenho never served as a colonial official in Camaxilo but simply spent time there on his own (and through Diamang), collecting stories. In this case, he was listening to two white men. These merchants probably gave him a lot of other information which would make its way into Terra Morta. This writer reiterates his contention that Soromenho did not enter the colonial administration until October of 1935. (See p. 36, et seq. of this study.)

These traders will appear only very thinly disguised in Terra Morta by a slight name change. José Bernardo becomes Francisco Bernardo and Anacleto Augusto becomes Alfredo Anacleto. Soromenho was always ready to tap any and every source at his disposal in order to paint the broadest possible picture of Africa, either before the arrival of the white man or during the colonial period.

As Soromenho has obviously been in Camaxilo, his descriptions of the town are true to life. It is divided into an upper town where we see the administration building and the officers' quarters and a lower town, the "commercial zone," where the merchants live and trade. The two towns are separated from one another by a stream over which a small, wooden bridge has been built. The povoação-de-cima, o bairro oficial is ten minutes walking distance from the bairro comercial. The upper town had originally been a military command post during the wars of occupation. Those wars had been necessary, Soromenho told us in Sertanejos de Angola, because of internal instability among the Africans and Portuguese fear of encroachment by other European powers.

> Este estado de coisas e ainda a cobiça dos estrangeiros sobre os sertões, agrava-se de dia para dia. . . . De um lado, estavam os negros, divididos em tribos, sem poderem entender-se; do outro, os brancos que estavam e os brancos que chegavam, chocavam-se porque eram antagónicos os seus interesses. E sobre tudo isto, pairava a cobiça dos industriais da Europa, que acabavam de descobrir, . . . a Africa e lhe iam mudar o curso da sua história e ditar ao homem negro um novo destino.

> É neste momento que inicia a ocupação militar portuguesa no interior do Continente Negro.[2]

After the bottom fell out of the rubber market, the military withdrew and the civilian administration took over, barracks and all.

In this civilian administration in the upper town, the Administrator's house was the largest and best appointed. It even had the "typical" African decorations: leopards' skins, leather shields, witchdoctors' masks, bows and arrows, antelope horns, spears and so on. (These are the same items that we always see in photographs in the living room of some "great white hunter." Soromenho deftly slips this image into Terra Morta to expand even further on the clash of cultures.) In back of the Administrator's house was a large garden tended very carefully by his wife, D. Jovita, who had nothing else to do all day. Beyond the garden was a shed where sacks of dried fish and meal, used to feed the Africans forced into doing "public works" for the government, were stored. The garden itself was surrounded by a high wooden fence not unlike that which circled the African villages in the author's pre-colonial fiction. The houses of the other officers are no more than casebres (hovels, shanties) made of whitewashed adobe and covered with rusted zinc roofs. A newly-arrived aspirante cannot believe the condition of his lodgings, especially after

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[2] Sertanejos de Angola, pp. 35-36.

he is told that the shack has been that way for many years. The author uses this episode to narrate the sordid living conditions of white officials other than the Administrator.

> Entraram na casa, de chão de terra batida e tectos de esteira, dois palmos acima da cabeca. . . . três dependências . . . formavam a casa, com meia dúzia de trastes velhos e desirmanados. Caixotes a servirem de mesinhas de cama e de cadeiras. A um canto, um balde-chuveiro e uma bacia de cara em cima de um tronco de árvore. A cama de ferro estava a outro canto. . . .
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> E uma pocilga, como lhe disse, colega. Não tem nada que preste. Pior do que qualquer casa de "calcinhas" de Luanda. . . . Nos postos ainda é pior. Aqui é tudo assim. A gente vive como os bichos.[3]

The reader is thus given an insight into how bad things really are when the speaker, Joaquim Américo, compares his shanty to the houses of the calcinhas (blacks who wore pants and tried to imitate other white customs in hopes of being accepted into white society. The term was a pejorative in Portuguese Africa). The shanties of the calcinhas in Luanda, we thus learn, were better than those of the white colonial officials in the bush.

The doors of some of the houses face the Administration square while others face the road leading to the lower town. Behind the square rises a small hill where the post's jail is located. And behind this jail are the huts of the sipaios and capitas. Next to these shanties (senzalas) are lean-tos where Africans forcibly recruited for "public works" and the diamond

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[3]Castro Soromenho, Terra Morta, 3rd ed. Colecção Vozes do Mundo, 3 (Lisbon: Sá da Costa [1974]), p. 122. Page numbers for all future quotations from this edition will appear in the text.

mines spend their nights. A kilometer beyond the upper town is the cemetery, surrounded by high walls to protect it from wild beasts and the ever-encroaching jungle. Every night, hyenas howl at these walls where blacks and whites have been buried "in completely separate places."

The Administration building is nothing more than a two-room shack, covered by a thatched roof. Outside, in the small square of pressed earth, a Portuguese flag on a wooden stick hangs listlessly in the heat. The office had little furniture and the only items worthy of note were a wooden safe (where monies collected from taxes were kept) with a bust of the Republic on top. The walls were covered with spears and shields, trophies of the last wars of occupation.

The lower town is at the bottom of a hill, on the other side of a stream. The author mentions that this povoação-de-baixo was like a completely different town, so separated was it in reality from the upper town. During the rubber boom, Camaxilo had been the most important trading center in all of Lunda. There were more than fifty stores and over a hundred white traders and merchants living there. Trading posts were scattered throughout the region and manned by whites, mulattos and ambaquistas.[4] The town was full of pombeiros, funantes

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[4]Blacks and mulattos from the Ambaca region of Angola (midway between Luanda and Cassange) who had become culturally and economically assimilated after three centuries of contact with the Portuguese. They were free men who engaged in all manner of commerce, often accompanying white traders as guides and translators.

and sertanejos who amassed large fortunes in the rubber trade.

> Êsse foi o tempo em que a borracha valia ouro de lei e os brancos corriam para o Leste . . ., pagando impostos aos sobas para poderem negociar com os seus filhos e transitarem por suas terras. (p. 44)

It was the time of the famous sertanejo, Braz Vicesse,[5] who traveled as far east as the great African lakes on trading expeditions that lasted a year or longer. He and others returned to Angola laden with rubber, ivory and "flocks of slaves, the white gold and the black gold of the old Africa."[6] Soromenho divides the history of the commercial occupation of Lunda into three periods, based on the commodities bought and sold. First came the slaves, then the ivory and finally rubber.

During the rubber boom, Bernardo and Anacleto also got rich. However, because they were possessed of the mentality of the typical Portuguese merceeiro, or grocer, they quickly spent all their money on gambling and on mulatto prostitutes who had come from Malanje to profit from the new wealth of the interior. Competition between traders was also very fierce. So much so, that they began paying Africans more than what the rubber itself was worth. The Africans,

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[5]The author describes this man in great detail in Sertanejos de Angola, pp. 16-18.

[6]In Sertanejos, p. 18. Soromenho called slaves ébano negro.

sharp traders themselves, took advantage of the competition by shopping for the best prices.

The sepoy Caluis,[7] in a flashback, recalls for the reader the rest of the story. He had first come to Camaxilo because of an unmentioned problem with the chief of his village. A merchant named José Aparício (a ghostly character) put him to work and when the chief arrived to reclaim Caluis for punishment, Aparício paid him off with two bottles of Port wine. Caluis worked faithfully for his white benefactor for years and his employer's store became the largest in Lunda. One day, however, Aparício caught Caluis drinking. First Aparício gives him a severe whipping, then fires him. In an interior monologue, Soromenho shows the reader that there did not always exist hatred between whites and blacks, as Caluis says: "'Seu Jusa é branco bom. Vinho e que fais gente maluco'" (p. 45). Although Aparício had indeed fired Caluis, he did not leave his former clerk destitute in the street. He sent him off to Malanje with a cloth cover and some salt. Caluis joined the army there and only returned to Camaxilo many years later. When he got back, he found out that Aparício had committed suicide when the bottom fell out of the rubber market. Camaxilo was never the same again. Houses had

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[7]A fictitious character created as a possible spin-off from a white sertanejo called Cáluis [sic] by the Africans in Sertanejos de Angola, pp. 18-20.

crumbled and the whites had taken their zinc roofs and departed. The only goods they left behind were their black women and their Portuguese furniture. "Da passagem dos brancos na terra da borracha, ficaram sòmente as laranjeiras e os limoeiros nos quintais abandonados que o capim invadiu" (p. 46). The only three white merchants who remained in Camaxilo were Anacleto, Bernardo and José Calado.

> A terra estava morta. Os negros das senzalas vinham uma vez por outra vender cera e produtos pobres e levavam sal e um pedaço de pano para as mulheres taparem o sexo. Os homens voltaram a usar peles e panos feitos de cascas de árvore. (p. 46)

Money had flowed so freely during the years of the rubber trade that we are told that men drank champagne instead of water. The situation appears to have been analogous to the boom and bust cycle of rubber cultivation in the Amazon except that the difference in social class, education and so on between the Brazilians in Manaus and the Portuguese in Camaxilo is readily apparent. In any event, the crash in the rubber market destroyed Camaxilo economically and it was now terra morta. At the very end of the novel, even the seat of the circumscription is moved from Camaxilo to Caungula, a solution which the author took directly from the daily press in Luanda.[8] And the last line of the novel is a repetition of the theme of the "dead land": "A sombra da noite subia do vale para a terra morta de Camaxilo" (p. 261).

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[8]"Foi instalada, definitivamente, na povoação de Caungula, a circunscrição Civil de Camaxilo." Última Hora, 9 May 1936, p. 4.

Behind the lower town, some unidentified distance downstream is the village (senzala) of the homens nus. This last is the author's term for black Africans untouched by European civilization and not directly related to the novelistic structure of Terra Morta.

The characters in the upper town are the administrative personnel and their black servants. These include the Administrator Grégorio Antunes and his wife, Jovita. They have two black servants, Amelia and Ratão. The other officials are Jaime Silva, the Secretary and two trainees (aspirantes), António de Vasconcelos and Joaquim Américo.

The novel itself begins with a card game among the civil servants whose number has been increased by a visiting Chief of post from Cuilo,[9] named Carlos Valadas. (His presence is noted only at the beginning and at the end of the novel.) In this scene, the characters define themselves by talking with one another over cards. The author says very little about them and the reader quickly learns that, beginning with this novel, he is about to enter an entirely new phase of Soromenho's craft as a novelist. In this presentation, the characters define one of the main themes of life among civil servants: gambling. Outside the shack where the men are playing cards,

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[9] It is possible that Cuilo might have been an administrative post during the 1930's but in 1950 it was a trading village within the area of the post of Caluango. Cuilo is also some three hundred kilometers from the post. See Galvao and Selvagem, p. 403.

the sepoys are shouting their alert while guarding the armory a kilometer down the road from the Administration building. Since the wars of occupation had ended long ago, guarding the armory (paiol) was absolutely meaningless. The sepoys were only carrying out the Administrator's orders which even his subordinates thought ridiculous. It was nothing more than a military charade with no reality in the present, most especially because the rifles in the armory were rusty muzzle-loaders with no triggers! Camaxilo had not been a military stronghold for years. (Historically, there had been an epic sense to the wars of occupation. The sertanejos and the Africans had been worthy enemies. But the rubber boom had corrupted the latter and the bust had destoryed the former.)

At the card table, Jaime Silva is the first character to be defined through presentation and narration. He is also the only character whose physical description is very carefully drawn. After the cards are dealt, he opens his hand slowly and looks out through small, round eyes. Gleefully he informs his colleagues that they have lost, as he extends his small, puffed hands to gather in the pot. He drools as he smiles maliciously. Américo criticizes him not for winning, but for his attitude. Silva lamely responds that that is his temperament. Américo addresses that excuse and reminds Silva that he always laughs like that when he wins but when he loses, he makes horrible faces. Vasconcelos chimes in that Silva cannot even sleep when he loses. The latter then starts to

attack Vasconcelos "que além de seu subordinado era um pobre diabo, porque não tinha coragem" (p. 5). Silva also tries to involve the fourth card player, Valadas, in his personal attack on Vasconcelos but Valadas will have no part of it. He too turns on Silva accusing him of liking money more than "a monkey likes bananas." The discussion continues in an ugly undertone and Joaquim Américo leaves the table. The narrator tells us why:

> Havia momentos em que não podia encarar com o secretário, sempre submisso e sabujo para os superiores, fanfarrão e velhaco para os que lhe estavam na dependência e se acobardavam. (p. 5)

Silva rants on that he is not at fault for having won, as he puts his winnings in the breast pocket of his shirt. The author tells us that his shirt is so tight that his fat chest looks like a girl's breasts. Silva offers a rematch but no one is interested in continuing the game. Valadas complains that the same thing always happens when he comes to spend time "nesta porcaria de terra." Américo decides to take Silva up on his challenge but only in one cut of the cards. He takes out a sheaf of bills, puts them on the table and informs Silva that he is betting it all. Soromenho then gives the reader another physical description of Silva, this time through Vasconcelos' eyes: "Olhava desdenhosamente para o Silva, de dólman desabotoado no pescoço grosso e vermelho, sempre suado" (p. 7). The author continues his physical description of Silva: "Levantara-se, muito apertado na farda de

caqui que lhe desenhava as formas redondas e a barriga empinada . . . Baixo e gordo, dava pelo ombro de Joaquim Américo" (p. 7). In an interior monologue, Américo calls Silva "a pig on the outside and a pig on the inside." This short, fat "pig" is also bald as the author shows him passing his sweaty hand over his shining pate as he is about to get his comeuppance from Américo in the card draw.

Silva's relationship with Vasconcelos had been defined when the Secretary caught him stealing money orders from the Administration's postal box. Silva made him write a letter of confession and, even though Vasconcelos repaid the money, never let him forget the incident. He kept the written confession although he told Vasconcelos that he had lost it. The latter knew otherwise however because Silva was constantly taunting him. In fact, Silva had caught Vasconcelos after his suspicions had been aroused when the latter showed up at a card game with an unusually large amount of money. The next morning Silva checked the books and found money missing. He insisted on putting his own money back into the account to cover Vasconcelos' petty thievery because, he says, "the State's money is sacred." Vasconcelos knew full-well that, at any moment, Silva was capable of producing his signed confession just to show the Administrator how efficient a Secretary he was.

In the draw of the cards, Américo wins 1,160 angolares (the sharply devalued currency of Angola until independence)

and Silva shouts almost hysterically, "That's impossible . . . it's one month's salary!" (Even in a simple card game, Soromenho manages to include an economic note: the salary of a secretary.)

Vasconcelos' fear of Silva is enlarged upon by the author, principally to expand his characterization of the Secretary, his archetype of colonial administrators. Silva had used his hold on Vasconcelos to attempt the seduction of the latter's black concubine, a young girl he had bought from her father for a blanket and a container of salt. Vasconcelos had been sent out to the bush to take the census and, in his absence, the slimy Silva sent presents to this girl daily. The blacks of the administration mocked Silva behind his back for not even respecting the dignity of his own colleague's woman. Finally, a black woman had to ask him if he were not ashamed of his actions. In that brief episode, the author places the non-existence of Silva's morality as a white man in juxtaposition to the moral rectitude of the blacks. Vasconcelos tells his friends that he would have beaten Silva to a pulp had he not been afraid of damaging his career. It was all a show of bravado on his part however because his real fear was being publicly exposed as a petty thief. He was helpless before Silva and only his woman, by her continuous refusals of the Secretary's advances, saved his dignity.

For Valadas, who did not know the whole story but was aware only of the attempted seduction, the only way to deal

with Silva was with a whip. Nor is he so much preoccupied with Vasconcelos' honor as he is with the reactions of the Africans to Silva's comportment. "Que respeito nos podem ter esses selvagens quando vêem coisas dessas? É por essas que hoje se vêem negros voltarem-se contra os brancos" (p. 14). Through further presentation, Valadas recounts that when he arrived in Angola, an African did not dare look a white man in the face. Now, things have changed and Valadas prophetically intones: "E qualquer dia correm-nos à porrada" (p. 14). Those words, we must remember, were written in 1945! Valadas, however, was not afraid of the Africans; if they ever tried anything with him, he was ready to cut their hearts out.

As the opening dialogue continues, we learn that Vasconcelos is anxiously awaiting a transfer to Luanda. He has been in Camaxilo for five years and cannot stand it any longer. In sharp contrast, Valadas prefers Africa even to Portugal. He recounts how, when he returned to Portugal four years before, he engaged an old friend in conversation without knowing that the friend had become a secret policeman. (Soromenho will not refer directly to the P.I.D.E. until A Chaga.) Valadas complains: "Não é que eu seja político, . . . um homem sempre fala no governo e não pode ser obrigado a concordar com tudo que se faz. Ou já não somos portugueses?" (p. 15). Yet the Portuguese political situation is not the only thing that keeps Valadas in Africa; his family is the other. They had all expected him to come back from Africa a wealthy man and

they could not wait to open his bags and dip their greedy fingers into his pockets. When they found out that he was penniless, they ridiculed him mercilessly. He had one uncle who doubted that he had ever been in Africa at all.

> -Nao acreditam que alguém venha das Áfricas, como eles dizem, sem trazer fortuna. . . . Mas não é só na Província, memso em Lisboa, e até doutores, não fazem ideia do que isto é. (p. 16)

The parenthetical element above, "como eles dizem," is a deliberate attempt by Soromenho to explain the total inability of the people in the metropole to distinguish one colony from another. To Portugal, they were all <u>as Áfricas</u>.

Brazil, as another ghostly point of reference, is mentioned as the only possibility for escape from the poverty of Portugal. But the reader is told through Americo, who had grown up there, that not even in Brazil could the Portuguese immigrant find economic stability. To begin with, that immigrant was usually the poorest of the poor, from the most backward regions in Portugal: "Iam cheios de fome e de sonhos. Era raro o que sabia ler" (P. 16). Valadas seconds the starvation in Portugal by remarking on having seen a man sitting in a Lisbon street eating out of a can. That poor devil kept looking around fearfully, expecting that at any moment someone might take his can away. It is Américo though, who summarized the situation of the Portuguese in Portugal and Brazil when he describes the people he saw at the Brazilian docks, possessed by an almost historical hunger that went back beyond their grandparents.

At the very outset of this novel, through dialogues among colonial civil servants in the jungles of Lunda, the author paints a nightmarish picture of Portuguese poverty in both Portugal and Brazil. But there are stereotyped characters too, and Valadas is one of them. He is the mouthpiece for the Portuguese myths on Africa. For him, Angola is the land of the future. Angola is to be Portugal's Brazil. "Quem fez aquilo ainda tem alma para fazer isto" (p. 17). Américo, most often the author's mouthpiece and mirror image, smiles disparagingly at Valadas' chauvinism. He had heard that line too many times before. Valadas, on the other hand, really believes the myth because for him, Angola was far better than Portugal. He had been born into a family of eight children and all he remembers eating as a child is chicken broth and coarse cornbread. Yet he was smart enough not to be fooled by the myth of Brazil. He had an uncle who had emigrated there in search of fortune but ended up being swindled by his Brazilian boss. When this uncle complained to the police, he was told to go back to his own country! For Valadas, at least Angola is Portuguese. In a very subtle reference to life before the Salazar dictatorship, Valadas is even able to recall that "no tempo da outra 'Senhora' ainda se amealhavam uns cobres, mas agora . . ." (p. 18). Under the Salazar dictatorhsip, the author seems to be telling us, a poor man cannot even look forward to saving a few pennies. Valadas is the ultimate pragmatist. All he wants out of life

is enough food for himself and his wife. "The stomach is sacred," he says. The conversation takes on a more philosophical tone as the author plants his opposition of ideologies. Vasconcelos gently reminds Valadas that man does not live by bread alone; that there are other considerations in life. Valadas' answer is simple and to the point: "You eat the problems and leave the rest for me. We have to accept life for what it is." At that point, Américo jumps in to tell Valadas that he is wrong, that men make their own lives, not vice versa. Before departing, Valadas (speaking for the author) comments that it is a good night for the lions; they like the heat and the dark. (In 1945, Soromenho was still tied to his pre-colonial Africa and such allusions to the natural world, the weather and so on are not uncommon in Terra Morta.) Throughout this entire "philosophical" conversation, the author has been leading up to describing Américo for the reader. Soromenho does this by having Américo recount, in flashback, his own story as he pensively reviews the words of his colleagues. Américo's last act in the present, before we go back with him to Brazil, is to send his servant to the African village to bring him back a black woman.

Américo had gone to Brazil as an infant. His parents had been forced to emigrate from the Minho region of Portugal because they were slowly starving to death. In Brazil, his father had become a foreman on a plantation in São Paulo but his mother died shortly thereafter. He was brought up in

the casa grande, out of charity from the plantation owner's wife. Américo's father had taken a mulatto mistress who did not particularly care for the young boy and welcomed the opportunity to get rid of him. The father is an early analogue in Americo's life of the Secretary, Silva: "Tudo que pertencia a fazenda era-lhe sagrado" (p. 22). His father was as praised by the landowners for his harsh discipline as he was despised by the peasants for his mindless brutality. Having been oppressed all his life in Portugal, Americo's father was perfectly suited to oppress the field hands in his charge on the plantation.

After a rather unhappy childhood as the ward of a frustrated old woman, Américo started out on his own at sixteen by running away from "home." He began by selling newspapers on the street and then became a linotypist for an anti-fascist newspaper. He also got involved with the unsuccessful Communist uprising of 1936 against Brazilian President Vargas' Estado Novo. Having been identified as a "dangerous revolutionary," he was forced to flee for his life. All the anti-fascist[10] foreigners (as a Portuguese, Américo was still considered a foreigner) were dangerous revolutionaries. With the help of some of his camaradas, he was able to flee to

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[10]Soromenho only uses the terms "fascist" and "anti-fascist" in this novel as they relate to Brazil. In 1945 he did not dare use these words in relation to Portugal but the oblique references were understood by his sophisticated readers, nevertheless.

Angola, hoping to find temporary respite there until the political situation in Brazil changed for the better.

Américo arrived in the port city of Lobito, friendless and penniless. In parallel structure with Américo's personal flashback, the author intertwines the conditions of Angola during the mid-1930's. We learn that business was at a standstill and there was no credit to be had from the bank. (There was only one bank, the Banco de Angola, which served primarily as the conduit of taxes to Lisbon.) The colonists Americo met were all convinced that if Angola had belonged to the English, they would never have had any economic problems. Everyone knew that the British colonies had large, modern cities, and the government did everything it could to encourage colonization. In contrast, the Portuguese government used its laws to bleed the colony and the colonists and to discourage economic development. (It must be remembered that Salazar's economic policies at home were not much different from those applied to the colonies. Although he had formerly been a professor of economics at the Law School of the University of Coimbra, he never seems to have read John Maynard Keynes. Portugal and her colonies were guided only by Salazar's interpreations of the economic theories of Adam Smith.) The colonists Américo met were bitter, defeated men. For them. Portugal was not a motherland but a step-motherland. There were many who even left Angola for the Belgian Congo, Rhodesia

and South Africa. Any place had to be better than the Portuguese colonies.[11] In this climate, Américo had nowhere to turn until he met up with Gregório Antunes, the colonial Administrator, who was staying at the same boarding house. Still within the context of Américo's flashback, Soromenho gives us a clear picture of Antunes and, through him, Portugal's colonial philosophies.

Antunes is another Portuguese chauvinist who keeps reminding Américo that Portugal made Brazil. Américo tries to correct him by mentioning that Brazil had been "made" by peoples from all over the world, including the blacks. That is where Soromenho steps in to give the reader the official Portuguese attitude on the Negro race. Antunes tells Américo (and the reader) that the blacks are worthless; they do not even know how to handle a shovel properly. They are "big children" who have to be treated by holding out a carrot in one hand and a stick in the other. This is a simple restatement of the Portuguese colonial philosophy of the "three p's": pau, pão and pano (a stick, bread and loincloths). Américo, having been brought up in Brazil, is understandably shocked at Antunes' attitude. At the same time, he was also perplexed by the latter's warm personal descriptions of his mulatto son who was studying in Lisbon. Nevertheless, Antunes and Américo

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[11] Soromenho lived in Angola during this period (1930-1937) and recounted in Terra Morta what life was really like in that abandoned colony.

become friends, notwithstanding the vast gulf separating them on racial issues. Finally, Antunes offers Américo a job in the colonial service. Having no other resources at hand, Américo accepts, if only to take the job temporarily. His heart was still in Brazil but he had to face reality. "Ninguém sabia quando a noite fascista terminaria, mas os homens livres não desanimavam, lutavam e sofriam" (p. 27). The reader gets the distinct impression here that Soromenho, too, was one of those free men who did not lose heart but continued to fight and suffer. Américo is posted to Camaxilo and we find out, not unsurprisingly as Soromenho's mirror image, that he really did not have the proper mentality for his new job. He was not able to collect taxes from Africans who had nothing with which to pay them, nor was he inclined to employ the Portuguese methods of enforcement: beating the recalcitrants in question or imprisoning their wives. Such treatment towards another human being was beyond his capacity. He quickly earned the reputation of being "soft" on Africans.

If Américo is Soromenho's alter ego in this novel, then his characterization is certainly highly idealized. Soromenho was well aware of what were to be his responsibilities as an aspirante long before he entered the colonial service in 1935. His father had been a district governor and he, himself knew what the colonial service in the bush was like from his experiences at Diamang. This writer is firmly convinced that the author left the service (or was forced out) because of his

asthma and not because he awoke one day and decided that beating and raping blacks was immoral. Furthermore, if it had not been for his asthma, Soromenho would probably have remained in the colonial service as he had taken the job with no illusions whatever. What stands out is his radical change in ideology, culminating in the writing of Terra Morta only seven years after he had left Angola.[12] A year after Américo had been in Camaxilo, Antunes is posted there as Administrator of the circumscription. Although his views on how to treat the African have not changed and are, therefore, still in sharp

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[12] Amândio César, who described himself as a "fascist" to this writer in a personal interview in Lisbon (24 October 1972), said further: "Castro Soromenho estava há vinte anos afastados de Angola quando escreveu Terra Morta." Elsewhere, César stretched that claim by another ten years when he wrote: "Perto de trinta anos separavam o autor do meio com que convivera, mais ou menos à superfície. . . . O que descrevia nem lá estava nem já existia!" (See: Amândio César, Novos Parágrafos de Literatura Ultramarina [Braga: Sociedade de Expansão Cultural, 1971], p. 221) This insightful analysis, coming from a man who had been a spy for the P.I.D.E. (a fact disclosed to this writer in conversations with Manuel Ferreira in Lisbon during June of 1974), is more than a little ambiguous. Firstly, his facts are all wrong. As we have seen, only nine years separate Terra Morta from its author's career in the colonial administration. Secondly, César's own words, "what [Soromenho] described wasn't there nor existed anymore," are gross contradictions. But César was not one to let sleeping dogs lie. In a short biography of Soromenho, he wrote: "A vida, em França, correra-lhe mal e o emprego mais estável que arranjara pouco mais era, do que o de um inválido a cuidar de inválidos. . . ." (See César, Contos Portugueses, II, 448.) This gratuitous disparagement, written four years after Soromenho's death, elicited a livid rejoinder and denial from Mercedes. It was published in the Portuguese press as an open letter from the author's widow to César. See: "A viúva de Castro Soromenho acusa Amândio César de 'tendenciosa inveracidade,'" Diário de Lisboa, 9 October 1972, p. 3.

conflict with those of Américo, the two men do not clash personally in the novel. Antunes is just there to do a job. He looks just like what we would expect of a typical colonial officer. "Com o capacete puxado para os olhos, uma varinha de bambu na mão" (p. 129). He, too, is rather fat, as the author describes him walking across the square in front of the Administration with his belly shaking. Antunes had come to Angola during the wars of occupation and had even fought in the south (probably against the Cuanhama). His immediate family consists only of his wife, Jovita, the only white woman in the circumscription.

We know very little about Jovita other than she has long, blonde hair, firm breasts which occasionally stick out of the half-opened robe she invariably wears and blue eyes. She spends her days cultivating her garden, the only one in the upper town, and making clothes to sell to the Africans and mulatto children of the merchants from the lower town. We get some idea of her loneliness and isolation in a presentation by Vasconcelos who notes, with a modicum of pity, "the poor woman, she spends her life in this hole without even any other woman to talk to." He remarks that if it is a stupid life for him, how much more so must it be for her. Through Jovita the author reminds us that Africa is really only for the very strong, "like the old men down below" (i.e., the merchants). Everyone else becomes brutalized and wastes away in Africa. Jovita's relations with her husband are not well-

developed in the novel. He appears to be the "typical" Latin man in the way he orders her around and she appears to be the "typical" Latin woman in the way she obeys. The fact that he has sexual relations with African women is not unnoticed by his wife but when she remonstrates against him, he cruelly tells her that his Africans are better sex partners than she is. Jovita spends her days dreaming mindlessly and occasionally casts longing glances at Américo. He is aware of her hunger but the author does not develop the theme; it hangs in the air as just one more unfulfilled desire in this dead land. Not even Antunes is aware of the psycho-sexual tension between Américo and his wife.

As the Administrator of the circumspection, the closest social contact Antunes has with his subordinates is an annual Christmas dinner he gives for his "colonial family." What we do know about him is that he is a rational man because the author uses him, too, to present his archetypal colonial villain, Silva. In one episode, Silva returns to Camaxilo after having spent four months in the bush taking the census of the entire circumscription. He makes his grand entrance into Camaxilo reclining on a litter carried by four Africans. Behind him are thirty porters lugging chickens, goats, baskets of eggs and all other manner of tribute. As colonial officials were prohibited by law from taking personal belongings of the Africans, Silva's tribute is the result of outright extortion. When Antunes catches sight of Silva, he mumbles loudly about

the Secretary's lack of sanity and then storms into his office slamming the door behind him. The tactless and thick-skinned Silva is blissfully unaware of the Administrator's feelings. He spends his days working the Africans beyond endurance, just to show Antunes what a good job he is doing. The Administrator is not at all impressed. To the contrary, he goes out of his way to tell the other officers that "an Administrator is an Administrator and a Secretary is a Secretary." Silva, nevertheless, is undaunted. He seeks advancement on the backs of the Africans. He knows he has to study hard to become a good Administrator but he has to work his conscript labor hard too. In an act of typical colonial irrationality, Silva decides to have a road built to the cemetery just so everyone will know how hard he works. The author tells us that "Jaime Silve não quer que digam (ninguém diz coisa alguma mas ele anda convencido que toda a gente tem os olhos postos na sua pessoa) que não faz nada" (p. 98). Silva, as Américo has told us, is also a sycophant and is constantly telling Antunes that he wished he had the Administrator's brains. Antunes leads him on by telling him to buy a lot of books and study hard. Yet there is a subtle undercurrent in this relationship. Antunes is really living off his former reputation and is not overly anxious to make Camaxilo the splendor of Angolan circumscriptions. Without the author ever mentioning a word in this regard, the reader feels that Antunes encourages Silva's ambitions, even if in a negative fashion. Silva, of

course, rises to the challenge but in the eyes of his colleagues he is little more than a buffoon. In a brief remark to Vasconcelos, Américo says almost compassionately: "-Nao ves como o tipo fica inchado quando substitui o administrador? Coitado . . ." (p. 78). And although Silva may in fact be something of a clown to his colleagues, he is also crafty, as we have seen in his blackmail of Vasconcelos. His sexual appetites for black women, even those of his friends, are insatiable. He goes so far as to set up a school for the mulatto children of the merchants so he can get his grubby hands on the little girls. In one episode, he is caught bringing an African woman--who had been imprisoned as a hostage because her husband fled the diamond mines--to his house. Antunes is outraged by such moral turpitude and severely chastises the Secretary. Silva is also avaricious, not only because of his attitude in the card games (e.g., the day after he lost the 1,600 angolares to Américo he was too sick to come to work) but because of what he himself tells us. In discussing the problems of the cotton industry in other regions of Angola, the only thing Silva complains about is the bonuses given administrative personnel in those areas who meet high production quotas. Silva had tried to move heaven and earth to get transferred to one of those posts but to no avail. The author tells us, in a passing remark on the ghostly higher authorities (civil and ecclesiastical) of the colonial power structure, that "os lugares eram poucos e

muitos os 'meninos bonitos' do Governador-Geral e do Bispo" (p. 117).

The objective description of the administrative structure itself comes early in the novel. The government of the Colony was recruiting trainess everywhere for posting in the bush. Such assignments were obviously not the first choices of senior officers or the well-connected young dandies. The less fortunate were almost invariably sent in to the back-lands and, as trainees, they started at the bottom of the ladder. We learn that these men had no rights to paid trips home or paid vacations, and sick leave or other absences were discounted from their salaries. This certainly comes from Soromenho's own personal experience as he took two medical leaves as an aspirante. Time spent in the rank of trainee was also not counted towards eventual retirement. Aspirantes had little more than their salaries, in fact, which were just enough to cover their eating expenses. And as they were trainees, they lived in constant fear of losing their jobs for the smallest infractions of the rules. Most of the people in this entry-level rank came from the lowest levels of Portuguese society and that combination of social class and insecurity of position combined easily to make them tyrants over the only group beneath them: the Africans.

Another stereotype of lower class Portuguese colonial administrator is the aspirante Albino Sampaio. He comes on the scene as a substitute for the cowardly Vasconcelos midway in

the novel. Vasconcelos finally received his long-awaited transfer to Luanda. Sampaio comes to Camaxilo to replace him. Dressed in a new khaki uniform, he is described as tall and muscular with a sun helmet hanging from a strap from around his neck and a cigarette butt dangling from the corner of his mouth. He also has shining blue eyes which help him later seduce Maria Anacleto, the mulatto daughter of Alfredo Anacleto. Sampaio will "get his girl" under the false promise of marriage. But when he finds out she is pregnant, he makes a hurried exit from Camaxilo. Not only does he leave Maria "disgraced," but he has also piled up a very large debt in Manuel Pancario's tavern, a debt which he never repays. Sampaio is first presented to the reader in a dialogue with Américo, where he tells us that he has been thrown into this "end of the world" but does not expect to stay there long. He asks Americo what Camaxilo is like and the latter tells him that it is jungle, just like the rest of Africa. Sampaio adds: "Mas mato do cu do mundo!" (p. 116). He continues by complaining about the condition of the road from Malanje and adds that he thought that he would never arrive. (In those brief words, the author again shows us the isolation of Camaxilo from the "civilized" world.) Rocha, the truck driver who brought Sampiao, tells the others that the new trainee has quite a reputation as a lecher and a lush. "They even call him Dr. Whiskey." Rocha is a secondary character and all we know about him is that he has been driving

the Malanje-Camaxilo run for six years and he is an avid reader. A short narration tells the reader that Rocha stops his truck arbitrarily, gets out and sits down by the roadside to read for hours on end. On the trip to Camaxilo, Sampaio was unimpressed by his chauffuer's idiosyncracy and cursed him the whole way.

The new aspirante tells the reader that he had been forcibly transferred from Cabinda (considered a good posting because of its location on the coast and its proximity to Luanda). As Sampaio tells the story, the Administrator of that circumscription had arranged his transfer because he believed Sampaio to be sleeping with his wife, a charge Sampaio vehemently denies to his new colleagues. His later treatment of Maria, of course, confirms his debauchery. By having the newly-arrived Sampaio ask informational questions of the other officials, Soromenho expands upon his themes and characters. Diamang is the first to be mentioned (called the Companhia de Diamantes do Nordeste in the novel, it's real name is the Companhia de Diamantes de Angola). Even Silva gets an opportunity for further obsequiousness by informing the new man that Antunes is a "good person . . . and a friend to his subordinates." Sampaio also serves to integrate the outside world into the novel by brining the latest "news" from the coast. We learn that a new governor-general has been appointed and the author has Sampaio tell us that the man is a colonel who, in classic Portuguese fashion, has never been to the

colonies before. A new tax, to be paid by everyone, has been instituted and is called the "public salvation" tax. The civil servants are grossly disappointed because they had been hoping for a small raise in their subsistance-level salaries rather than now having to share what little they already have with the government. The monies collected from this new tax are to be used to fight the latest grasshopper plague and Sampaio remarks sarcastically: "A gente é que tem de pagar os estragos dos gafanhotos. Toda a gente diz que e com o nosso rico dinheiro que o Governo vai auxiliar os colonos" (p. 120). As the grasshoppers were front-page news in Angola of the mid-1930's, they too find their way into Terra Morta. The author also uses this episode of reportage to expound further on the poverty of the colonists. Rocha, the truck driver, interjects that people in Nova Lisboa are on the Portuguese equivalent of welfare because there is no money for food. The government has opened up a special credit account for these indigent colonists but to qualify, we learn, the borrowers have to have bons padrinhos. The economic situation had deteriorated to such an extent in Angola during this period that white women in Lubango are alleged to be selling themselves to African villagers just for food. Given the racial attitudes of the white men listening to this story, such an act was beneath contempt and is not, in fact, commented. Soromenho presents the issue and lets it die.

There is yet another colonial official who makes a quick appearance in Terra Morta and we hear nothing about him again until A Chaga. His name is Alberto Sobral and he is Chief of post in Lubalo. He comes to Camaxilo with his annual quota of conscripted blacks for Diamang. All we know of him physically is that he has a blond mustache. The author characterizes him rather ambiguously. On the one hand, he has met the quota of conscript labor assigned him and on the other, he seems to have some empathy for the African. His conscripts had marched into the square of the Administration singing loudly and Silva ordered the capitas to shut the "niggers" (a negralhada) up. The orders were that singing was only allowed during the batuques in the African villages because the whites lived around the Administration building "e os negros não podiam levantar a voz, porque isso incomodava-os" (p. 99). Sobral good-naturedly chides Silva for his orders, reminding him that singing is about the only thing that the African can still do without having to pay a tax for it. Furthermore, although Sobral has brought in his quota of three hundred "tar-heads" (cabeças de alcatrão), as he calls them, for the diamond mines, he resents having to do it because it is causing a shortage in the work force of his post. "-Nós passámos à categoria de moleques da Companhia. Caramba! Isto tudo mete nojo e raiva! A Companhia está a desgraçar as populações da Lunda" (p. 100). This problem is mentioned more than once in the novel and reflected the reality

of Lunda demography in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's.[13]

Sobral is a family man with a black concubine and mulatto son waiting for him back in Lubalo. He speaks with pride of his twelve-year-old boy who is already chasing after African girls. But Sobral is also a drunkard and after handing over his "tar-heads," all he wants to do is go down to Pancario's store and drink. Through this character, the author is able to add yet another dimension to the dehumanization of the white colonial officer who we have already seen as a gambler and lecher; he is also a drunk.

After the conscripts are put away safely for the night under guard in the sepoys' village, all the officers go off to the lower town for a drunken orgy. The scene is shameful, as the author bears down on his characters to show them at their worst and weakest. Sobral gets so drunk that he needs Silva and Vasconcelos to support him on the way back to their quarters. The Chief of post from Lubalo does not quite make it as he vomits all over his uniform and falls to the ground. The author's ambiguity about this character reappears at this point. As Américo tries to help him up. Sobral stiffens,

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[13]The circumscription of Chitato, for example, where the diamond company was headquartered, had 77,547 Africans in 1940 while Camaxilo had only 42,637. See Galvão and Selvagam, Império, III, pp. 403, 411. The fact of the matter is that "except for the Diamond mines of Dundo near the Kasai frontier, the Portuguese did almost nothing to develop the eastern portion of Angola." Marcum, The Angolan Revolution, pp. 115-116.

picks himself up and yells: "-Revolucionário de merda! Larga-me!" (p. 104). This reference, of course, is to Americo's political experiences in Brazil. The four drunks finally get back to the Administration but separately. Silva is carrying Sobral and Américo is walking alone singing, not unnaturally, the "Volga Boatmen." The final scene in this night's dissipation and degradation finds Silva calling out all the sipaios and capitas and making them march around the square while he laughs hysterically. Silva obviously has a continuing need to exercise his authority, no matter what the circumstances.

The tedium of a civil servant's existence is dwelled upon at length in this novel. Some of the narration is filled with descriptions of natural backgrounds reminiscent of the author's pre-colonial fiction: "As manhãs frescas . . ., com flores abertas ao sol sob o zumbido das abelhas, perfumando os caminhos limpos de capim, tornaram-se sombrias e quentas" (p. 165). Here Silva is out taking the census and Antunes has been sick in bed for a month. Américo is the senior ranking official on the post, which gives him the right to yawn more often than Sampiao. The two aspirantes spend their days doing just that. The heat is oppressive now as it is throughout the novel. The author's references to the hot sun and blistering heat are, in fact, innumerable. For these two men on duty, there is nothing to do since the taxes have already been collected. Few Africans even ask for their "transit pass,"

required of all "non-civilized" Africans while traveling outside the post within which they reside.[14] The author does manage to inject a little bit of ethnography into all this tedium by explaining why the Africans are not seeking signatures on their transit passes: ". . . o indígena não gosta de viajar em épocas de trovoada" (p. 168). If we remember back to Rajada and Homens sem Caminho, we can certainly understand why the African does not like to travel during storms. Américo spends his days following nonsensical rituals. His isolation and solitude begin to eat away at his spirit and he hardly even speaks to Sampaio anymore. Every morning he goes to Antunes' bedside to receive his orders for the day, which are always the same. He even becomes impatient with the Administrator who, lost in his own desperation of loneliness, tries to keep Américo at his bedside a little longer each day to talk to him about the "good old days." Américo retreats further and further into himself. He gets lost in an interior exile, thinking mostly about the uselessness of his life. He finally decides that he has been "buried alive" in Camaxilo. In one of the best turns of phrase in the novel, Soromenho describes Américo's state of mind as follows: "Começava a neurastenizar-se . . ." (p. 170). Américo is being strangled to death by solitude and emptiness. Within

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[14]This transit pass was called a caderneta and served as both identity card and "passport."

a page of one another, Soromenho tells us "A vida de Joaquim Américo decorria monótona e tediosa" (p. 170) and "Os seus dias decorriam vazios e tediosos" (p. 171). So surrounded by silence and desolation is he, that he can do nothing, even at night. He had been in Africa for four years now and the boredom of his life in that "asshole of the world" was beginning to drive him mad. There was simply no one to talk to anymore.[15] Américo, the untutored intellectual, could no longer even ruminate on the social problems which had occupied so much of his time when he first arrived in Camaxilo. He had a good library in his hut and used to offer his books to Vasconcelos in a vain attempt to raise the latter's political consciousness.

> -Lá dentro--. . .--é que estão os melhores. Podes escolher à vontade, mas não tire os que estão na prateleira de cima--appressou-se a recomendar, porque não queria que o Silva lhes pusesse os olhos, visto serem livros considerados oficialmente subversivos. (p. 111)

This description appears to be yet another example of Soromenho's idealization of Américo. By the time he wrote Terra Morta, he had an enormous need to create a protagonist who could articulate

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[15] In 1940, there were 42,714 people in the entire circumspection of Camaxilo, which had an area of 36,040 km^2. Included in that population were twenty-seven whites (.06%), forty-one mulattos (.1%) and nine "civilized" blacks (.02%). The other 42,637 inhabitants were "uncivilized" Africans. Thus, there was a ratio of 1.2 people/km^2 and, counting whites alone, 0.0007 whites/km^2. The whole of Angola only had 44,083 (1.2%) whites out of a total population of 3,829,558, with a ratio of three inhabitants/km^2 and 0.04 whites/km^2. See Galvão and Selvagem, pp. 211, 228 and 402-403.

his own opposition to fascism. Americo was that character who, by this time within the novel, was so bored with himself and his life that he could no longer even read his own "officially subversive" books. He became the author's first white homem sem caminho.

In the lower town, the "commercial zone," the ennui of life was the same. It had begun for the traders Francisco Bernardo, Alfredo Anacleto and José Calado after the bottom fell out of the rubber market and the wars of occupation began.

> A brusca queda da borracha, . . . muito deve ter contribuído, conjuntamente com a criação dos distritos militares, para a estagnação das regiões do interior que se estavam a desenvolver principalmente com base no seu comérico.[16]

The former bush traders who knew the interior of Angola like the palm of their hands, had joined the Portuguese army as scouts. They had traded with the Africans for many years on the latters' terms and, having lost everything in the rubber crash, now took the opportunity to avenge themselves against the sobas and their peoples. The Portuguese army would now turn the tables on the Africans and force them to pay tribute to Portugal. And the pombeiros would have the upper hand in trade, backed by the Portuguese military presence. "Então muitas coisas se passaram na terra morta de Camaxilo" (p. 46). These traders took the army deep into Lunda and participated

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[16]Pereira Neto, p. 115.

actively in the wanton rape and sack of African villages. Francisco Bernardo betrayed his old trading partner, the soba Xá-Mucuari, to the Portuguese column he was leading. When it got to this chief's village, Bernardo even raped his wife as Xa-Mucuari watched from the jungle. Now, Camaxilo was terra morta and what had been the major trading center in Lunda, with over fifty stores, was reduced to four.

The social grouping in the lower town revolves around the three former itinerant traders who had been in Angola for at least fifty years. Their number is augmented by a relative newcomer, Manuel Pancário. All four merchants have black women and mulatto children. Not all the characters of this grouping are named in the novel. They are primarily types, with only the Calados portrayed in any depth. This was probably the most typical trader's family in Angola and through narrations, dialogues and flashbacks the reader learns a great deal about how they related to one another and how they were related to by the whites. Near the end of the novel, José Calado dies and Silva, who is the ranking Portuguese in the post because Antunes and his wife are in Malanje, orders Calado's house sealed. His mulatto son, João, tells his mother, Francisca, not to be alarmed because the house has only been sealed to prevent the "negroes" from stealing.

Throughout the novel, the mulattos view themselves as far superior to the blacks and most of them consider themselves white. Although they speak Quioco with their mothers, they

speak a semblance of Portuguese with their fathers and with one another. They never associate with the homens nus of the African villages. When João goes up to the Administration to ask for the keys to his house (his mother only wanted to get back in to get her bright-colored cloths, we are told), Silva refuses to give them to him. He begins to explain that the situation is "complicated" and then asks João if he knows whether his father ever registered him as a legitimate son. In the jungle that is Camaxilo, João knows nothing about registers. He did not even know what they were for. He had come for the keys to his house, the house where he had been born; that his father had built and where he had always lived. Thinking that it must have something to do with taxes, João tells Silva that his father was paid up to date. Silva tries to explain that he is talking about a registry of births and recommends that João go down and ask his father's friends if they know anything about it. Silva adds that there is nothing in the books of the Administration and says to Joao that he can check them if he wants to. The latter, a little piqued, reminds Silva that the Secretary had never taught the mulattos how to read. This, of course, angers Silva but Américo interjects that the young mulatto is right. João goes back to the lower town to ask the other traders whether his birth had ever been registered. They tell him that they know nothing about it but João mentions a church mission as

his last hope. A little bit of the author's anti-clericalism creeps in as Bernardo tells the mulatto that they never had anything to do with priests. Most especially João's father had nothing to do with them because his brother had been a priest. The author weaves a very tight web around the young mulatto for reasons which we will soon see. João returns to the Administration and tries to convince Silva that the house really belongs to him and his mother. The Secretary, always a man to follow the letter of the law, tells him that legally he has neither a mother nor a father. This concept is totally beyond João's comprehension. He screams in his mulatto dialect: "Me tá roubando!" Silva jumps up, calling him a son of a bitch and yells, "I'll teach you, you nigger!" João takes a swing at Silva and knocks him over. Sepoys come running into the office and grab the mulatto. Silva orders him tied down at the same time that he orders the doors closed. With João tied securely to a chair, the brave Silva takes his whip and starts to thrash the helpless boy. Silva continues to whip him blindly until Américo suddenly bursts into the office, pulls the whip out of his hands and knocks him down. Silva runs back behind his desk and orders the sepoys to arrest Américo. Sampaio, in the meantime, had witnessed the whole scene from beginning to end and not only makes no attempt to prevent João's beating but immediately steps in to inform Silva that he is on his side. The black lackeys do not dare put a hand on Américo and he walks out of the office as Joao

is carried off to jail. News of what has happened immediately spreads through the neighboring African villages. However, the Africans refuse to believe that Américo has hit another white man simply for beating a mulatto. One old African steadfastly denies that such a thing could ever have happened because there was not a white man in the world who would ever take the side of a mulatto against another white. The white man, as everybody knew, would always stand with their fellow whites against anyone of another race. Nevertheless, as confirmations of the story keep coming in, this particular old man finally accepts the truth. In a flash, he jumps up, grabs a drum and starts shouting: "The heart of the white man has just been born!" Back in the Administration, Silva is having the sepoy who refused to arrest Américo beaten too. After leaving him almost senseless, Silva shouts, "That's for the next time you hear a white man's order."

The entire episode has laid the groundwork for two of the major tragedies in the novel. Américo resigns from the colonial service in spite of Antunes' pleas that he stay (the Administrator assures Américo that had he been in the post the entire incident would haver had happened). Shortly thereafter, the mulatto João, released from prison by the Administrator, burns down the Administration building to avenge his physical and spiritual degradation. As flames devour this old military command post, Antunes' only preoccupation is with the strongbox inside containing the collected taxes.

For a moment, he even considers running into the inferno to try to save this money but is held back by the other officers.

Returning to the other merchants and their families, Alfredo Anacleto had two mulatto children, Maria and Eugénio and Manuel Pancário had one named Mariano. Neither of Pancario's women are named in the novel, however. One of the better-drawn characters is Francisco Bernardo, who comes on to center stage in the lower town wearing a large straw hat. In a highly-polished integration of the elements of time and physical description, the author tells us that Bernardo's face is almost scorched black by "sixty years of African sun." He is an old sertanejo, always leaning on his walking stick. This old man is also quite hard of hearing and most people have to shout at him. The curtain rises on Bernardo supervising some non-descript digging as he had learned to do in his own homeland. He is yet another Portuguese who preferred to try his luck in the jungles of Africa rather than rot away in the misery and living death of Portugal. He has two black concubines, a daughter named Maria and some other unnamed mulatto children.

The other merchant, Alfredo Anacleto is a cranky and irrascible old man, always complaining about one thing or another. He enters the scene jumping around on high-heeled boots with a hat tied around his neck and a whip in his hand. Both men are also dressed in a type of Bermuda shorts.

Anacleto's first words, amply reflecting his temperament, are screamed at his concubine for picking rotten kale. She responds in Africanized Portuguese: "-É prá não estragá" (p. 31). As the Africans come into the lower town to trade balls of wax for trinkets and bright cloths, Anacleto and Bernardo watch them anxiously. The boredom of their lives is reflected on their faces; neither of them has shaved for days. All the merchants employed black clerks whose job it was, among other things, to go out to the approaching Africans and begin bargaining with them before they reach town. Their responsibility was to lure the Africans into the stores of their respective employers before they did business elsewhere. They were empowered to start making offers for the Africans' goods the moment they met up with them. The merchants also competed against one another by offering premiums to the sellers, called tingos. These could be anything from boxes of matches to extra pieces of cloth. The Africans, Soromenho calls them homens nus throughout this novel for lack of a more objective and less culturally biased term, are not easily won over. Because they have been cheated in the past, they are not going into anyone's store without firm commitments on prices and tingos. In fatalistic resignation, Bernardo and Anacleto watched the Africans pass them by on their way to Pancário's store. He had the largest, best-stocked store in the region. His goods were so highly prized that Africans would travel for more than a month to trade with him. He was

also the most greedy of all the merchants. When the Africans came into his store with their balls of wax, the first thing he, his son, or his African clerk would do was cut the balls of wax in half with a machete to check for filler. There was good reason for this as the Africans were in the habit of putting rocks or dirt in the middle of these balls so that they might weigh more on the merchant's scale. But Pancário was even more wily than the Africans. Even when no fillers were found in a particular ball of wax, Pancário or his mulatto son, standing behind the counter, would surreptiously put his finger on the scale in such a fashion so as to make the wax weigh less than it really did. In that fashion, Pancário was able to buy one kilogram's worth of wax and only pay the African for eight hundred grams' worth. The homens nus had very little contact with the whites other than when they came to trade. They spoke no Portuguese and could hardly have been expected to be on guard against "funny" scales. Pancário is presented to the reader in a dialogue between the two former bush traders, Bernardo and Anacleto. Each of them has been in Africa for over fifty years and it is as if Pancário had just arrived yesterday. Sadly for the old men, after over five decades in Africa, all they have left is their children "e um pedaço de terra com umas batatas. Terra que nem é nossa" (p. 51). This last remark by Anacleto comes as a shock to the reader for it is in sharp contra-distinction to the attitudes of the civil servants; it was

also treasonous on the author's part. Things had gotten so bad for these two traders that Anacleto is thinking of closing up shop and moving to Malanje because he has no more cloth and cannot compete with Pancário. He considers the possibility of not even renewing his trader's license. It would seem that the coming of the Portuguese military and civil authority did not abolish traders' tribute. The only difference was that the Portuguese pombeiros now had to pay white "sobas" instead of African ones. This particular dialogue also refers to four ghostly characters: the former traders Cardoso, Matias, Gastão and Firmino, who all did one another in while competing for African trade. The author seems to be telling us that in fact there is no honor among thieves. The ghostly Gastão had come to Angola as an exiled criminal (degredado) in the first place. He had been convicted of murder in Portugal and was expelled to the colony. Nor was he above committing a similar crime against a fellow trader in the bush.

Bernardo is too old to consider picking up stakes and moving elsewhere. He had not been to Malanje (a distance of some three hundred kilometers from Camaxilo) in over forty years. He does not even know where Malanje is anymore. He is content to spend his remaining days in his wicker chair on the porch of his house, smoking a pipe. The only immediate problem facing these two men is what to do about their

children. Soromenho introduces that issue through a continuing dialogue. Bernardo would let his children fend for themselves, just like he did when he first came to Angola at eighteen years of age. He is not really so worried about his boys ("boys always make out") as he is about his girls. The traders worry about what will happen to the girls after they die. Both Bernardo and Anacleto have already experienced personal tragedies with two of their mulatto daughters. Maria, a daughter of the latter, is whoring in Malanje, "uma desgraçada," and Anita, a daughter of the former, ran off with a man and is now in Benguela doing god-knows-what. Bernardo claims that he does not ever want to see his daughter, Maria, again but the author paints a different picture of his real feelings through Anacleto's words:

> -Isso é só falar, Bernardo. Então eu não sei que o compadre pergunta sempre por ela ao Rocha. . . . E no outro dia não lhe mandou um vestido que a sua companheira comprou à mulher do administrador. . . . A gente não pode esquecer os filhos, . . . são do nosso sangue. . . . (p. 53)

(In this short passage we get a very quick glimpse of another of the Administrator's wife's pasttimes: making and selling clothes to the Africans. Antunes himself was an honest man, never making dirty deals like his subordinates, Silva and Sampaio, and therefore had only his relatively meager salary to support himself and his family.)

The most human characters throughout Terra Morta are the merchants and their humanity comes through to us in their

conversations with one another, especially those dealing with their mulatto children. In contrast, the administrative personnel are characterized by their attitudes and philosophies but we get very little feeling for them as men. With all the overt Portuguese racism against the blacks, whether in the upper town or in the lower town, the mulattos are treated specially: they are the objects of parental affection. Their white fathers still regard them as bums, loafers, thieves and whores but blood ties do win out.

A story of the former bush traders' military activities against the Africans is introduced by the author through an allusion to the arrival, among the Africans wanting to do business with the whites, of certain men from the villages of the sobas Xá-Mucuari[17] and Xanvuri. One of Anacleto's daughters informs him that these Africans are passing them by and going directly to the stores owned by Calado and Pancário. Bernardo spits on the ground. After fifty years in Africa he appears to have picked up some African customs from his black concubine and others. He says of Xá-Mucuari, "-Esse cão nunca mais morre!" (p. 54).

The author narrates how Bernardo and Anacleto had done a brisk business with the Africans, even letting them buy on credit, in days gone by. It was not a risky thing to do

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[17] Xá-Mucuari was an historical figure, whose villages lay within the post of Camaxilo. See Galvão and Selvagem, p. 403.

because the African, todos sabiam, always paid his debts (as opposed to some white men such as Sampaio). If an African died before settling accounts, his family would voluntarily contract the debts and pay them off. Bernardo and Anacleto had come to Lunda long before the rubber boom and had made a good friend of the soba Xá-Mucuari by helping him in a war against an enemy chief, one Xá-Cungo.[18] Because of this friendship engendered on the field of battle, Xá-Mucuari and his people traded only with Bernardo and Anacleto. Even during the rubber boom, when most of the Africans shopped around to get the best deals, Xá-Mucuari continued to trade only with his friends out of unfailing loyalty.

Things changed quickly after Bernardo and Anacleto joined the Portuguese army. The soba's father had warned that whites could never be true friends to the African but Xá-Mucuari chose to ignore him. He should not have done so because it was Bernardo and Anacleto who would lead the military column to his village. The officer in charge took the chief's father prisoner and later poisoned him in the military jail in Camaxilo. Xá-Mucuari himself barely escaped with his life after watching the conquerors rape his women and destroy his village. Bernardo, as has been mentioned, even went so far as to rape one of Xá-Mucuari's own wives. The soba

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[18] Xá-Cungo was also an historical figure in Camaxilo. See Galvão and Selvagem, ibid.

then spent many years in exile and only returned to Lunda after the army had gone and had been replaced by a civilian administration. The only person left from Xa-Mucuari's old village was his muata-muari who recounted to him the horrors of the occupation. Many of his people had long since fled to other regions and had pledged allegiance to other chiefs. Although he tried to gather them back again, they sent word that they would never return to the land their soba had abandoned out of fear. In a situation reminiscent of the soba Carumbo, who recommended to his people that they surrender their women and goods to the marauding Quiocos, Xá-Mucuari had lost his authority and his people because of cowardice.

> E Xá-Mucuari foi chorar o seu povo perdido junto dos túmulos dos velhos sobas, mais felizes do que ele, porque morreram sem conhecer os brancos e os negros que vieram de longe fazer a guerra dos brancos contra seus irmãos de raça. (pp. 57-58)

Even though the times have changed radically, Soromenho still has the old soba return to the ultimate roots of his authority, the tombs of his dead ancestors. What we also see in this description is the European colonial policy of using tribes from one region as mercenaries against tribes from another. The first hint of this "divide and conquer" tactic of pitting Africans against Africans had come, we may recall, in Noite de Angústia. Candongo, a Lunda councillor, was portrayed as having fought with the whites against the people of the Cuanza River region (i.e., the Bailundos). In the occupation of Lunda, Africans from the west of Angola like the Bangalas

and others from the south like the Ambacas were used to subdue their "brothers." In this fashion, the Europeans were able to destroy traditional African structures and attempt to impose their own. When the Portuguese Army finally left Angola and the civilian administrations took over, sepoys would be chosen from the ranks of these former mercenary armies, having already shown themselves to be loyal and obedient servants of their white masters.

Xá-Mucuari was not beaten easily, however. Whenever a colonial officer came through his village to take the census or collect taxes, the soba hid in the jungle. He could no longer even bear the sight of a white man. The authorities were told, when they came looking for him, that he was either sick or on a trip. And when they called him to the post to account for the misdeeds of his people, he sent an old slave in his stead, confident that to the Portuguese "all black men looked alike." This slave in fact came to be considered the soba Xá-Mucuari by most of the white authorities and it was he who suffered their brutal beatings when taxes were not paid or men fled from the diamond mines. These beatings were never carried out by the whites themselves but by their black lackeys, the sipaios and the capitas. The instruments of physical abuse were the hippopotamus-hide whip and the palmatória, a flat, wooden paddle with four or five pegs jutting out of the center. The latter was particularly painful and generally left an African victim immobilized for weeks.

Soromenho's first words of the deliberate destruction of African social institutions by the Portuguese comes to the reader in the long narration of Xá-Mucuari's exile and return. Not only did this soba refuse to see any white men but he refused to have anything to do with "os novos sobas de nomeação dos militares . . . e dos civis . . ." (p. 58). In this one line we see where the traditional African tribal structures have begun to decay under Portuguese military rule. What the Portuguese officers did, in order to minimize further armed insurrections, was replace the traditional sobas with ones of their own choosing. This practice will later be banned by the civilian colonial government but the ban was more fiction than fact, as we shall see. Some of the "new" sobas had been slaves of Xá-Mucuari and found in the white muatianvuas an opportunity to avenge themselves against their former master. Other Africans with no axes to grind simply sold out to the Portuguese because of their desire to "rule." They gave the Portuguese all the men needed for public works, the diamond mines and the army. They seem to have retained some of the powers of sobas described in Soromenho's pre-colonial fiction because they could still dispose of the lives of their subjects without much objection. They only radical change in their authority now was that it was backed by the white man and his guns. To please their new masters, this colonial generation of tribal chiefs was, more often than not, honored to have the white men sleep with their wives. To facilitate such encounters, they went so far as to take their wives to the military

command posts. The author summarizes what had happened to Africa after it "had lost its Destiny"[19] in these simple words:

> O destino dos negros tinha mudado. O branco passou a ser o dono da terra. Os comerciantes nunca mais pagaram aos sobas impostos para comerciarem com os seus filhos e andavam por toda a parte como se a terra lhes pertencesse, como se tivessem ali nascido e os negros fossem os estrangeiros. . . . Um soba antigo valia, agora, tanto como um dos seus escravos. (pp. 58-59)

If there were business problems between white merchants and Africans, the former always won out because their army stood behind them.

A great deal has been said about the Africans. We may now ask who were all these people? In Terra Morta they are the "naked men" of the senzala, or African village. Of all the tribal Africans still living more or less within the traditional structures, Xá-Mucuari is the only one who is fully characterized in the novel. Except for one or two exceptions, all the other tribal Africans are grouped together in the human background as homens nus. Xá-Mucuari merited special attention. He was a soba in the tradition of Soromenho's sobas from Nhari through Calenga. We may recall that in those works, the fate of the soba was invariably the fate of the tribe. In Xá-Mucuari's case, this fate is a symbol for his entire race, notwithstanding the fact that the fictive space of Terra Morta is the tiny town of Camaxilo lost in the northern jungles of the Lunda district. In fact, the greatness of this novel rests in its

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[19]The author's last words from A Maravilhosa Viagem.

universal implications for whites, blacks and mulattos alike.

The homens nus are primarily the victims of oppression by both whites and detribalized blacks. Throughout Terra Morta, they are described only in groups, as prisoners of the colonial system. They are conscripts of the colonial administration on their way to do "public works" jobs (to fulfill their "moral obligations") or they are on their way to the diamond mines to waste a year of their lives digging diamonds for foreign interests. Because they are still tied to tribal structures, they are also easily duped by rapacious, petty Portuguese merchants.

As conscripts, they are always guarded by their own "brothers," the detribalized sipaios and capitas who work for the white man. The reality of forced laborers is heightened aurally for us by the author because wherever the blacks are gathered by capitas, we always hear the sound of their whips buzzing in the air. The very first time the Africans appear as a group in the novel, they are prisoners led by a capita holding the ubiquitous hippopotamus-hide whip, the chicote de cavalo-marinho. He has brought them to the administration for their day's "serviço do Governo." This "government service" was an obligation to work which had been defined legally in the Código do Trabalho dos Indígenas nas Colónias Portuguesas de África promulgated on 6 December 1928.[20] This enlightened document of Portuguese multi-racial harmony established the

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[20]See Pereira Neto, p. 246.

government's moral and legal obligation to force the African to work, whether he wanted to or not, to provide for his own support and to "progressively improve his social condition." According to Pereira Neto, the labor code was a

> . . . documento avancadíssimo. . . . Ele traduz, . . . a continuidade com a lídima tradição portuguesa de respeito do homem pelo homem, independentemente da cor da sua pele ou da cultura em que se integre.[21]

On paper, the Labor Code appears to have prohibited any form of forced labor for commercial enterprises. It also ostensibly assured the African freedom of choice in seeking employment. But the government reserved to itself the power to enforce among the Africans their moral obligation to work. The law also prescribed severe penalties, including imprisonment, for whites who attempted to conscript Africans against their will. Not only could heavy fines be levied against unscrupulous businessmen but any colonial officer who subjected an African to forced labor for private projects or who acted as a labor recruiter for private business interests were subject to dismissal from the service. However, there were certain circumstances under which compulsory labor might be allowed. Among these were urgent projects of public benefit, when volunteers were not available (as they never were), public emergencies, cleaning roads and bridges and cultivating crops on lands specifically reserved for African subsistence. Yet even Pereira Neto, trying hard to make his case for Portugal's avançadíssimo

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[21]Ibid.

Labor Code, cannot flee from the ultimate truth: "Em relação aos indígenas . . . se registaram determinadas flutuações quanto ao que dispusera a legislação metropolitana, especialmente em matéria de prestação de trabalho. . . ."[22] In spite of his own admission above, this Portuguese sociologist attempts to refute certain foreigners who had written extensively on forced labor in Portuguese Africa by pointing out that they had never been there.[23] One need not have been in Auschwitz to write about genocide.[24] And if foreigners could be criticized, as

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[22]Ibid., p. 251. Italics added.

[23]Pereira Neto's special target is James Duffy.

[24]Contract labor is one of the principal themes of Soromenho's three novels which portray the clash of cultures. For non-fictional discussions of this institution, see: Mário Pinto de Andrade and Marc Ollivier, Guerra em Angola (Lisbon: Seara Nova, 1974), pp. 78-84; Norman A. Bailey, "Native and Labor Policy," Portuguese Africa, ed. Abshire and Samuels, pp. 167-168; Roger Bastide, "Lusotropicology," Protest and Resistance, ed. Chilcote, pp. 235-236; Chilcote, Portuguese Africa, pp. 12-13, 39-40 and 130-131; Basil Davidson, The African Awakening (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), pp. 190-221; Davidson, In the Eye, pp. 105-118 and 155-159; Duffy, Portuguese Africa (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 130-173, 252-254 and esp. 317-328; L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, Burden of Empire (New York: Praeger, 1967), pp. 254-256 and 379-380; John Gunther, Inside Africa (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955), pp. 587-588; Marvin Harris, "Portugal's Contribution to the Underdevelopment of Africa and Brazil," Protest and Resistance, pp. 221-222; P. K. Huibregtse, Angola, trans. Nicolette Buhr (The Hague: Forum, 1971), pp. 96-119; Hugh Kay, "A Catholic View," Angola: A Symposium, pp. 86, 96-98; Kay, Salazar, pp. 217-218; Marcum, pp. 7-8, 60-61, passim; Oliveira Marques, II, pp. 359-360; William Minter, Imperial Network and External Dependency (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1972), pp. 9-10; Minter, Portuguese Africa and the West (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 21-27; Thomas M. Okuma, Angola in Ferment (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), pp. 29-31; K. Madhu Panikkar, Angola in Flames (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1962),

they were continually by the apologists of the Salazar regime, for writing about an Angola they had never seen, what excuse could an academic like Pereira Neto make for a man like Castro Soromenho who knew forced labor like the back of his hand? Indeed, he could make no excuses because there were none that could withstand honest scrutiny. On the contrary, in the same work where Pereira Neto criticizes James Duffy for writing about an Angola alien to his personal experiences, this sociologist goes so far as to quote certain passages from Terra Morta, as we shall see, as examples of certain of his "scientific" conclusions.

Let us now take a closer look at the reality of forced labor as the mainstay of manpower for the diamond company of Angola. As has already been mentioned, one of the principal themes of Terra Morta is the horror of contract labor recruited by officials of the Portuguese colonial administration for Diamang. This Company first began operations in Lunda after World War I. In 1926, the acting Governor-General of Angola gave the Company exclusive prospecting rights in the Lunda region along with concomitant powers to expropriate any and all properties belonging to whites or assimilados which the

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pp. 41-48; Douglas L. Wheeler, "Portugal in Angola: A Living Colonialism?" Southern Africa in Perspective, eds. Christian P. Potholm and Richard Dale (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 179; Wheeler and Pelissier, pp. 99-100, 109-112 and esp. 138-141.

Company deemed necessary to its welfare. Furthermore, travel within Lunda was restricted and emigration to that district was forbidden. The area under the Company's control was more than half that of Portugal itself. Although its center of operations was in Dundo, in the northeastern tip of the LUnda district within the Chitato circumscription, the Company had mineral rights for all of northern Angola almost to the Atlantic coast. The restrictive immigration regulations resulted in Lunda remaining one of the least populated districts in Angola. After the rubber crash it was almost totally deserted and that is the way the diamond company liked it. However, Diamang supported the colony for many years. Even as late as 1966, it was still providing "approximately 5% of government revenues in Angola."[25] The Company was controlled, in the main, by American and Belgian interests together with the British-owned Anglo-American corporation. The Portuguese did not even control the Company within the borders of their major West-African colony. As late as 1947, roughly one-third of Diamang's African workers had been provided as conscripts by the Portuguese colonial administration. The average wage of these workers "was 830 angolars a year, or about $25. Diamang thought this perfectly reasonable, even generous."[26] In 1954, the Portuguese

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[25]Minter, Portuguese Africa, p. 32.

[26]Davidson, In the Eye, p. 128.

government, perhaps out of fear of revolt among the Africans, told Diamang to double its wages.

> The company balked at adding $410,000 to the wage bill of African miners whose average earnings were about $2.45 a month. This, its directors affirmed, they could not afford. But what they could afford, in that same year of 1954, was to pay out ten times as much in dividends ($4,100,000) to shareholders who, with few or no exceptions, had never so much as set foot in Angola or even knew where Angola lay upon the map.[27]

Fortunate indeed were the Belgian, British and American owners of Diamang. For thirteen years (1961-1974), the Portuguese people, ill-informed and backwards, willingly sacrificed their lives in Angola so foreign investors could clip their dividend coupons in peace and prosperity.

Diamang is one of the threads that connects Terra Morta from beginning to end. We recall the arrival of Alberto Sobral, the Chief of post of Lubalo, in Camaxilo with three hundred "tar-heads" for the Company. Silva tells him that his "tar-heads" have arrived none too soon because the district governor in Saurimo (the capital of the Lunda district) is really putting pressure on the administrators of the district's cicumscriptions. (Soromenho's father, it must be remembered, was a district governor in Saurimo for some years.) Sobral had complained about being nothing more than a "lackey for the Company." Even Joaquim Américo did his duty however as far as Diamang was concerned. "Na varanda, Joaquim Américo prosseguia à chamada

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[27] Ibid.

dos indígenas contratados para os trabalhos da Companhia . . ." (p. 39). Finding five men missing, Américo accuses the sipaio Canivete of having fallen asleep on guard, thereby permitting them to escape. At that moment, deus ex machina, Antunes joins the issue and orders another sepoy to give Canivete fifty lashes as he says: "Já estes cachorros hão-de aprender a fazer o serviço" (p. 39). In this public beating of the sepoy, the author shows us two things: firstly, we see that one detribalized African had no qualms about beating another on orders from the white man; secondly, we see the white man exercising the most supreme of his authorities, having his own policeman whipped for everyone else to see. Antunes' calling them "dogs" requires no comment here. The Administrator orders a squad of men out to arrest the five fugitives and bring them back to the Administration. His problem lies in the fact that the Company has already paid for the men and they, therefore, must be found. "E se não os encontrarem, que tragam o soba e a família dessa canalha" (p. 129). The men who had fled were from Xá-Mucuari's village and this incident is the beginning of the only heroic episode in the entire novel, as we shall see. As has been stated, Africans appear in Camaxilo either under guard for public works projects or under guard on their way to the diamond mines. A typical narrative description of the latter is dramatically portrayed as follows: "Do fundo da planura, veio um canto monótono e triste. Marchavam a cantar os homens nus das aldeias de palha que vinham entregar os seus

braços às minas de diamantes" (p. 209). We may now ask where were all these men going, what was the Company like and what would their life be for the year of their contract? Soromenho has all the answers to our questions because, as a labor recruiter for the Company, he had been an eyewitness to all its operations.

Conscripts from all five posts of the circumscription are lined up in front of the Administration building "com peles à volta da cintura e o dorso nu, um ar de espanto nos olhos" (p. 80). The author uses this brief staging period to describe the Company's omnipotence in an aside between Silva and Américo.[28]

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[28]Forced labor permitted Diamang to generate very high profits with minimal costs, other than capital investments. The economic model which encouraged, if not mandated, this situation was quite simple. For Portugal to survive, it had to bleed Angola dry through taxes, inverted (and perverted) rates of exchange, etc. Diamang, forced labor-intensive, represented the greatest source of taxable wealth in the Colony. The task, if not the raison d'être, of the colonial administration, was to supply forced labor in all of Angola to support the government in Portugal.

Other than Castro Soromenho, the only one who dared attempt to explain, in human as well as economic terms, the effects of this disastrous policy, was Henrique Galvão. As Deputy for Angola in the Portuguese National Assembly from 1945-1949, Galvão repeatedly denounced Portuguese colonial policies on the floor of that body. His speeches were never reprinted in the Portuguese press but he did publish a summary entitled: Por Angola (Quatro Anos de Actividade Parlamentar): 1945-1949 (Lisbon: Author's edition, 1950). The documents contained therein, official transcripts of his charges, detail in facts and figures Portugal's mis-, mal- and non-feasance in Angola. Indeed, both Galvão's Por Angola and Soromenho's Terra Morta tell the same tale. Oddly enough, both books are published within a year of each other. The difference between these men is, however, critical. Galvão, the self-interested politician, wrote his polemical tract for the white supremacists in Angola who had elected him to the National Assembly. Soromenho, the humanist, wrote his novel for all the peoples of Angola and, by extension, the world. As we know,

No colonial civil servant who opposed the Company's forced labor policies ever lasted very long in Lunda. To the contrary, anyone who did not bow and scrape before the Company was fired in the blink of an eye.

Américo, after calling out each and every name (or number, as the case may be) against his manifest, turns the "condemned" men over to the siapaios and capitas. Each conscript is given a piece of white cloth, a shirt and a cotton blanket along with enough manioc meal and dried fish for the month-long journey to the mines. They are lined up in single file for the march but each and every one of them would gladly exchange cloth, shirt, cover and food for the freedom to return to their villages. But there they stand, homens sem caminho, awaiting the long march, under orders from the Portuguese homens sem caminho. They had been contracted for a year which they would spend digging from sunrise to sunset. Other men from their villages had returned from the mines with their legs torn up from slivers of rock. The slivers come flying up with each swing of the pick and these new conscripts had a fair idea

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Soromenho had great success in reaching his audiences. Galvão, on the other hand, failed miserably in his goal, being publicly repudiated by his constituents while still in office and arrested and imprisoned by the Salazar regime after the expiration of his mandate. Nor did he ever forgive Soromenho his success. As was mentioned in Part I of this study, it was Galvão who vetoed Soromenho's employment at O Estado de São Paulo seventeen years after Terra Morta was first published. Nevertheless, if one ever wished to confirm in fact the themes Soromenho wove so artfully into fiction, Galvão's Por Angola is the place to start.

of what awaited them. The diamond mines had become "o inferno das homens do sertão" (p. 81).

Once in the mines, the men often worked in water over their ankles but still could not avoid being cut by chips of rock flying into their legs. They quickly learned the way to the first-aid station. There, they were treated with dispatch and sent back to work. White foremen were shouting everywhere and beating the slackers because they could be fired if their charges did not meet production quotas set by the Company. These whites however were very grateful for their jobs because they all had families to support and, the author tells us, their memories of poverty and unemployment in Portugal were still vivid in their minds. They were good foremen and none of them wanted to lose his job on account of the Africans. The Company even gave financial incentives to those foremen who worked the Africans the hardest. Everybody, it seems, was always bucking for a raise on the Africans' backs. The Company did not seem to do much hiring in the colony but rather had its main employment office in Lisbon. Prospective employees were only hired after careful background checks. That way the Company was able to weed out any labor agitators or suspected subversives. For the blacks, on the other hand, the only way out of their contract was in a coffin. Escape from the mines was as impossible for the Africans of this period of Soromenho's fiction as had been escape from the Quiocos in his pre-colonial works.

The reader is told that the Company was so concerned about its African miners that it did not even have the most rudimentary idea of what their diet was. The Africans, as we know, were accustomed to little balls of fried manioc (bolas de pirão) and chunks of cooked meat smothered in pepper. What they got were cold meals with no condiments at all. In the end, they ate only out of acute hunger and it was harder for them to get used to the food than it was to the work in the mine. Nor was the vision of a white foreman standing over them with a whip strange to the African. He had been in similar situations back in the post when conscripted for public works. The greatest clash of cultures, we find, existed on a much different level, the hospital. To the Africans, the hospital was nothing less than a medieval torture chamber, a basement room used by the Inquisition or the Gestapo. What the African most feared were injections. For the African, having to spend time in a hospital must have been akin to being transported to another planet. There were no fires to keep him warm, no women to keep him company, no medicine men to give him home-cooked remedies and, worst of all, no witch doctors to pray for his recovery. Instead there were neat doctors, orderlies and nurses, the latter two usually blacks or mulattos, dressed in lily white house coats and uniforms. In effect, the Africans' reaction to the hospital was the same as that of the Cuanhamas to Portuguese attempts at cattle vaccination. There was only one major difference: the African had been well-subjugated by the time Diamang's

operations were in full swing. The hospital's set-up, with its beds neatly lined up in rows, its daily routines of taking orders and medicines from nurses and its odors of disinfectants were all unbearable to the tribal African. He had absolutely no desire to eat chicken soup and drink milk anymore than he wanted to be "cured" by the doctors. In fact, when anyone died it was always attributed to the white doctor. Conversely, when an African got well, it was because of some divine miracle. They could bear any of the elements of life in the mines; the cold food, beatings from the foremen and so on. But being in a hospital was the most traumatic and feared of all experiences. To the directors of the Company, the hospital was their pride and joy. It had large operating rooms, good doctors and the most modern medicines. Even the hospital in Luanda, we are told, could not compare and the Company proudly boasted, "É o melhor da colónia. Custou milhares do contos. Hospitais como o nosso, só na África do Sul" (p. 85). One could almost believe that this well-stocked, well-staffed and well-appointed hospital had actually been built to take care of the Africans' illnesses. This was absolutely not the case. The task of the doctors was to get the miner up on his feet and back to the mines as quickly as possible. Time is money for Diamang and they could not bind the man beyond the year of his contract no matter how long he might spend in the hospital. The hospital was an instrument of terror for the African but a terror which had resulted from a legitimate difference in cultural values.

Direct oppression, as has been mentioned, was in the hands of the foreman, but indirect oppression was visited upon the African through the Company store. Under the regulations of 1926, mentioned above, the Company had the sole and exclusive business rights in the entire region abutting the mines. Non-Company personnel were simply not permitted into Diamang's "state within a state" because the Company was paranoid on the subject of thefts. So paranoid were they on this issue, that the Africans had to undergo daily physical examinations to determine whether or not they had swallowed any diamonds in an attempt to smuggle them out.

> . . . até . . . purgantes . . . eram obrigados a engolir os que trabalhavam no posto de escolha de diamantes, para defecarem antes de sair desse lugar guardados por cem olhos, não fosse algum levar no buxo uma pedrita valiosa . . . (p. 84)

Yet again, the Company cannot be faulted for desiring to protect its business interests. After all, the shareholders had to be paid. We know that there was a black market in diamonds because Eugénio Anacleto makes a deal with Comboio, a semi-detribalized African who would come to substitute Xá-Mucuari, to buy black market diamonds. With his haul, Eugénio will leave Camaxilo and go to Luanda to live the good life.

Very few Africans, in any event, succeeded in smuggling out any diamonds and they usually returned to their villages after their contract expired, glad to be done with their year of indentured servitude. Once home, in the typical tribal patterns known to us from the readings of Soromenho's pre-colonial

fiction, the Africans composed songs and danced batuques about their experiences in the diamond mines. "Cantavam cantigas gritadas com tamanha violencia e raiva que ate os velhos guerreiros de todas as guerras com os brancos se enchiam de espanto" (p. 85). In other words, their one year in the diamond mines was more horrendous than all of the bloody wars of occupation that the older men of the tribes had ever known.

One of the greatest impediments to the economic development of Angola was the lack of African manpower. We are told repeatedly in Terra Morta that this shortage is the direct result of the government's conscript labor policies. And, in light of what awaited the conscript in the mines of Diamang, it is not difficult to understand why countless numbers of Africans fled to Bula Matari (the Belgian Congo). Nor was Portuguese economic mismanagement confined to forced labor in the jungles of Lunda. Soromenho subtly tells us, in one line, that life is at a standstill even in the cities. This piece of information comes to us through Américo. We may recall that his first port of debarcation, after having fled political persecution in Brazil (one of Soromenho's many ironic touches), was Lobito. There he learns from the local colonists that commerce is paralyzed and the colony is, in fact, dying. This theme of economic stagnation is expanded to its fullest in the author's detailed portrayal of life among the merchants in Camaxilo. We must not lose sight of the fact that, for Soromenho, Camaxilo is truly a microcosm of the entire colony.

The principal theme of this novel remains the multi-faceted and multi-tiered decadence caused by colonialism. No one who participates in that process, whether actively or passively, escapes unscathed. On the contrary, everyone within the colonial sphere is ultimately degraded and many are even destroyed. Soromenho structures his indictment of colonial oppression around the lowest common denominator of white-black interaction, the administrative post in the jungle. Within this framework, one of the points the author stresses is the inevitable annihilation of traditional indigenous cultures. In Terra Morta, the specific vehicle for the development of this theme is the episode which transpires between the soba Xa-Mucuari and the sepoy Caluis.

Caluis, we may recall, had first come to Camaxilo to work for a white merchant. After being fired for drunkenness, he joined the Portuguese army and, with the traders Bernardo and Anacleto, took part in the destruction of Xa-Mucuari's villages, among many others. And like Bernardo, Caluis too had earned Xa-Mucuari's eternal enmity. In still another flash-back, the author presents Caluis to the reader. He was known among the homens nus because of his part in the wars of occupation and especially his arrest and murder of one soba who had refused to pay his head-tax. After the wars, he was made a sepoy as a reward for having served the "whites of the government" well and because he knew how to speak Portuguese. He had only once returned to his old village but was not recognized by

the young men who had grown up there after the wars. However, after an old woman pointed him out as a murderer and traitor, he never again returned. Once, while passing by his old senzala, he heard his people singing a song about "the traitor Caluis" who had killed his soba and given the women to the Portuguese soldiers. From that day on, Caluis was obsessed with revenge and spent his nights dreaming of sorcery. He did not need sorcery, however, because he had much more powerful instruments at his disposal. Dressed in a uniform, he was the authority of the white man and if anyone dared doubt it, he carried a rifle to prove it. With other sepoys and their aids, he raided African villages for men to be conscripted into the administration's labor force or to be sent off to the mines. All the African police did this under the authority of the white man. These detribalized blacks, despised by their own race as traitors and disdained equally by the whites for the same reason, were not beneath looting the villages they raided white rounding up their human quarry. Only the sobas' sons were able to buy their way out of their "moral obligation to work." The old Africans who had fought the brave fight could only sit back with Xá-Mucuari and smoke opium to forget their humiliation, saying, "A Lunda está desgraçada" (p. 59).

Caluis and Xá-Mucuari were destined to cross paths once more, however. When Antunes finds out that five Africans have fled the group rounded up for a year of forced labor in the diamond mines, he orders Caluis to arrest the men, if he

can find them, or bring in their women or their soba. Furthermore, Antunes had never been fooled by the old slave Xa-Mucuari used to send in his stead. He tells Caluis that he does not want that man but the real Xá-Mucuari, "O antigo." Antunes had been satisfied in dealing with the soba-substitute presented to him up to that point but now he wanted Xá-Mucuari himself.

The official colonial policies towards traditional African authorities had been established early in Norton de Matos' administration. Norton was quick to realize that he did not have enough personnel to effectively control the interior of Angola and therefore he would need the cooperation of the traditional authorities, the chiefs. In his "Regulations on the Administrative Circumscriptions of the Province of Angola," Norton mandated that the sobas act as intermediaries between their tribesmen and the new civilian regime. He further affirmed to all his own subordinates that the sobas were to be treated with the greatest of dignity and respect.[29] (Of course this would seem to imply that before Norton's directive, sobas were treated like any other African. This is, as we now know, exactly what happened. It was the Portuguese military which first began the destruction of the traditional African authorities as a measure of self-defense.) Not all the chiefs were willing to be tools of the Portuguese however.

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[29]See Pereira Neto, p. 262.

Many, like Xa-Mucuari, would have nothing to do with them. But Portuguese colonial policy was also ambiguous on the question of treatment of sobas (i.e., the more powerful they were, the greater the threat of revolt). Therefore it was decided that in the case of recalcitrants, other Africans who enjoyed the white man's confidence would have to be chosen by the Portuguese and invested with the traditional authority of the chief. Behind every act of the colonial administration lay the army of the sepoys and capitas. Naturally, there was little resistance. In fact, this practice of substituting traditional leaders accepted by the Africans, for others who would play the Portuguese game, was prohibited by law. But, like so many other colonial proscriptions, it was done more often than not, and not always to the benefit of the Portuguese. When such a substitution was made, there were usually only two possible consequences: either the "soba" chosen by the Portuguese was ignored by the Africans while they followed their traditional chief or he was only partially obeyed but never respected. The latter circumstance resulted in a lack of respect by the Africans for the Portuguese themselves. To prove these points, Professor Pereira Neto, in his award-winning doctoral dissertation already cited in this study, quotes from Castro Soromenho's novel, Terra Morta![30]

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[30]Ibid., p. 263. Stranger than Pereira Neto's use of fiction to support fact in a doctoral dissertation in Sociology, is the edition of the novel cited. The edition Pereira Neto uses

Although Antunes had ordered Caluis to bring back either Xá-Mucuari or the five fugitives, the sepoy was not happy about his assignment. He knew the old chief to be the last great soba of Camaxilo and the last of the African rebels. He also knew how much Xá-Mucuari hated any and all Africans who collaborated with Portuguese in any capacity. Nevertheless, in the company of a capita, he starts off on his mission.

The author not only expands on his individual characterization of Xá-Mucuari but he describes the chief's village in a manner which is quite familiar to us. It is, as a matter of fact, the only description of an African village in any of the three novels of this period. The huts of the village are grouped around a terreiro, women are grinding manioc and Xá-Mucuari himself is in the chota (which the author calls an alpendre in this novel) smoking a pipe. The only thing missing here are women with children bifurcados nas ancas. (Soromenho managed to repeat that portrayal in an earlier narration of a woman who had been brought to the administration by the sipaio Canivete because her man, too, had fled from the mines.[31])

Xá-Mucuari's village is surrounded by elephant grass (capim), with a river close by. The difference in this setting

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is the second, the one published by Editora Arcadia in Lisbon in 1961 and banned shortly thereafter. Pereira Neto's dissertation was published in 1964 and questions do arise as to where he got his copy and why he felt secure enough to quote from an officially banned book.

[31] Terra Morta, p. 87.

is that instead of the river being in a muxito, the author substitures the more Portuguese and therefore less African word, matagal. Soromenho's early tendencies to the exotic have totally disappeared in the novels of the clash of cultures. In the description of Xá-Mucuari's village, the author characterizes some of the chief's old councillors by giving them flashbacks of their won. They, too, are seated in the alpendre recalling how chief Caungula had killed a white man named Amaral, quartered his body and stuck his decapitated head on a spear. This he did so that the soba grande (an allusion to the chief Portuguese authority) would know that "the milk they were nursed on was good and strong." It was milk which had not yet been defiled by white men sleeping with African women. These old men also remembered the days when they, and not the whites, were the owners of the land.

When Caluis gets to the village, he demands to speak to the soba. Xá-Mucuari merely gestures to one of his councillors to take care of the sepoy. Caluis starts to rant and rave about the five men who have fled from the administration. Xá-Mucuari merely opens his eyes and mouth in mock surprise and disbelief; the same way all the Africans reacted when confronted by a sepoy or other white man's African on this issue. The chief tells Caluis to go look for the men himself. The elder dealing with Caluis directly tries to confuse him about the nature of his mission. In the narration, a conjecture is made

that perhaps the fugitives are from another sobado. Caluis sidesteps this ploy saying that the Secretary had told him that the men were from Xá-Mucuari's village and, more importantly, "tudo estava escrito no livro da administração" (p. 144). The author creates a lively exchange, primarily through narration, offering the reader both the tribal African and the detribalized sepoy in a wily tête-à-tête. Perhaps the men from the diamond company got the names mixed up, the elder suggests slyly, playing on Caluis' bias towards non-government personnel. This elder reminds Caluis that the brancos do Nordeste were not colonial officers and they could have made the mistake. Caluis is not fooled with such temporizing but it is because he is ignorant rather than cunning. As far as he was concerned, anyone who could write names was a branco do governo. Finally, Caluis demands that Xá-Mucuari accompany him back to the administration. The elder goes down to the river and brings back an old fisherman whom Caluis immediately recognizes. But he also knows who Xá-Mucuari is and he has been ordered to bring in the "real" soba. At this point, all the elders come out of their casa do povo and start arguing with Caluis that "o velho Xá-Mucuari nunca tinha tratado com os brancos, toda a gente o sabia, mesmo os brancos do governo" (p. 145). Through those words we learn that even the white man had accepted the authority substitute foisted on him by Xá-Mucuari's people. As the soba leaves the chota, walking in the opposite direction, Caluis runs after him and tries to knock him down with his rifle

butt. In an instant, Xá-Mucuari turns, parries the blow and slits Caluis' throat. In the confusion, the capita who had accompanied Caluis to the village flees into the jungle. Xá-Mucuari, smiling triumphantly, then goes off into the jungle and calmly hangs himself. His last act is as much one of sacrifice to save his people from reprisals, in the old tradition of Soromeho's sobas (e.g., Calenga), as it is one of heroic defiance against Portuguese domination.

Xá-Mucuari had been the last great chief in the lands of Camaxilo. Remaining faithful to his ethnographic description of Xá-Mucuari's village, Soromenho describes the beginning of a funeral dance (batuque fúnebre). The senior elder begins to beat the drum which will inform all the neighboring tribes of Xá-Mucuari's death. At the same time, the author shows us that things have truly changed with the arrival of the white man in Africa. A young man jumps into the middle of the village square to protest that the whites will hear the drums. What follows is the theme of dismemberment not only of African tribal structures but of African customs as well. The chief elder was one of the three councillors (homens bons) of the tribe and is shocked at this show of disrespect for the dead Xa-Mucuari. The younger members of the tribe however support their rebellious brother because they have worked in the mines and have been to the white man's villages where they learned that the time of the old sobas had passed. Nowadays, "quem mandava era o branco do Governo, que tanto podia castigar o soba como o

seu antigo escravo" (p. 149). The author sets the older members of the tribe who want the traditional batuque funébre against the younger men who are afraid to have the drums beaten for fear they will bring the white man. The latter are also mindful that since Caluis, a sepoy, was the victim, a batuque funébre in honor of his murderer would only aggravate the situation in the eyes of the whites. Caluis, after all, had been their ally and guide in the wars of occupation.

Following the author's special attention to Xá-Mucuari's village, we are then given a scene of African life right out of his pre-colonial fiction. The debate, for example, which is a tradition among the Lundas was first presented by Soromenho in Noite de Angústia. Salemo's old councillor, Candongo, comes to mind when he complains that the only thing the Lundas seem to know how to do is argue. The first point in the debate, made by the elders, is that there must be a batuque funébre (now called batuque dos mortos, as the author continues to move away from his pre-colonial terminology) otherwise the wrath of the gods will surely fall upon the tribe. The elders suggest leaving the village and migrating to a land where there are no whites and no sepoys. Bula-Matari is suggested. At this, the young men quickly rejoin: "Já não há terra sem brancos. Esse velho está doido!" (p. 151). They are not wrong either; Africa belongs to the white man. The debate continues with each side trying to make a better point than the other. A young man named Comboio (already detribalized and depersonalized

by accepting as his name the Portuguese noun "train," his presence in this traditional village is out of character) becomes the spokesman for the young, semi-detribalized Africans on the abyss of what Alberto Memmi has called "cultural amnesia." Bula-Matari (the Belgian Congo), he tells the old men, is even worse than Camaxilo. In Bula-Matari, the Africans work on roads in chain gangs and are connected to one another by iron rings around their necks. The final destruction of tribal coherence is portrayed succinctly by the author:

> Ja nada detinha o povo que olvidara a tradição de respeito e o temor às leis da tribo. O seu passado estava com o soba morto. Xá-Mucuari, ao dar-se à morte para não sofrer afrontas dos brancos, libertara o povo de um passado que ele próprio nao pudera manter em prestígio. (pp. 153-154)

But Soromenho has subtle ways of melding the past with the present. Comboio, we are told, has filed, pointed teeth like some of this predecessors in Soromenho's pre-colonial fiction. He has convinced the people that their future lies in cooperation with the "white man of the government." They pick up Caluis' body and march off towards the administration. The final tragedy for Xá-Mucuari's people, and by extension all traditional Africans takes place with an authentic authority substitution.

The capita who had escaped Xá-Mucuari's village after the murder of Caluis, ran back to the administration to report on what had transpired. A veritable white war party climbs into Antunes' car as if to carry out a punitive expedition reminiscent of the wars of occupation. All of the administrators

are there, from Antunes to Américo, as are Anacleto, Pancário and the sepoy Canivete. All of them are armed to the teeth. Careening down the dirt road from the administration to Xá-Mucuari's village, Antunes almost runs over Comboio and the rest of the tribe. Comboio then relates the story to Antunes through Anacleto, for whom he had once worked. Everyone returns to the village where Antunes proposes that the tribe name a new soba.

> A multidão manifestou-se com alegria ruidosa, porque assim é que estava certo, que o "branco grande" procedia bem, visto ser esse o costume da terra. (p. 160)

Antunes of course had no intention of letting anyone other than himself choose a new chief. One Xá-Mucuari had been enough and now that he was dead, his tribe would be governed by someone of the administration's choosing. Antunes immediately intervenes in the selection process by supporting Comboio's candidacy. Not only is the latter brave and smart, says Antunes through his sipaio interpreter, but he knows how to speak Portuguese and is a friend of the white man. When some of the older men of the tribe start to mumble against Comboio, Anacleto tells Antunes that they are not happy with his choice. Naturally that makes no difference whatsoever to the Administrator as he says: "-Pois é esse mesmo que nos serve para soba" (p. 161). The operative words in that sentence of course are "nos serve." The sepoy Canivete who translates for Antunes, informs the tribe of this decision and adds, on his own, the threat of jail for anyone who opposes it. When Antunes asks

Canivete if the people want Comboio as their soba, out of insecurity and the need to reinforce his own decision, the sepoy responds in typical Afro-Portuguese: "-Si sió, falou. Tá contente" (p. 161). For this writer, the best judgment on Soromenho's portrayals of Africa comes from the Portuguese social scientist, Pereira Neto. He says that although it is evident that the authority substitution described by Soromenho "não passa de cenas de um romance, . . . elas são representativas do que muitas vezes terá acontecido."[32]

Terra Morta is the best panoramic view of colonialism ever written in the Portuguese language by a white man. It portrays all of the human elements which constitute colonial Africa. For Soromenho, there were no heroes in a land condemned to death by the very nature of man's exploitation of man. In fact, the only heroic act that remains is self-destruction. Because Soromenho did not yet have a solution to the clash of cultures in Terra Morta, Américo, the author's sometime alter-ego, abandons Angola. Before Américo leaves however, the author manages to define for one last time the clash of cultures as perceived even between the white men. In the exchange between Antunes, who is trying to convince him to say, and Américo, who is just as intent on leaving, we see the opposition of values once again. Antunes cannot understand how Américo could have taken the side of a mulatto in the house-key

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[32]Pereira Neto, p. 263.

incident between João Calado and the Secretary, Silva. In attempting to explain Angola to the now-defeated Americo, the Administrator says: "O senhor não conhece esta canalha. Isto não é Brasil" (p. 243). Antunes accuses Américo of not understanding what life is really like in Angola, to which Américo responds: "Excuse me, I understand but I don't accept it." Antunes laughingly tells Américo that the blacks really do not appreciate his defense of them, to which Américo responds: "Eu não os defendo por serem negros, porque para mim a cor e as racas nao contam, mas sim como homens que são tratados como animais, como bestas, nada mas" (p. 244). Here, then, is the author's point of view on race relations and man's inhumanity to man. Antunes, the antithesis, is no more capable of understanding Américo's attitude than is Américo capable of understanding the Portuguese colonial philosophies which motivate the Administrator. Antunes hates to see a man mess up his career, especially because things in Portugal are as bad at the end of this novel as they were at the beginning. Valadas, who has come back to Camaxilo, is the author's instrument for disseminating this information. "-Andam por lá médicos a ganhar trezentos escudos por mês. . . . E advogados a guiarem autó moveis de praça" (p. 245).

The author has brought Valadas back in this final episode merely to recapitulate the same attitudes that this character expressed in the beginning of the novel. Valadas and Antunes continue their justification of colonial policies.

The former tries to explain Américo's attitudes in order to oppose them to the reality of Africa as perceived by those who choose to remain. In Valadas' words, Américo seems to think that the civil servants are hard men, "without either heart or conscience." Antunes takes up this rationalization of Portugal in Africa by explaining that the circumscription has an area of more than 30,000 km^2 and a population of over 40,000 Africans. To properly administer that area and that number of people there are ten civil servants and three sepoys in the seat of the circumscription with three more in each post. They are the ten white men who are responsible for the "discipline" of 40,000 Africans, the maintenance of 700 kilometers of roads, the collection of 10,000 taxes and the conscription of a thousand Africans each year for the diamond mines. Because they are spread so thin, their only answer to African recalcitrance is force. During this dialogue, reference is made to Monteiro, the Chief of post in Caluango who spends all his time in the senzalas listening to the stories of the Africans rather than collecting taxes and sending men to the mines. Valadas sums up for the reader the general white point of view, diametrically opposed to Americo/Soromenho, when he says:

> -Há dias encontrei o Monteiro numa senzala do Luita Estava sentado à volta da fogueira, de conversa pegada com os negros. Até lhe disse que aquilo não ficava bem a um branco. E não fica. . . . A gente sente-se mal. (p. 247)

This was Moser's description of Soromenho's "sly humor" referred to earlier in this study. It is however much more than that. It is Soromenho's indictment of Portuguese racism as much as it is an indication that some of him, through Monteiro, will remain in Africa even as Américo goes to Lisbon.

Soromenho was not content with the broad picture he had painted in Terra Morta. He takes up the same themes again in 1957 in Viragem where he condenses the clash of cultures and exposes it to minute observation.[33] The location of this novel is no longer the seat of circumscription, Camaxilo, but rather one of its small administrative outposts, Cuango. Geographically, Soromenho takes us from the general to the particular at the same time that he continues to paint his universal portrait of colonialism. A reviewer of the French translation of this novel (Virage) appears to be totally ignorant of Soromenho's main themes as he writes: "Le lieu, de même, est imprécis, car ce qui ce passe dans ce poste éloigné d'Angola pourrait tout aussi bien se passer au Tchad, au Congo, ou ailleurs.[34] Antônio Soares Amora, the Brazilian literary historian and critic, showed a much wider grasp of this particular novel when he wrote:

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[33]Castro Soromenho, Viragem, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Arquimedes Edições). Page numbers for all quotations from this edition will appear in the text.

[34]Michel Ligny, rev. of Virage by Castro Soromenho, in Présence Africaine, 41(1962)176.

> . . . se evidencia, na obra, o estudo indireto da conquista da África pelo Europeu . . . o da adaptação, muito difícil, do branco à hostilidade da terra e do homem africano; a assimilação do negro "selvagem" à vida e à mentalidade do branco; e . . . a compreensão do negro pelo "civilizado" europeu.[35]

And even Mário António (the cultural sepoy of Angolan letters during the Salazar/Caetano regime), after pointing out that "trabalho interessante é a capa," cannot escape from the fact that

> Esse quadro . . . é o de uma "zona de fricção" da colonização em que o comportamento das pessoas é determinado por factores como a violência e o medo, a insegurança e a resistência desesperada.[36]

In Viragem, Soromenho concentrates on fewer characters to give us an even wider view of the clash of cultures. There is a total of twenty-eight, of whom the most important are the white aspirante, António Alves, a white grandmother and her granddaughter, D. Joana and Paulina, their black servant Jusa

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[35]António Soares Amora, rev. of Viragem by Castro Soromenho, in O Estado de São Paulo, "Suplemento Literário," 12 April 1958, p. 2.

[36]Mario António, rev. of Viragem, in Cultura, 4(June 1958)3. Professor Russell Hamilton shows a much greater appreciation for this mulatto critic who spent two decades in Portugal betraying Angola than he does for Soromenho, the white man who spent his whole life foisting his multi-racial, humanistic visions of Angola on a disinterested metropole. Of all the reviews of Viragem, Hamilton goes out of his way to cite from the only negative one ever written, that of the mulatto Mário António! He does this to "prove" that the white Soromenho could never be anything but a writer "within the colonial tradition." (See: Hamilton, Voices, pp. 36-37.) For Professor Hamilton, the color of a critic's skin is apparently more important than the themes of a novelist's works. We will have more to say about Hamilton's biases in the conclusion of this study.

and the sipaios[37] Jacinto and Tipóia. Ever-present in the background is the ghostly Afonso Nogueira, the regular Chief of the post, who has gone to Luanda for radical cancer surgery. Paulina is his mistress and it was Nogueira who had brought her and her grandmother to Cuango in the first place. Alves has been sent from Camaxilo to substitute for Nogueira during the latter's sick leave. The plot of the novel revolves around Alves' relations with Paulina, her grandmother, the sepoys and the Africans who are conscripted for work in the Administration.

The principal themes of this novel are absolute isolation and cultural differentiation between whites and blacks. The three white characters appear throughout the novel. The black servant, Jusa, and the sepoys, Jacinto and Tipóia, as well as one other of their rank, Pedro Santo, are also with the reader during most of the novel. The history and sociology of Africa portrayed in Terra Morta are present too but with some slight modifications. The Africans are individually characterized to a much greater extent in Viragem than in Terra Morta. The blacks in the post have personalities all their own as do others, of secondary importance, who also appear in this novel. The reader even comes to have great compassion for these Africans, especially when they are degraded by their white masters. This is true both for Jusa, who is

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[37] In this novel, as opposed to Terra Morta and A Chaga, the author spells sipaio with a "c." There is no apparent reason for this slight change in orthography.

ordered beaten by Paulina because he had made fun of her grandmother as well as for Tipóia, who is stripped of his authority in the emotional high point of the novel.

Soromenho cleverly lays the foundation for his denouement by establishing the importance of the rifle as authority symbol. The novel begins amidst a violent storm which destroys many of the African huts along the river. The post of Cuango, on a hill, is not so badly affected although the severity of the storm leaves the two white women huddling with one another in fear of their lives. Alves has not yet arrived on the scene and Paulina is the only effective colonial authority in the region. Although she had no official standing within the colonial administration, being merely the mistress of an absent Chief of post, she was white and the Africans who come to report on the effects of the storm wish only to speak to her.

In an episode stereotypically constructed to portray white cruelty and heartlessness, some homeless fishermen come to the post asking for food. There is a granary which they believe to be full of manioc and dried fish. Paulina tells them that she has nothing to give them but she will sell them whatever they need. Of course they have nothing left after this storm but are willing to buy on credit. Paulina will have none of it and sends them away with an order to the capitas: "Corram com essa canalha!" (p. 24). The capitas crack their whips laughing uncontrollably while the fishermen

run for their lives. Nevertheless, the Africans in this novel are quite different from those we found in Terra Morta. The hungry fishermen, on the way back to their devastated village, decide to raid the granary. An African servant who lived next door and whose job it was to protect the granary offers no resistance to their forced entry but carefully studies each and every face as they tie him up. The fishermen find in fact that the granary is empty and "soltaram injúrias contra a 'branca nova,' cipaios, capitas, granjeiro, 'todos os cães dos brancos'" (p. 24). From the description above, the reader notes an enormous change in the tone of the novel as Africans at the service of the white man are called the equivalent of "running dogs of white imperialism." The storm has not only left these men without food or lodging but it has caused one of the sepoys, Chipanda, to lose his rifle. He flees into the jungle with the fishermen for fear of certain reprisals from Paulina for so heinous a crime. Back at the post, Jacinto and the capitas want to go after Chipanda and the fishermen. They ask Paulina for bullets but she refuses; she is afraid to arm the Africans. But the reader now knows that to the white man, the rifle is the ultimate symbol of his power over the black man.

Tipóia's disgrace and final degradation begin with his mission into the jungle to arrest an escaped capita named Oxenda. This capita had been caught literally with his pants down trying to have sex with an African woman who had been

imprisoned because of her husband's failure to pay taxes. Alves catches Oxenda in the act and yells for his arrest but he, too, manages to flee into the jungle. In a scene somewhat analogous to Caluis' attempted arrest of Xá-Mucuari, Tipóia is sent into the jungle to bring the capita back to the administration. After traveling for ten days and passing through more than twenty villages, Tipóia finally arrives in Oxenda's village. There he tells the soba that he has come to arrest the fugitive capita. The chief expresses great surprise and indignation at Oxenda's alleged crime but tells Tipóia that his suspect is not in the village. He says further that Oxenda has fled to the Belgian Congo. Tipóia answers sarcastically, "Todos os malandros fogem para Bula Matari, mas é na bôca dos outros" (p. 116). In spite of the soba's denial, Tipóia is certain that Oxenda has not gone to Bula Matari nor has he gone through any of the other villages because, since he was a capita and therefore an enemy of his people, no one would hesitate to denounce him to the authorities.

Soromenho's use of flashbacks continues in this novel and we learn about Tipóia through his own recollections--Camaxilo during the rubber trade, Xá-Mucuari, the soba Caungula--which all appear before the reader. A new hero is introduced through this flashback, the soba Calendende, who had made the last heroic stand in Lunda ". . . nesse dia ardente de setembro de 1920, em que emudeceram os tambores de guerra e o soldado Tipóia içara a bandeira portuguêsa na fronteira luso-belga"

(p. 119). This battle was no small clash but the last stand of the Africans against final Portuguese domination, as we can see from the following:

> . . . em 1920, uma grande batalha deu-se entre os Tchokues e os portugueses em Kalendende. Os portugueses venceram essa batalha e dominaram toda a Lunda da margem esquerda do Kassai. Em 1920, termina, pois, a independência da Lunda. . . .[38]

Tipóia had been a black soldier in the service of the Portuguese and, like Caluis, went into the colonial administration as a sepoy after the wars of occupation. We learn through this flashback that another element of oppression had entered into the lives of the Africans. After the wars, not only were men conscripted for the diamond mines of the northeast but also for the cocoa plantations on the islands of Sao Tomé and Príncipe. And reference is again made to the substitution of traditional authorities. "Os sobas que ousavam desobedecer eram presos, logo substituídos por outros escolhidos pelo chefe do pôsto, 'amigos dos brancos' . . ." (p. 120). Tipóia's greatest frustration in life appears to have been not being named corporal of the sepoys. He lost out to one Augusto Mulambo, who got the job because he was a good cook. Tipóia felt that he should have gotten the job as a soldado da guerra, rather than Mulambo, who was nothing more than a soldado da cozinha. During this flashback, Tipóia falls asleep, only to be awakened

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[38] História de Angola, Coll. Libertação dos Povos das Colónias, 8 (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1975), p. 154.

by the fugitive Oxenda, who has grabbed his rifle. After running away from the menacing Oxenda, Tipóia sits down to ruminate on what has happened. In an interior monologue, he wonders why he did not go after Oxenda, even when the latter was pointing the rifle down his throat. Suddenly, he remembers that he still has the bullets in his pocket rendering harmless, therefore, the rifle that Oxenda stole from him. Soromenho tells us that only three bullets were ever given to a sepoy, to be used specifically in case of emergencies, because the white man truly feared arming even his black lackeys. Tipóia stops at the first village he comes to and asks for help from its inhabitants. They refuse because he is unarmed and therefore can no longer wield any power over them. When he finally gets back to the post, he invents a story about how twenty men from Oxenda's village attacked him. He swears he beat them off but, unfortunately, his rifle was stolen. Augusto Mulambo, the corporal, blames Alves for the loss of the rifle because he did not allow the sepoys to travel with loaded weapons. The other African police agree with their corporal and promise to support Tipóia before Alves. Oxenda's actions, it seems were bringing shame on all of them. When Tipóia finally presents himself to Alves with his story, he is met by disbelief: "Aqui há gato." Alves promotes on the spot a capita named Santo to the rank of sepoy. He tells Santo to take five other capitas and arrest Oxenda, his entire family and the soba. Alves then orders Tipóia's arrest. The latter

cannot believe what is happening to him as he mumbles: "-Nosso chefe, trinta ano de servico nos brancos, trinta ano, patrão . . ." (p. 135). At that moment, dues ex machina, Oxenda's soba comes walking up to the post with Tipóia's rifle on his shoulder. This chief has also brought Oxenda and his wife to the post as his prisoners. Thus begins the final revenge of the African against their most despised oppressors, the sepoys and their aids.

Before the chief begins to tell his story, Alves calls all the African lackeys of the post together for a lecture in which he says that they are all liars. They lie to the "brancos do Governo," to the sobas and to all the Africans. He tells them that they lie because they are thieves and they steal from sobas while acting allegedly in the name of the colonial administration. It is their actions which lead the Africans to believe that the white man is a thief. Tipóia is nothing more than a "cipaio de merda." He then tells the newly-appointed sepoy, Santo, who was a soldier during the occupation, that he should act as translator for the newly-arrived soba and that the latter should not be afraid to tell the truth. "Para o branco do Govêrno, todos são iguais, todos são filhos do Muene Puto" (p. 136).[39] Through indirect narration, we learn the soba's version of how Tipóia had lost his rifle, as Pedro Santo translates and recounts it for Alves. Alves does

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[39]In a footnote, the author tells us that Muene Puto is the "Senhor, chefe, de Portugal."

not believe a word of it. As far as he is concerned, both the sepoy and the chief are lying, with each of them telling a tale to cover up the truth. However, that is not important. Tipóia had lost his rifle and had even tried to extort the soba's lone pig in Alves' name. With that revelation, Tipóia tries to escape but is quickly recaptured by the capitas. Then Alves pronounces sentence: "Take off his uniform!" Tipoia cannot move and lets them undress him completely. He is resigned to his fate.

> Tinha os olhos fechados e nada ouvia, mas os lábios mexiam-se sem cessar, sem que se lhe ouvisse um sussuro, e repetia mentalmente: "Trinta ano, trinta ano, trinta, trinta, trinta. . . . (p. 139)

In Viragem, Soromenho has created a world where the white merchants, their mulatto children and black mistresses are totally absent. In so doing, he is able to focus much more sharply on the direct clash between Africans, sepoys, capitas and the white oppressor characterized in the person of António Alves. For instance, reference is made to forced labor as an institution which expanded unchecked, before, during and after the wars of occupation. Specifically, the author mentions the cocoa plantations on São Tomé.[40] He also describes in great detail the importance of cotton to the economy of the

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[40]Soromenho makes only passing reference to São Tomé in both Viragem and A Chaga because he had never had any direct contact with forced labor there. For a detailed study of Portuguese atrocities against the peoples of Angola, especially on São Tomé, see: James Duffy, A Question of Slavery (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

colony. We learn, for example, that often Africans sold their cotton on the black market rather than sell to the government-protected monopoly at non-competitive, fixed prices. There is a scene in the novel where Alves orders all the sobas within his post to attend a lecture on cotton. The focal point of this episode revolves on an African who has been arrested for allegedly trying to sell his cotton to white merchants in the town of Quela. He is accused further by Alves of having stolen the cotton. The interrogation of the suspect, who categorically denies the charges, is handled by the sepoy Jacinto but is directed by Alves. As the hapless African continues to protest his innocence, Alves asks rhetorically: "-Então essa bêsta não sabe que o algodão, todo o algodao, só pode ser vendido à Companhia e que o Govêrno é que marca o preço?" (p. 83).[41] Alves orders the man beaten with the palmatória.[42] In a dialogue between Joana and Alves, reminiscent of the discussion between Antunes and Valadas on how to deal with the African, Alves says: "hoje vai ser um grande dia. Nunca mais ninguém terá vontade de roubar algodão.

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[41]The "Companhia" to which Alves refers is the Companhia Geral de Algodões de Angola, known generally by its acronym "Cotonang."

[42]"[A sort of mallet carved from one piece of hard wood, its head being a disc some three inches across and an inch and a half thick, patterned with dots like the five of dice (just like the Portuguese flag!). Under the force of the blow, the flesh is sucked up into these tapering holes, producing intense pain.]" Davidson, In the Eye, p. 158.

Vão saber o que é um chefe de pôsto" (p. 85). The reader is about to witness the most brutal beating in the entire novel. The implied didactic purpose of this punishment is to give the sobas an expanded lesson in colonial economics. However, Alves takes pains to assure Joana that he is not acting out of personal interest, since the Administration's percentage on the sale of all cotton belongs to the absent Nogueira. He adds in a touch of sadism tinged with pseudo-machismo: "Vai começar a festa. . . . -Agora é que a senhora vai ver quem manda . . ." (p. 86). As Alves walks out in front of the administration building, all the chiefs extend their arms in the Portuguese fascist salute (a gesture totally absent in Terra Morta).

Alves now proceeds to give the assembled chiefs their lesson in Angolan economic infrastructure. Speaking through Jacinto, Alves reminds the sobas of their obligations to the brancos do Governo. He tells them that the colonial officials are the "fathers" of the African and then accuses them of being ungrateful for the civilization that the white man has brought to Africa. He reminds them that their lands were worthless before the arrival of the Company which taught them how to cultivate cotton and made them rich. He charges that the Africans, in their continuing ingratitude, have done nothing with their cotton plantations. Consequently, it has become necessary for the Administration to stand over them and make them work their lands. He reminds them, however, that

the land really belongs to the government but it has been given to them gratis. Similarly, the Company has given them cotton seed and their only obligation is to sell cotton to the Company in return. They owed the government nothing. The only responsibility that he has, as a colonial official, is to insure that the cotton is weighed properly, according to official market prices, thereby "defending the interests of the planters." Alves cynically reminds the sobas how lucky they are to have the protection of the Company. Since its establishment, we learn, no Africans from Cuango had been sent either to the plantations of São Tomé or to the diamond mines. (This would appear to contradict Diamang's legal monopoly on African labor in the Lunda province but Soromenho, the novelist, is not bound by such distinctions of fact.)

In response to all this beneficence, the Africans are stealing cotton from the market at the post, Alves charges. They are stealing cotton that belongs to the Company, he argues, since it is the Company which has supplied the seed. Alves knows that the Africans have sold cotton to white merchants in Quela. He explains, however, that because these merchants gave the Africans no seeds, they had no right to buy the Company's cotton. Now, Alves tells them, they are about to witness the beating of a thief so that they may never again steal the Company's cotton. In spite of fifty blows with the palmatória, the alleged thief still loudly protests his innocence. Dissatisfied with that response and perhaps

fearful that he might have falsely accused the suspect, Alves has another sepoy take Jacinto's place with the palmatoria. The reader is told that this man, Cassolo by name, had been demoted from sepoy to capita by Nogueira for excessive cruelty. Alves says: "-Chega-lhe tu, Cassolo. . . . -Esse merda de cipaio nem para bater serve" (p. 95). When even Cassolo tells Alves that the prisoner's hands can no longer be beaten, the latter tells him to beat the man on his back. This excruciating beating goes on for a while longer and is described in horrifying terms by Soromenho.

> A palmatória bateu em cheio na nádega e o preso soltou um urro que fez estremecer os capitas. . . . já outro gople o atingia. . . . O corpo arqueou-se num movimento felino para logo se esticar com . . . violência. . . . (p. 95)

It finally comes to an end, deus ex machina, when Paulina runs out of her house yelling, "Basta! Basta!" Only for her sake will Alves now relent but, first, he must justify what he has done and why. He says:

> -Esta canalha tem andado a abusar e era preciso, à bruta, pôr cobro a isto. Eles não sentem de outra maneira. A gente trata-os bem e êles julgam que somos fracos. É preciso que eles nos temam. O que lhe posso garantir é que depois disto acabam os roubos de algodão. E, . . . nós não estamos aqui a tomar ares. . . . Temos de os civilizar. (p. 96)

It is obvious that in Viragem, Soromenho is further refining his point of view. Immediately after this horrible beating, Paulina accompanies Alves back into his office where he tries, as if nothing at all had happened and perhaps because beating an African has aroused him sexually, to seduce her. This is

probably the most extreme contrast between the world of the white man and the world of the African in the entire novel.

The problem of cotton cultivation was a very real one in the Angolan economy. (It was also another issue Galvão dealt with at length in the National Assembly.) Cotonang, like Diamang, used the colonial administration to ensure its growth and prosperity. Not surprisingly, and in sharp contradistinction to Soromenho's descriptions of cotton growing in Angola, advocates of Portuguese colonialism have nothing but praise for the Company's role.

> Pela sua acção intensa de ensino e propaganda sobre os cultivadores indígenas, pelas novas condições económicas que lhes tem assegurado, pela contribuição que tem prestado à sua organização social, . . . que . . . elevam o nível de vida das populações indígenas, . . . -e especialmente, pela expontaneidade [sic] . . . e inovações tendentes a civilizar e tornar mais económica a cultura do algodoeiro--a "Cotonang" bem merece a distinção que fazemos.[43]

As can be seen, the author has intensified his attacks on Portuguese political and economic colonialism. His very descriptions of the Africans as sertanejos in Viragem, as opposed to the homens nus of Terra Morta, is indicative of his changes in attitude. The inclusion of African sobas and sobetas rising to greet the Alves with the Portuguese fascist salute is a theme which will be amplified in A Chaga. Paulina's African servants as well as the sepoys spend a great deal of

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[43]Galvão and Selvagem, Império, III, p. 361. Italics added.

their time huddling together and mocking the whites behind their backs.

Viragem concentrates much more on the life of the Africans than did Terra Morta. In the latter, the African was part of the human background and was depicted in groups, working either as forced laborers for the Administration or the diamond mines. The only individual characterization of an African still living within the tribal structure and bound by pre-colonial traditions is that of Xá-Mucuari. Not even the chief who turns in the renegade Oxenda and recounts a tale about how Tipóia lost his rifle has a name. He is only an instrument of African revenge against the African oppressor, the detribalized sepoys and their assistants. In contrast, Viragem specifically concentrates on the lives of these detribalized Africans working for the Administration or for Paulina. The three white characters in this novel are depressed, frustrated, isolated and hovering on the abyss of insanity. Paulina's grandmother, Joana, often goes over that abyss. Paulina herself is given to fits of such great depression that she spends hours, if not days, locked up in her room. Alves is continually subject to prostration from the intense and endless heat. Many times he has to retire to his room because he is on the verge of losing consciousness. What is most apparent in Viragem, is the intensification of relationships between and among the characters in the novel. Irrational, sadistic cruelty is more extreme, whether it be that exercised

by Alves over his cadre of lackeys or by the latter over their African brothers. The anger and hatred of the detribalized blacks towards the whites comes to the fore very early in the novel. There is also a strong sexual undercurrent in the novel which manifests itself in two different fashions. In the first instance, Alves has an African woman brought to him but he cannot have sexual relations with her and, in fact, winds up vomiting in his room. This particular episode leads to a discussion between the sepoy Jacinto and Lombriga, Alves' servant, about whether or not this white man is a homosexual. The reader catches a hint of Soromenho's pre-colonial fiction here where Lombriga vehemently denies that he might be a soba's "boy" for "serviço de mulher." Alves is apparently not gay as he spends most of his time thinking of how to seduce Paulina. Indeed, he finally succeeds in that endeavor, if only once. For her part, Paulina remains faithful in her mind to the absent Nogueira but succumbs to Alves' advances out of loneliness and the mistaken belief that Nogueira is dead. She sleeps with Alves once and despises herself afterwards in the remainder of the novel. The aspirante lives from one frustration to another. After failing to seduce Paulina a second time he shouts, "Merda!" Jacinto comes running up and asks if Alves has called him. The latter's response sums up his attitude towards all the black police and everyone else in Cuango: "-O teu nome é merda, idiota? És mesmo merda, tudo isto é merda" (p. 147). Clearly,

whenever Alves' frustrations get the best of him, for whatever reason, he takes it out on the nearest African. In an interior monologue, he describes himself and his life for the reader. He says: "Tôda a minha vida tem sido isto: fracassos e mêdo e raiva. Tudo o que ganho é para perder. Nem um amigo verdadeiro, nem uma mulher, nada!" (p. 154). At this point, Alves is beginning to have a nervous breakdown. Of Africa he says, "Mortos somos todos nos a apodrecer neste buraco do mundo. Cloaca é que é" (p. 154). But he has nowhere to go because, he tells us, Portugal is full of misery and fear; fear of unemployment, fear of hunger, fear of life. Brazil is no better as we learn that the only thing that the Portuguese wind up doing there is lugging pushcarts through the streets. Thinking to escape the misery of life in Portugal, Alves had joined the Army. The Army had brought him to Africa and after his enlistment was up, he joined the colonial administration.

In Viragem, as in Terra Morta, there are also other references to the ghostly space of Portugal and Luanda. In mental monologues, Paulina tells us of other lovers she has had in Portugal. In a dialogue with her grandmother, we learn of the fate of Paulina's brother, a young man who had fought in Spain for the Republicans. These, the old woman calls "heretics." The introduction of the Spanish Civil War theme marks yet another contrast between Viragem and Terra Morta. Nor can we ignore the author's intentions here. Terra

Morta had been written only six years after that war (1945), although it was not published until 1949. Viragem, on the other hand, was published eighteen years afterwards. Yet the author goes out of his way to create a ghostly character to bring that war into this second novel. The reason, this writer believes, is that Soromenho had undergone his own personal viragem, or about face, and was now prepared to confront fascism head-on. He does this by attacking it in this novel and A Chaga, as we shall see. Furthermore, Terra Morta made everyone a victim of colonialism; Viragem attacks the white, fascist power structure for perpetuating it. (What does remain unsolved is the enigma of censorship. With respect to fascism, why does the Salazar government prohibit and eventually ban the sale of Terra Morta, which avoids any references to it whatsoever, while permitting Viragem, which strikes out clearly against it, to be published and sold in any bookstore in the country?)

In bringing up the Spanish Civil War, the author not only gives us a spatial reference, however ghostly, but a temporal reference as well. The war in Spain places the action of this novel in the late 1930's. Feeling free to express his sentiments on this issue, Soromenho relates very well to the ghostly figure of Chico, Paulina's brother. We learn that he was a hard worker who became a mechanic's apprentice at ten years of age. He went to jail, however, for hitting a priest. The only reason that Chico hit the priest, we are

told, was because the latter took sides with a landowner against the workers in a labor dispute. The priest had called him a bolshevik and Chico hit him. We do not know whether Chico died in Spain or was still alive, nor is it important to the plot. He enters the novel to establish an opposition of ideologies and to give the reader a temporal frame of reference. Having made his point after long years of silence on the issue, this is Soromenho's only mention of the Spanish Civil War anywhere in his fiction. Curiously enough, Paulina shows herself to be empathetic to her brother. As far as she is concerned, if he did die in Spain it was because he sacrificed himself for that in which he believed. This attitude does generate reader sympathy for her as we see her more a victim of circumstance than another instrument of oppression.

Paulina also lives in a world of her own, trying to avoid her grandmother, Alves and everyone else whenever possible. She lives in the hope that Nogueira will return and take her at least back to Luanda. She asks daily if there is any mail from Camaxilo or any place else. One day Alves answers that a packet has arrived from the seat of the circumscription informing everyone about the great batuque that is going to be held there in honor of the prospective visit of the Governor-General of Angola. Alves gratuitously comments that Africa is all "one great big batuque." Soromenho will later pick up on the thread of

this visit and use it as the plot of A Chaga.

Nogueira, we find out towards the end of Viragem, has not died in Luanda as everyone had been led to believe. When word of his impending return reaches Alves, the latter simply packs his bags and leaves the post. As Nogueira approaches Cuango, in the company of the mulatto Mauricio, he recognizes the beating of drums as a batuque dos mortos. What he does not know is that the drums are beating to commemorate his death. Maurício expresses surprise at Nogueira's knowledge of African customs. The author uses this incident to show us how divorced from their roots the mulattos have become. Maurício says: "-Pois eu sou mulato e não sei distinguir. Para mim é tudo o mesmo" (p. 173). As the two men continue their journey to Cuango, they begin to discuss women. Through Maurício, we learn that an old sobeta from Caungula had planned to marry his daughter off to a merchant named Manuel Pancário. The girl ran off instead with an aspirante named Vasconcelos and Maurício only found out about the whole story when he stopped in Camaxilo to visit José Calado. The author has thereby tied Viragem to Terra Morta by telling us how Vasconcelos had gotten his African woman; an episode never developed in the first novel. Through the technique of Nogueira's trip back to Cuango, we learn a great deal more about him and his colonial past. We know for instance that he is dying of cancer but he has returned to marry Paulina saying,

> Não quero morrer e deixá-la assim, sem sermos casados, sem sequer ter direito a uma passagem de regresso à Metrópole. . . . Não tenho vintém, sou dos que não sabem vender "cabeças de alcatrão." (p. 175)

We learn that the Portuguese government apparently would only pay for the return trip of a civil servant's family. We also learn that Nogueira was an "honest" man in that he never knew how to sell "tar-heads." But the author does not indicate, one way or the other, whether Nogueira would have if he could. This is not to say, either, that his colonial philosphies were different from his analogues in Terra Morta. In one of Paulina's flashbacks early in the novel, she remembers that Nogueira had told her: "'Se não fôsse a chicote e à palma toada, êstes negros não pagariam os impostos e ninguém quereria trabalhar'" (p. 35). Terra Morta had ended, as we may recall, with a recapitulation of opposing colonial philosophies presented in dialogue between Americo and Antunes. Viragem ends with Nogueira giving the reader a recapitulation of Portugal in Africa through a summary of his own life. He says to Mauricio:

> -E é tudo, . . . ao fim de vinte anos de funcionário, vinte anos de cobrar impostos com a palmatória na mão. Na nossa terra sonhamos com uma África cheia de aventuras e aqui acabamos nisto . . . (p. 175)

The dialogue then returns to the previous discussion about women. Maurício talks about an African woman who is waiting for him at the end of this trip. Nogueira cannot understand why his friend will not get involved with a mulatto woman. Maurício's answer is quite simple: he is not the slightest bit interested

in mulattos. The problem, according to the mulatto Maurício, is that mulatto women have white fathers who have tried to instill "civilization" in them. Maurício can do without this "civilization." He will take an African woman any time because no one cares what happens to her. As the truck finally pulls into Cuango, Maurício asks Nogueira what kind of a man his replacement is. Nogueira responds that he knows only the man's name, Alves, and that he was a corporal of the prison guard in Luanda. (Deftly, Soromenho tells us just what kind of military service Alves did.) Nogueira's last request of Maurício is that if anything should happen to him, Maurício must promise to take Paulina and her grandmother to Calado's house in Camaxilo. We will, indeed, meet these two women again in A Chaga.

As Soromenho becomes more interested in propounding an ideology than in writing literature, his novels begin to decompose as coherent works of art. He is less efficient in his employment of characters in Viragem than he was in Terra Morta. Characters come and go to meet the author's needs of the moment. Among them are Alves' servant Lombriga, the chauffeur Maurício, and the capita, Cassolo. As characterizations are replaced by attitudes for the principal characters, the reader is told even less about the secondary characters. These latter tend to drift like phantoms in and out of the plot. Structurally, the cohesiveness found in Terra Morta, such as it was, has begun to disappear in

Viragem. And we must ask the meaning of the title of the novel itself.

Soromenho had explained how Camaxilo had become a terra morta, a "dead land," at least three times in that novel. In contradistinction, we are given no such clues or direct references to the meaning of the title of this second novel portraying the clash of cultures. Is it the detribalized blacks turning on the whites by ridiculing them? Is it the soba turning on Oxenda and Tipóia to avenge years of black oppression against traditional Africans? Is it Nogueira returning to Cuango after being absent from the entire novel to turn the table on Alves' designs for Paulina? This writer believes that it is none of the above but rather, as has been stated earlier, Soromenho's own about-face in dealing with the problems of Portuguese colonialism in Africa.

It will be remembered that Viragem was written in 1957, after the author had returned from Paris. It was there that the Angolan poets and MPLA leaders Agostinho Neto and Mario Pinto de Andrade had introduced Soromenho to the Présence Africaine movement and Roger Bastide. Aside from the author's point of view in the novel itself, his references to the Spanish Civil War and to the fascist salute that the African sobas were required to give serve only to further support this conclusion. Twelve years after the writing of Terra Morta, Soromenho decided finally that the time had come to take a public stand. The novel implicitly

denounces colonialism and the resultant disintegration of traditional African societies. There are no Joaquim Américos in Viragem because the non-resoultion of that character's dilemma in Terra Morta was totally unsatisfactory. On the other hand, Soromenho had not come to any new solutions to the clash of cultures. He concentrates rather on the isolation of the white man in black Africa. However, the author now knew what his caminho, his path, was to be. With the publication of Viragem, he was now on the record as writing for a cause. That cause was Angolan independence. Soromenho's next, and last, weapon in the upcoming wars of liberation is his polemical tract, A Chaga.

A Chaga[44] is dated "Paris, 1964." It was written during the time when Soromenho told Mário Sacramento: "I'm

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[44]Castro Soromenho, A Chaga, pref. by Ruy Coelho, Coleção Biblioteca do Leitor Moderno, vol. 126 (Rio: Civilização Brasileira, 1970). Although the "bleeding sore" of colonialism is the theme of the "novel," this writer believes that Soromenho had a copy of Galvão's Por Angola at his side while writing. Galvão uses the word chaga twice in denouncing Portugal's policies in Angola. First, he refers to "essa política . . . que fabrica aparências para ocultar realidades, . . . é . . . a chaga incurável das nações" (Por Angola, p. 226; italics added). Then, to call attention to the absolute incompentence of key colonial officials, he says: "Ponhamos imediatamente o dedo na grande chaga . . . (ibid., p. 245; italics added).

At first glance, one might be inclined to view both men's use of the same word as sheer coincidence, were it not for the following. In Por Angola, Galvão describes the organization of a "spontaneous" demonstration for the Governor-General. He writes:

> "Eu fui um dos muitos que assistiram . . . em Luanda a uma manifestação feita . . ., por ocasião do regresso do Sr. Governador-Geral do sul da colónia, para o

not even able to write two lines." The author had been in exile for four years and the African wars of liberation were well underway. He felt the need to play his part in those wars by writing a novel of Africa which would portray white colonial oppression and the destruction of African society in their most extreme forms. If A Chaga is a sore "donde sangram os três mosaicos socio-rácicos: o negro, o mestiço e o branco,"[45] it is also a work which reflects the author's own bitterness at life. And, contrary to the words of one Brazilian critic who said that it was not "uma tendenciosa literatura de propaganda política panfletarista,"[46] that is exactly what this "novel" is. It is a hodge-podge of some fifty characters running aimlessly back and forth trying to tell the reader about all the evils of colonialism. It is almost as if the author had invited all of his archetypes for a reunion in Camaxilo just to repeat their stories "for the

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esplendor da qual se prenderam e arrebanharam sob prisão algumas centenas, senão milhares, de indígenas dos Muceques." (p. 220)

The entire plot of Soromenho's A Chaga centers on the planning and preparation of just such a demonstration. This performance is being staged in honor of the arrival in Camaxilo of the Governor-General of the colony.

[45]Manuel Rui, "Castro Soromenho," rev. of A Chaga by Castro Soromenho, in O Estado de São Paulo, "Suplemento Literario," 7 November 1971, p. 3.

[46]Leo Gilson Ribeiro, "A última denúncia de Castro Soromenho," rev. of A Chaga by Castro Soromenho, in Jornal da Tarde, 24 February 1971, p. 6.

record." There are nine colonial officials, five merchants and assorted mulattos and African domestic servants. There is even a Lunda capita who finally gets to avenge the defeat his people suffered in Homens sem Caminho by being the instrument of punishment for seven Quioco tribesmen. The Chief of post Alberto Sobral and the sepoy Cebola return to this novel from Terra Morta. The aspirante António Alves, Joana and Paulina, the sipaio Jacinto and the chauffeur Maurício walk right out of the pages of Viragem. But the inherent and inevitable crises wrought by the clash of cultures are never resolved. According to R. L. Moloney, all Soromenho does is paint "whites, blacks and mulattoes in their most depraved, rootless, disoriented stage."[47]

In A Chaga, Camaxilo is the lively seat of the circumscription. It is preparing for the first visit of the Governor-General of the colony and the Bishop of the Archdiocese. But that is the only thread that holds this work together. Past time is still portrayed in flashbacks but

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[47]Raymond L. Moloney, "Castro Soromenho's Africa," Studies in Honor of Lloyd A. Kasten (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1975), p. 175. Unfortunately, Moloney has little else to say about A Chaga in this article. To the contrary, the article is an almost verbatim reprint of two papers Molony gave almost fifteen years before: "Portuguese Africa as seen by Castro Soromenho," 15th Annual Foreign Language Conference, Lexington, Kentucky, April 1961 and "Castro Soromenho in the Land of the Lundas," Forty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, Washington, D.C., 30 December 1962. Moloney's analyses seem to reflect a lack of research in the intervening fifteen years and remain as ingenuous as they were simplistic. His interpretation

now dialogues are much more important. There are so many dialogues, however, among so many different characters that it is often impossible to know who is speaking to whom, why and about what. The author is so intent on painting the blackest picture possible that his merchants no longer even make any pretense of recounting the "good old days." Among them, the author's archetype is the old Albino Lourenço. Lourenço wants only to forget the past because he knows that he is going to die "with dirty hands."

By the time Soromenho wrote A Chaga, he had undergone a viragem of his own in terms of understanding the economic roots of colonialism. The majority of his civil servants have the same attitudes that we find in Terra Morta and Viragem but he now sets up an opposition between the merchants José Paulino and Albino Lourenço to expound on the economic and social clashes. Through their recollections and dialogues with one another and with the aspirante Vasco Serra, we find them to have as distinctive personalities as do Alves and Paulina, for example, in Viragem. But these distinctions are still attitudinal rather than anything else. The two merchants have been friends for many years but they have opposite views on almost everything. Dialogues between them are much richer than those in the previous novels. The author uses words such as

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of Viragem as meaning a "skid-in-the-road" is, in this writer's opinion, completely erroneous. His biographical information on Soromenho is equally misleading.

interrompeu, cortou, indagou, esclareceu, and so on rather than the almost invariable disse of Terra Morta and Viragem. Because there are more characters, less fully developed, in this novel than in the preceeding two, the reader's confusion is heightened. Nor was characterization ever one of the author's stronger talents. There is almost no cohesiveness in A Chaga, which makes matters worse. The vignettes which we saw in Terra Morta and Viragem are now much shorter and, in the main, totally unrelated to the almost non-existent plot. Nevertheless, some of the episodes in A Chaga which deal with the mulattos are well-portrayed. By this point in the development of Soromenho's theme, mulattos are completely isolated. Nevertheless, there is a hint of change in the point of view. For the first time we find a mulatto, Severino Santana, who feels he has much more in common with his African mother than with his Portuguese father. In the other novels, we may recall, these characters lived in a racial limbo. Now, where Severino's father is proud that his son is treated like a white man, Severino despises himself and his father for the same reason.

There is no need here to describe the town of Camaxilo; it is the same town in Terra Morta. There are however certain types who stand out. One of them is Gunga, the corporal of the sepoys, who has been nursing a fierce hatred against the merchant Albino Lourenco for over twenty-five years. The latter had stolen both Gunga's woman and his lands during the

wars of occupation. To add insult to injury, no one ever let Gunga forget it. "Gunga ficou preso naquela teia de raiva, sempre em chaga viva pela troça que dele faziam os sipaios, capitas e serviçais dos europeus."[48]

The racial attitudes of the white civil servants are the same as expressed elsewhere but they are intensified for the author's clearly evident political purposes. There are predictions that the Africans will rise up and "piss on the white men." But the Africans are still "niggers for the batuque." Antonio Alves, who had fled in the final pages of Viragem, appears in the beginning of A Chaga and the author fills us in on the true story of why he left Luanda before coming to Cuango. It appears that he had been having an affair with the wife of his commanding officer. A discussion then ensues between him and another aspirante, one Joaquim Mota. Through this dialogue, the author takes us back to the ghostly space of Portugal. We learn that Mota is from Leiria but his life really began in Lisbon when he had his first sexual relations with a thirteen-year-old Portuguese prostitute. Since his arrival in Africa, Mota spends all his time dreaming about that thirteen-year-old. The psychological implications of such dreams are not lost on the reader. In fact, Soromenho uses sexual dissipation as the mirror of white amorality in

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[48]Castro Soromenho, A Chaga, p. 3. Page numbers for all future quotations from this edition will appear in the text.

Africa. Ghostly Brazil returns too as the "Africa of the Portuguese," although Alves repeats his views on Brazil that the author had already brought to the fore in Viragem. This dialogue also presents us with the author's first overt attempt at self-exculpation for his own role as forced-labor recruiter for Diamang. The seed for this thesis of self-absolution was first planted by Alfredo Margarido when he wrote of Soromenho in 1959:

> O isolamento do funcionário administrativo . . . e depois a complementar actividade de angariador permitiram-lhe essa penetração no mundo do homem negro, e . . ., através da memória que era (e é) uma mancha negra, . . . lhe virão o desejo e a necessidade de escrever a obra em que o mundo do Nordeste Angolano, . . . possa viver.[49]

Specifically, mention is made of the Secretary of the circumscription, Bonifácio Pereira, who is selling "tar-heads" to Diamang for five hundred angolares a head. Alves repeats the now-worn theme that it is necessary to force the Africans to work because they are "mandriões e não têm hábitos de trabalho. Só com a enxada e picareta nas mãos é que se pode civilizar essa malta" (p. 11). Mota agrees with him but stresses the fact that Pereira had been selling Africans as if they were cattle. For him, doing a job is one thing but selling men is another. Alves, on the other hand, does not consider picking up a little extra money on the side for "tar-heads" to be

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[49]Alfredo Margarido, "Castro Soromenho, romancista angolano," Estudos Ultramarinos, Revista Trimestral do Instituto Superior de Estudos Ultramarinos (Lisbon), no. 3 (1959), p. 134.

a crime. He even takes issue with Mota's use of the word "selling." He says: "Vender é uma maneira de dizer. Todos nós sabemos que a única maneira dêles trabalharem é com o contrato" (p. 11). Mota will have none of it. Alves reminds him, at that point, that the going price for blacks is a thousand angolares. The author then interjects an incident which he might have known first-hand: Alves says, "O recorde bateu-o um chefe de pôsto nos bundas. . . . Três contos por cabeça" (p. 11). We have already documented in Part One of this study that Soromenho did, in fact, serve for a brief time in the circumscription of Bundas in the district of Moxico. He details the indicent very carefully by telling us that this particular chief of post sold thirty-one matutos for three thousand angolares each. He even tells us that the man's name was Freitas and he was an acting Chief of post. Angola, the author tells us, is full of men like Freitas and Pereira; their only problem is not having enough Africans to sell. There is even a passing reference to authority substitution as Mota mentions that the soba with whom this Freitas had been dealing was not even a Bunda but rather a former mercenary who had been made chief by the Administrator of the circumscription. The author then moves on to a description of the Administrator, Santiago da Silveira and the Secretary, Bonifácio Pereira.

We learn very early in A Chaga that the contagion of Portuguese fascism has spread even into the jungles of Camaxilo.

Bonifácio Pereira is the carrier as we can see in his salute to the Administrator. ". . . Pereira parecia sair do cano das botas altas, ao estender o braço, a mão aberta, naquele jeito de saudar que lhe ficara dos seus tempos da Legião Portuguesa" (p. 16).[50]

This particular episode however is also indicative of the author's loss of control of fictive time. A Chaga is set in the seat of the circumscription in Camaxilo. As we know, the seat of that circumscription was moved to the village of Caungula in mid-1936. As the Portuguese Legion was founded only in 1936, Pereira could not have possibly remembered the fascist salute "from his days in the Portuguese Legion." As a matter of fact, Soromenho falls into the trap of trying to equate fascism with colonialism in this novel. In that attempt, he accidentally undoes much of his case against man's inhumanity to man that he had so painstakingly built up in Terra Morta and Viragem. He continues to describe Pereira's fascist inclinations as follows:

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[50]Oliveira Marques explains the origins of the Legião Portuguesa, Portuguese Legion, as follows:

> "A partir de 1936, o 'Estado Novo' ganhou novos aspectos fascistas. . . . A eclosão da Guerra Civil em Espanha trouxe como resultado o nascimento da milícia do regime, a Legião Portuguesa (1936), organização paramilitar. . . . Os seus objectivos consistiam em participar na 'cruzada anti-bolchevista' e em defender 'o património espiritual da Nação,' bem como o Estado corporativo. A Legião Portuguesa reuniu porventura uma vintena de milhar de membros nos fins da década de Trinta . . ., tanto mais que a filiação tinha o seu quê de obrigatório em certos empregos públicos." (Oliveira Marques, II, 298.)

> Bonifácio Pereira desceu da varanda. . . . Os sipaios apresentaram armas e os capitas levantaram o braço em saudação romana. O Secretário bateu os calcanhares, peito para fora, e estendeu o braço. (p. 18)

Unable to control his own rising crescendo of anti-fascism, Soromenho has someone remark that Pereira has a portrait of Mussolini on his night table. Sobral, still the relatively rational character that he was in Terra Morta, calls Pereira a "clown" for having forced even the capitas to give the fascist salute. He asks almost rhetorically where all this is going to end. Another chief of post, João Deusda, neatly summarizes Pereira's problem: "O gajo é do Hitler" (p. 26). These asides also show, on the other hand, that most of the civil servants held the fascists in contempt. For instance, almost all of his colleagues call Pereira "Pereirinha," using the Portuguese diminutive of derision. Even the Administrator cannot help hiding a smile as Pereira gives him the fascist salute.

Santiago da Silveira and his wife, Inês, are also depicted through small vignettes. Two of these, however, are particularly important. The first symbolically portrays the white man trampling Africa underfoot as we see Inês getting out of a bath "de pé sôbre a pele de leopardo que servia de tapête" (p. 64).[51] The second incident occurs in the Admin-

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[51]Italics added. The symbolism of a Portuguese woman using the most feared and respected of African authority symbols, the leopard's skin, as a bath mat is probably lost on most readers of A Chaga. Within the context of this study, the true meaning of that act is quite clear.

istrator's bedroom and is the narration of attempted sexual intercourse between husband and wife. Silveira tries to excite his wife through foreplay but as he tries to perform cunnilingus on her, she squeezes her thighs tightly around his head forcing him to stop. Inês reminds him that the last time he did that she became so nervous and frustrated that she was incapable of having sexual intercourse afterwards. Silveira angrily accuses her of being frigid, gets dressed and storms out of the room in a fury. In front of the Administration building he finds a capita leading some prisoners with their hands bound very tightly. He screams at the Secretary for not having punished the capita right then and there. In an obvious psychological transference, he accuses Pereira of lacking "virility." This then gives rise to yet another discussion of colonial philosophies.

The Administrator repeats the theme that the only thing the African understands is force because they are "big children and lazy." Nevertheless, the African admires the white man and accepts his punishment when it is just. That admiration lies in the recognition of the white man's superiority and force. The Secretary chimes in that, of course, the Africans do not like to work and therefore the worst punishment for them is being sent to the mines. According to Pereira, the Africans prefer the palmatoria and the whip to a year of forced labor. Further, and for the first time in any of Soromenho's novels of this period, the white man even has an opinion on African family structures. We learn

from Silveira that "-Êsses selvagens sabem lá o que é família. Se êles até vendem os filhos como se fôsse gado. . . . O negro é devasso" (p. 68). Such overt attempts at sarcasm on the author's part serve, however, only to diminish further the literary value of A Chaga. Nevertheless, the theme remains constant and, as in Terra Morta and Viragem, there is one specific episode which highlights the clash of cultures more than any other. In Terra Morta it was the Africans' view of the hospital at Diamang headquarters; in Viragem it was the degradation of the sepoy Tipóia after thirty years of loyal service to the Portuguese and in A Chaga it is a mock battle scene between Lundas and Quiocos who have been gathered from all the posts of the circumscription to greet the Governor-General. It is this scene which is uncannily reminiscent of the one described by Deputy for Angola Henrique Galvão in one of his speeches before the Portuguese National Assembly.[52]

In the same fashion that the advocates of white oppression are caricaturized in A Chaga to serve the author's need for moralization, self-abnegation and articulation of the socio-politico-economic problems intrinsic to colonialism, so are the brave African warriors idealized for the purposes of contrast. The author calls them sertanejos as he did in Viragem (the homens nus are gone and forgotten), and his

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[52] See footnote 44.

portrayal of the rehearsal of the battle scene is the high point of the novel. But even more important than the warriors wearing lions' manes and carrying spears, is the author's description of an exchange between the sepoy Jacinto and the Secretary over an incident that occurs in the rehearsal itself. The two ancient tribal enemies, the Lunda and Quioco, now reduced to performing mock wars for the benefit of the white men, have lost neither their wits nor their wiles. On the contrary, they show themselves to be much smarter than the whites who rule them. After the two opposing "armies" charge one another amidst the beating of drums and almost forgotten war cries, the Secretary orders the rehearsal cut short because it is causing too much noise and raising too much dust. In yet another anachronistic aside, Soromenho even manages to make reference to the Japanese. One of the colonial officials says, in commenting upon the noise made by the Lundas and Quiocos, "Armavam praí um banzé que era o fim do mundo" (p. 42).[53] After the dust clears, three men are seen lying on the ground. The Secretary and two sepoys rush over to treat them. One of them, Domingos, orders the men to get up. One of them opens an eye, looks him squarely in the face and explains that they cannot get up because they are dead! The dialogue then shifts to the Secretary and Domingos as follows:

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[53] Italics added.

> -Mortos!?
> O sipaio Jacinto riu e esclareceu:
> -Êles tá vivo, nosso secretário.
> -Que novidade, rapaz. Que esperto tu és . . .
> -Tá vivo--insistiu o sipaio. -Na guerra tá morto, não levanta não. (p. 43)

The Secretary has absolutely not the slightest inkling of what the warriors are trying to tell him. Jacinto starts talking to them "in Lunda." They tell him of their surprise at the Secretary's attitude. They explain to him that they thought they ought to remain dead so that the white man would be satisfied with the "war." After all, everyone knows that a war without casualties is no war at all. However, they promise to get up once the sepoy has explained to the Secretary why they were lying "dead." Pereira begins to have a vague understanding of what these African warriors have been trying to convey but it quickly disappears as he remarks that the rehearsal is over. For Pereira, "Êsses burros é que não perceberam nada." Jacinto responds obsequiously: "-É nosso secretário, é. Os home tá servage" (p. 43). Nor is this the only part of this episode where sarcastic humor is used by Soromenho to intensify the clash of cultures. Before the rehearsal began, the Administrator had ordered his chiefs of post to make sure that their Africans took baths because the smell of their sweaty bodies was unbearable. Once again, Sobral, still a partial spokesman for Soromenho, enters as the rational civil servant and remarks to a colleague: "Acho muito bem--. . . .--E ainda seria melhor se o administrador desse uma loçao para depois da banhoca . . ." (p. 39).

In A Chaga as has been mentioned earlier, the author presents his points of view primarily through dialogues between the merchants Lourenço and Paulino while relegating the aspirantes Serra and Sales to summarizing the issues for the reader. One of the themes that is stressed in this work is the merchants' own bitterness towards the colonial administration. One of them, Cardoso, in recounting the history of the wars of occupation to Serra, remarks that it had been the merchants, as pombeiros, who led the military columns into the interior of Angola. In return for this service to the fatherland, they were permitted to languish and rot in the jungle. As far as these merchants are concerned, the colonial officials are corrupt and worthless and live off the labors of the colonists. They complain bitterly that the government has no money for any of the projects which they deem necessary; especially building schools for their children. But even these merchants, when confronted with the question of returning to Portugal, would never even consider the idea. The poverty and hunger is so bad back home, we are told again, especially in the Alentejo, that even decayed and decadent Africa is better than Portugal.

In a dialogue of presentation, Lourenço tells the reader about his own past in Africa. As the story unfolds, Soromenho gives the reader a reference to real time. As he begins to recount his story to Serra, we learn that Lourenço is over seventy years old. He had been a typical

pombeiro, trading from the Zambezi River in the south all the way up to Luba in the north. He had even passed through Catongo, which gives his listener an opportunity to ask, "Isn't that where Silva Porto used to go?" Lourenço answers affirmatively and gives us an exact time reference when he says that he got to that town about three or four years after Silva Porto had committed suicide.[54] The whole story of the slave trade is repeated and even Livingstone is brought into the picture. But Soromenho goes out of his way to remind the reader, through Lourenço's words, that Silva Porto had been the only white man who did not participate in the "ebony business." And in what appears at first glance to be the author's own renunciation of all of his historical writings, Lourenco says:

> E ria-me comigo próprio com as histórias dêstes sertanejos manhosos, que procuraram justificar tudo o que fizeram, e muitas vezes o que não fizeram, com atos de heroísmo na descoberta destas terras, fazendo sempre do negro um selvagem e da África um mistério . . . . (p. 53)

The old Lourenço is presented as a wise man who has learned the evil of his ways and is now repentant. Paulino recounts to Serra how Lourenço attempted to protect a slave from being beaten by his master. Although this writer does not know

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[54]António da Silva Pôrto, the most famous of the white sertanejos, committed suicide in Angola on 1 April 1890 in protest against the Portuguese military occupation of Bie. Wrapping himself in a Portuguese flag, he blew himself up with gunpowder. A fictional discussion of his fate continues on pp. 116-117 of A Chaga. See also: Castro Soromenho, A Aventura e A Morte no Sertão, for the author's fictional rendition of Silva Pôrto's life.

whether Soromenho had ever read Cervantes, what can be stated with certainty is that he had read Eça de Queiroz. Lourenço mentions having all of Eça's works with him during his long years in Africa. Furthermore as Lourenço becomes Soromenho's expiatory alter-ego, we see the emergence of a character akin to the Abade Ferrão from the third and final version of O Crime do Padre Amaro. Without the existence of a Lourenço in A Chaga, there could be no hope at all for the future of Africa. And in one last return to one of the author's key themes of his pre-colonial fiction, we find out the author's interpreation of this work's title. Serra is explaining the caçada a fogo to the newly-arrived Sales. He describes how these guided brush fires burned the ground and twisted the trees but could never destroy the roots. These roots become the metaphor for the black man in Africa,

> esse negro que anda por ai com ar de medo é como a raiz da terra queimada. . . . Para a sua vida o colonialismo é como uma queimada, uma chaga, mas êles são as raizes vivas dentro dessa queimada. (p. 151)

And, in one parting shot at Portuguese fascism, Castro Soromenho compares the debasement of the black by colonialism to the degradation of the Portuguese by fascism! "O colonialismo aviltou o negro. O fascismo fêz o mesmo ao português" (p. 151). By this point in the novel it is obvious that the author has lost complete control of his material. His rational understanding of colonialism is hopelessly confused with anti-fascist ideologies. This contention is easily justified when

we hear Soromenho telling us, through Serra, that whereas colonialism under the Republic was a form of "paternalism, a milder brand of humiliation," colonialism under the fascist regime of Salazar "widened even further the abyss between whites and blacks." This attitude probably reflects a very weak attempt by Soromenho to defend his, and his father's, colonial careers in Angola. As we have already seen, however, the Portuguese colonial administration under the Republic was as bad, if not worse, than that of the Salazar dictatorship. Because of family ties and his own Weltanschauung, Castro Soromenho was never quite able to understand that fact.

A Chaga, having bled for one hundred and eighty-nine pages, ends on the usual themes of isolation, despair and death. The Governor-General does not visit Camaxilo, the old trader Lourenço dies without ever having made peace with himself and Gunga, who had spent his whole life just waiting for the latter to die, has nothing left to live for. The object of his hatred for twenty-five years is dead. "Gunga levantou-se, . . . e meteu à estrada, . . . de costas voltadas ao vale e à terra perdida" (p. 189).

CONCLUSIONS

Castro Soromenho's fiction is a synthesis of his total vision of Africa. That vision saw Africa divided in three parts: tribal Africa before the arrival of the white man; Africa during the 19th century European explorations; and Africa under European domination.

In the beginning there was tribal Africa, with its own structures, traditions and institutions. The author's pre-colonial fiction brings these elements to life. In studying them, Soromenho readily concluded that they sprang from peoples whose realities were self-evident. His objective, in this period, was to bring these realities of Africa before the white man to his European readership. His motivating force, from beginning to end, was his love of Africa and its peoples. He succeeded in his task, as had no other Portuguese writer before him. More importantly, he succeeded despite the limitations of his own cultural and personal heritage. Recognizing the difficulties inherent in psychological analyses of alien cultures, even if fictive, Soromenho concentrated instead on objective descriptions of the drama of African life. By establishing the humanity of the African, by portraying him as a thinking, feeling being, Soromenho suspended

his readers' disbelief. He brought further credibility to his fiction by concentrating on the universal in Africa: love and hate, war and peace, freedom and slavery and life and death.

Simultaneously, the tides of history were moving within Soromenho. He was also an active participant in the external events of his world. And it was the interaction of these two currents which led him, inexorably, to expand his vision of Africa. After laying a firm fictive foundation of Africa before Portugal, he began constructing his bridge to Portugal in Africa. That link was his fictionalized histories of the 19th century Portuguese explorations of Southern Africa. In those works, Soromenho rewrote the history of Portugal's attempts to get from Angola to Mozambique and vice versa.

He began with Silva Pôrto's efforts to get to Mozambique in A Aventura e a Morte no Sertão.[1] Undaunted by Silva Pôrto's failure, Soromenho went next to Mozambique to try his luck with Lacerda e Almeida's expedition. This group was searching for "the route to Angola," which the author detailed in A Expedição ao País do Oiro Branco.[2] Because Soromenho knew little of Mozambique, his principal source for this work was

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[1]Castro Soromenho, A Aventura e a Morte no Sertão, Colecção Gládio, 11 (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1943.)

[2]Idem, A Expedição ao País do Oiro Branco, Colecção As Grandes Epopeias, XV (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica Editora, 1944).

Lacerda e Almeida's own chronicle, Travessia da África,[3] from which the author quoted liberally. In fact, having had no personal experience in Mozambique (other than having been born there), Soromenho had almost nothing to say about the history, customs, traditions, etc., of its peoples. There is not even a reference to Vasco da Gama's contact with Mozambique after he rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. Lastly, because Lacerda e Almeida died in the middle of his trans-African voyage (1799), Soromenho returned to Angola to search for his success story. This he found in the diaries of Serpa Pinto, Hermenegildo Capelo and Roberto Ivens. With these men, Soromenho finally crossed Africa from coast to coast in his A Maravilhosa Viagem dos Exploradores Portugueses.[4]

A Maravilhosa Viagem begins with the arrival of Diogo Cão in Angola in 1482. It traces the history of Portuguese contacts there from the search for Prester John and relations with the Manicongo (the King of the Congo with whom the Portuguese first established diplomatic relations) through the various travels of Serpa Pinto, Capelo and Ivens in the late 1870's.

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[3]Like Chatelain's Contos Populares de Angola, the first edition of those chronicles was published in English. The editor was the British explorer Richard F. Burton. See David M. Abshire, "From the Scramble for Africa to the 'New State,'" Portuguese Africa, ed. Abshire and Samuels, p. 60.

[4]Castro Soromenho, A Maravilhosa Viagem, 3rd edition (Lisbon: Editora Arcádia, 1961). Page numbers of quotations from this edition will appear in the text.

By now Soromenho's world was no longer Lunda or even greater Angola but rather all of Southern Africa. His theme was no longer the peoples of Lunda but every single African tribe with whom the white man came in contact. Soromenho detailed the history, customs and traditions of such disparate peoples as Bochimanes, Vátuas, Cuanhamas, Maravés, Macolólos and so on. He also expanded on peoples already quite familiar to us such as the Bângalas, Lundas and Quiocos. He had carefully read the diaries and reports of the explorers and, as we have mentioned elsewhere, was determined to bring them to life in vivid, exciting prose. But even these works were not his main concern. His focus continued to be Africa and the African. The "marvelous voyage" is not really that of the particular explorers of the late 19th century. It is, rather, the four hundred-year-old history of Portugal's relations with Africa.

Soromenho used the explorers' diaries merely as threads on which to hang all his accumulated knowledge of Africa, its lands and its native peoples. Many a chapter begins with one or another explorer setting out for this place or that. But whenever they come upon a new tribe, Soromenho immediately begins to recount the history and traditions of that people. The explorers disappear completely from the scenario as the author goes to the heart of his material. They have served merely as vehicles which permit the author to present his expanded vision of Africa.

For Castro Soromenho, the history of Africa is the history of slavery. We may recall that as early as 1936, slavery had been a principal theme in his Imagens da Cidade de São Paulo de Luanda. In A Maravilhosa Viagem, that theme is elaborated in such detail that it becomes synonymous with Africa itself. In this regard, the work is almost schizoid. On the one hand the Portuguese explorers were heroes, penetrating the African bush against great odds and with very little help from Lisbon. (The author goes to great pains to show how Livingstone and Stanley, supported by the comércio de Liverpool e Manchester, had a much easier task to perform.[5]) On the other hand, these same explorers had also come to substitute black slavery for white slavery without bringing any noticeable increase in the African's standards of living.

In this work, Soromenho draws an historical map of Africa rather than a fictional one (as he had in his pre-colonial literature) but uses all his talents as a writer to make that map come to life. It is in fact a masterpiece of vivid description. The great commercial center of Benguela,

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[5]England's industrial revolution was well underway when Livingstone made his first voyages to Africa "under the pretext of spreading the gospel," in Soromenho's words. British commercial interests were greatly in need of new sources of raw materials, especially cotton. The need for that particular commodity became even more acute with the outbreak of the Civil War in the United States and the subsequent blockade of Confederate ports by the Union Navy. That blockade appears to have been a very important factor in stimulating England's interest in Africa, especially Portuguese Africa.

for example, is brought to life far better in this work than in any of the explorers' diaries. "É do alto das montanhas, nos horizontes longínquos, que vem o Sol e descem as caravanas dos negros do sertão . . ." (p. 48). The author also tells us in this same paragraph that Benguela, in the 18th and 19th centuries had been "a small Babel." He portrays each and every item of trade--cotton, rubber, ivory, wax, etc.--as parts and parcels of Africa itself. Most importantly, he continues his technique of humanizing the African for his readers; that African who was little more than another element of natural background to the Portuguese explorers.

Withal, Soromenho is ambivalent. On the one hand he seems to recognize the historical inevitability of at least temporary European hegemony over Africa. On the other, he has great respect for the dignity and independence of the African. These ambiguities are difficult to resolve because Soromenho could not escape Africa's white heritage of which he was a part. Yet this is all to his credit as that heritage today is still a part of black Africa.

In spite of race and heritage, Castro Soromenho was an African and his love for his land and its peoples is reflected in A Maravilhosa Viagem as much as in all his other works. His admiration for his African brothers shows itself in his discussion of a particular tribe which survives by raiding others. He says: "apesar de ladrões, respeitam as

dívidas, como todo o Banto. 'A dívida e sagrada . . .'" (p. 63). The contrast between Africans and whites on this issue had already been drawn, as we have seen, in Terra Morta. The author goes on to explain a tribal custom where the women give themselves to men other than their husbands to help support the family. "A mulher que não tem contraído algum adultério e mal vista do marido, que não aumenta o seu haver por esse meio" (p. 64). This theme, too, had been treated elsewhere, in Homens sem Caminho. However, in A Maravilhosa Viagem, the author presents this African custom as merely being different from those of the Europeans. Soromenho continued, thusly, to make the case that the universals of mankind as they related to Africa, had to be understood in African terms.

As Soromenho's vision of Africa widened, a subtle shift in his point of view began to emerge. Whereas in his pre-colonial fiction he was a white man writing about black Africa, in A Maravilhosa Viagem his words are those of an African writing about his own land and its peoples. This is not difficult to understand in light of the fact that "a Africa não serviu a Castro Soromenho de mero pretexto, pois que, antes que ela se lhe apresentasse como motivo, já fora o seu próprio berço."[6] And the first hints of change come as

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[6]Taborda de Vasconcelos, "Um pioneiro da literatura portuguesa," Estudos Ultramarinos, no. 3 (Lisbon), 1959, p. 287.

far back as 1945 in the author's Dedicatória[7] to his "black mammy" in Calenga.

Finally, the author's total vision of Africa is completed in his novels of the clash of cultures. By beginning in black Africa, then moving through white Africa, Soromenho brings us coherently to his ultimate goal of "destroying the legend created by the Portuguese colonizers; that Europeans brought peace, order and a higher standard of living to Africa."[8]

In terms of the evolution of Soromenho's total vision of Africa, his goals did not crystallize until he wrote Terra Morta, in 1945. As we know, he was not able to publish this novel until 1949. By that time, he was a deeply embittered man. The following "interview," which he himself prepared for publication in Brazil, shows us his exact state of mind as well as the state of Portuguese letters in 1950. He prefaces it with a brief summary of the coup d'etat of 28 May 1926 and the subsequent coming of the dictatorship. Whatever the causes of that rebellion, by 1933 Salazar had institution-

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[7]Cited in Part One of this study.

[8]Elena A. Riáusova, Portugaloiazychnye Literatury Afriki (Moscow: Izdatelstvo "Nauka" Glaunaya Redaktsia Vostochnoi Literatury, 1972), p. 184. The portions of this Russian study of Afro-Portuguese literature pertaining to Castro Soromenho were translated for this writer by Professor Filia Holtzman. Professor Holtzman is the former chairperson of the Department of Russian, Hunter College of The City University of New York.

alized the corporative Estado Novo and fascism followed quickly on its heels. In Brazil in 1949, Soromenho wrote just what this meant for him personally and for contemporary Portuguese literature.

> Um dos sectores da vida nacional duramente atingido por essa revolução foi o dos escritores. Vai para dez anos que sou escritor e, dia após dia, tenho assistido, com revolta e amargura, ao sacrifício imposto pelos poderes públicos às tarefas literárias. . . . Toda uma geração de escritores com as suas obras sujeitas à sanção de um militar, a uma incompreensão dos problemas literários e artísticos. Livros mutilados da maneira mais absurda, outros proibidos, outros apreendidos, e sempre, sempre, ao lado da nossa mesa de trabalho a sombra do censor desviado dos quarteis para deliberar sôbre o destino da literatura. . . .
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> Foi sobretudo a partir de 1932 que o Estado Novo se voltou abertamente para a literatura e tentou desviar o seu curso. É a partir dessa data que, silenciosa e sistemàticamente, se vem fazendo a dilapidação da literatura portuguesa. A acção de sonegar ao património cultural do país as obras literárias, as que se escreveram e sobretudo as que não puderam escrever, é só uma parte do grande processo que está um curso. Outro, de uma gravidade enorme, é o de vedar ao povo português o acesso às fontes da Cultura, com a proibição da entrada no país de revistas e livros estrangeiros. Isto sem falar nas limitações impostas a nossa editorial progressiva, sujeita a nada publicar sem censura prévia e sob ameaças de encerramento e multas. Ao cabo de 22 anos de salazarismo, o país não tem jornais literários nem vistas de cultura, nada por onde se possa aferir do pensamento português. . . . Raro é o escritor que não tenha obras mutiladas pela Censura. E não colhe o argumento dos motivos políticos. Basta sejam realistas, foquem as contradições da realidade social, ou simplesmente abordem problemas religiosos e outros apolíticos considerados tabú, embora sejam do dia-a-dia da vida portuguesa, para que o lapis da censura, essa baioneta apontada à inteligência, mutile. . . .[9]

Among other Portuguese authors whose works had been censored or prohibited, Soromenho cites Ferreira de Castro, Aquilino

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[9]A copy was made available to this writer by Mercedes de Castro Soromenho.

Ribeiro, Miquel Torga, Maria Archer, José Bacelar and "my novel Terra Morta, the first of a cycle about the lives of the whites, blacks and mulattos of . . . Africa." We also learn in this interview that Soromenho's novel Homens sem Caminho had been "confiscated" by the censors. The final version was printed only after significant deletions. By that time however Soromenho had finished building the foundations from which he was to launch the trilogy of his indictment of the white man in Africa. A final note on that trilogy and on a specific criticism of Soromenho is warranted before turning to our summary.

Terra Morta, Viragem and A Chaga have been discussed at length in Part Three of this study. We have detailed the author's painfully brutal portrayals of the clash of cultures in colonial Africa. Although Soromenho is a white man, he is the only white in all of Portuguese literature to depict the simultaneous degradation and destruction of the colonizers and the colonized alike. And in fact, in Viragem and A Chaga, he takes the side of the oppressed African unabashedly. That thematic about-face (viragem) of his own had already begun, as we know, in Calenga and A Maravilhosa Viagem. In spite of that fact, Russell Hamilton, an historian of Afro-Portuguese literature, calls Soromenho an "enlightened" colonial writer in his article, "Black from White and White on Black."[10] Hamilton's views of Soromenho are badly distorted

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[10]Hamilton had first used this term in his voluminous and exceedingly thorough study of Afro-Portuguese literature,

by what appears to this writer to be a form of literary black racism. The very title of Hamilton's article is indicative of a totally irrational, not to mention anti-intellectual, relationship between color and literature. It is impossible for this writer to understand how that critic could call the author an "enlightened colonialist" in view of Soromenho's complete and unequivocal denunciation of white colonialism in Angola. In fact, the only thing that Soromenho could do after writing his trilogy, in order to be honest intellectually and philosophically with himself, would be to involve himself directly in the African liberation movements. And that, as we know, is exactly what he did. It is truly lamentable that Hamilton could not be so honest with Soromenho as Soromenho was with himself.

On the other hand, it is the author's own ambivalence which leads to such conclusions. We cannot forget that he

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Voices from an Empire. (See Russell G. Hamilton, Voices from an Empire: A History of Afro-Protuguese Literature [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975], p. 40.) "Enlightened," however, is not Hamilton's only mistake. On the same page where he calls Soromenho an "enlightened colonial writer," he places Homens sem Caminho with the author's later novels dealing "with the contradictions of Lisbon's colonial policy." If Hamilton had ever read that novel, he would have known that it deals with war between the Lundas and Quiocos. There is not even the most remote reference to anything European, much less "Lisbon's colonial policy." But he goes on to make an even wilder assertion. To wit: "Soromenho took advantage of his access to local populations to learn to speak Kioko. . . ." As we know, Soromenho could not even speak French, much less Quioco. Furthermore, he was never without his língua on his forays into the bush to gather African legends and folk-tales. For further misinformation on Castro Soromenho, see Russell G. Hamilton, "Black from White and White on Black: Contradictions of Language in the Angolan Novel," I & L: Ideologies and Literature, I, 1(December 1976 - January 1977)25-58.

was long shunned by the Neo-Realists for almost the same reasons. But they, like Hamilton, had an axe to grind and it had nothing to do with an objective overview of Soromenho's works of fiction. In fact, it was because Soromenho was an African writing about Africa that he could never be considered a Neo-Realist. Portuguese Neo-Realism, when it finally did get around to looking at Terra Morta, praised that novel not for its "message" but because of its implicit attack on the Salazar regime. The true meaning of Terra Morta, with its universal implications for all men regardless of their literary affiliations or the color of their skin, lies far outside the narrow parameters of those cited above. And it goes without saying that Soromenho's insights go far beyond those ever held by an "enlightened colonial writer."

As we come to understand Soromenho's total vision of Africa, his ambivalence drops by the wayside. The only dichotomy in the man and his works is that he was a Portuguese and an African. Because of that fact and in spite of it, he brought those two worlds together through his fiction. And it is his total vision of Africa which makes him not only the foremost Portuguese writer of African themes but also one of the founders of modern Angolan literature.

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