Song of Exile
Enslen, Joshua Alma

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Chapter Two

“Adeus Coimbra inimiga”
Precedents and Contexts

In Machado de Assis’s short story “O espelho,” written in the late 1800s, the protagonist Jacobina advances a theory in which every human has two souls, one facing inward and the other outward. One night, in the presence of four or five others, Jacobina is challenged to present his theory in the context of the metaphysical discussions of the evening. Although he had until that moment remained “calado, pensando, cochilando,” he takes over the conversation with his radical theory, “Em primeiro lugar, não há uma só alma, há duas.” “Duas?” the others inquire. “Nada menos de duas almas. Cada criatura humana traz duas almas consigo: uma que olha de dentro para fora, outra que olha de fora para dentro” (155). In Jacobina’s theory, the exterior soul, as he termed it, influences the interior soul, shaping it through its gaze. This process “que Jacobina não hesita em localizar no olhar, torna-nos permanentemente sujeitos e objetos de significação atribuída” (Villaça 101–02). Jacobina explains further, “Quem perde uma das metades, perde naturalmente metade da existência; e casos há, não raros, em que a perda da alma exterior implica a da existência inteira” (Machado de Assis, “O espelho” 155).

Jacobina, a military officer, then recounts how overwhelming loneliness and solitude once put his whole existence in jeopardy. Left alone on a farm in the countryside, his exterior soul, the one defined by the social aspects of his identity (objects, relationships, etc.), began to fade. In desperation, he sought a solution to his crisis and eventually found one: his military uniform. “Cada dia, a uma certa hora, vestia-me de alferes, e sentava-me diante do espelho, lendo, olhando, meditando; no fim de duas, três horas, despia-me outra vez. Com este régimen pude atravessar mais seis dias de solidão, sem os sentir” (Machado de Assis, “O
espelho” 162). This act, reminding him of his respected role in society, breathed new life into his exterior soul, making it possible for him to survive the ordeal.

In the words of María Jesús Martínez Alfaro in “Intertextuality: Origins and Development of the Concept,” texts do not function “as self-contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures” (268). Broadly speaking, every text is an intermittent articulation of ideas formed within a complex web of (con)texts stemming back to prehistoric drawings and early human mark making. Thus, adapting Jacobina’s theory, words also have two souls and the basic meaning of any given text, like Jacobina’s interior soul, is dependent upon and constantly shaped and re-shaped by all those other word-texts that exist alongside it, by those that came before it, by those that will come after and by its own repetitions through time.

In the 1960s, when Julia Kristeva introduced the term intertextuality for the first time, she was in many ways putting a new spin on an old idea, but with the pronounced possibility of new analytical rigor. Turning it into a spatialized process, intertextuality represents a post-modern constructivist approach to understanding the production of meaning. In “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” Kristeva’s original hypothesis on intertextuality visualizes a matrix in which a series of discrete texts or words—the latter defined as the “minimal textual unit”—enter into dialogue with one another through their temporal and spatial relations: “The word as minimal textual unit thus turns out to occupy the status of mediator, linking structural models to cultural (historical) environment, as well as that of regulator, controlling mutations from diachrony to synchrony” (37).

Defining the specific status of the word as signifier for different modes of (literary) intellection within different genres or texts put poetic analysis at the sensitive centre of contemporary “human” sciences—at the intersection of language (the true practice of thought) with space (the volume within which signification, through a joining of differences, articulates itself). To investigate the status of the word is to study its articulations (as semic complex) with other words in the sentence, and then to look for the same functions or relationships at the articulator level of larger sequences. Confronted with this spatial conception of language’s poetic operation, we must first define the
As originally conceived in the text above, intertextuality was at once already a visual mode of thought. Despite her initial rendering in purely narrative form, one must only briefly consider the language Kristeva employs in order to appreciate intertextuality’s inherent visuality as a Cartesian plane. She describes “the word’s status” “horizontally” and “vertically.” She writes of the movement of the word within these “axes” as it is transmitted linearly from “writing subject” to “addressee,” the addressee (or reader) possessing the lens of interpretation. Kristeva then conceives of a “semic complex” as a frame of reference for capturing a word’s historical and cultural evolution within and across these texts and contexts, a word’s “synchrony” and its “diachrony.” She also uses such visual terms as “dialogical space,” “dimensions,” “spatial,” and “spatialized,” when describing the interactions between author, text, and reader.

The two axes of Kristeva’s intertextual machine—the horizontal and vertical—represent the two dimensions of a Cartesian plane, or the “coordinates of dialogue,” as she calls it. The horizontal line is the space of the text, as it is transmitted from writing subject to addressee. The vertical column is the position of the text ordered chronologically within a plane hypothetically containing all texts: every text a line, every line in time. Still, Kristeva writes not just of these two axes, but also of dimensions. The word functions in three dimensions in the process of transmission: “subject—addressee—context,” but these three “dimensions” are of a single hypothetical reading. Thus, there are many more than just three dimensions to intertextuality. In fact, and this is important, if we were to count each and every reading as a dimension, then they are limitless. In this “semic complex,” it falls to the reader to give meaning to the text, who positions each word within her own dynamic textual matrix. With each subsequent reading, she recon-
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figures her Cartesian plane of intertextuality, re-inventing every time a new set of dialogical truths to be negotiated with those of other readings, whether dramatically or only slightly different than the previous set. Although a bit overwhelming in theory, it is this limitlessness that makes dialogue possible, since with every reading new perspectives may emerge. As every reading (and writing) re-configures each reader’s Cartesian plane of dialogue, our collective multiplicitous perspectives dangle in mobile-like confusion, tinkling, and clanging against one another when in conversation.

In contrast to formalism, intertextuality represents a post-structural approach to the production of meaning, considering the whole of textual production as one grand novelistic enterprise (Bakhtin). Like the theory of the two souls, this is a bold concept which attempts to describe the spatial relations between all texts ever written, articulating each as part of what one might call a grand ubertext, a text that simultaneously contains all other texts. But, even as its totality diffuses any original, such as “Canção do exílio,” of its force and power, the implications of intertextuality lay the foundations for the networking of the poem with others. In this light, “Canção do exílio” emerges as a provisional text, or a strategic urtext, from which to pinpoint a non-essential origin for the elaboration of a body of texts for analysis. A term partially inspired by Gayatri Spivak’s notion of “strategic essentialism,” a strategic urtext represents a discrete text in which can be located, in chronological terms, the earliest occurrence of a specific pattern of words. In the case of “Canção do exílio,” this pattern of words and phrases, borrowed and transformed to varying degrees in subsequent texts, can be used to identify the contours of a vast network of influence that carries at its core questions of Brazilian history, identity, and culture.

Still, while this provisional positioning places “Canção do exílio” as an original, a first of many, intertextuality also reminds us that nothing is created ex nihilo, and that “Canção do exílio” carries the marks of other texts. Thus, despite its singular influence, “Canção do exílio” is not unique, and an account of the literary (con)texts from which it emerged will help to illuminate this fact. Anterior texts from writers in both Portugal and Brazil gaze upon and course through the interior soul of “Canção do exílio,” triangulating and shaping its historical influence. Heavily indebted to the international discourses of Romanticism, “Canção do exílio”
is a late articulation of nationalistic tendencies in Brazil under development since the arrival of Cabral and with precedents in Portugal. In fact, all the prominent features of “Canção do exílio” in both form and content have their roots in earlier texts. These features are surmised in the glorification of Brazil’s flora and fauna over that of other nations, especially Portugal. This glorification, bound to a Eurocentric gaze of the colonial other, communicates the “ripeness” of Brazil for colonization, re-writing the territory’s history as a European imposition while romanticizing its pre-colonial past. The poem accomplishes this re-writing by drawing upon traditional Portuguese forms and tropes, especially the redondilha maior, and saudade, a characteristic longing for home. These features find ample representation in both Portuguese and Brazilian literature as examples from both countries abound.

Gonçalves Dias’s poem famously begins “Minha terra tem palmeiras,” and Alfredo Bosi, in Colony, Cult, Culture, provides an etymological explanation for the metonymic relationship of “terra” with the idea of nation. “The words culture, cult and colonization all derive from the Latin verb colo, whose past participle is cultus and whose future participle is culturus. In the language of Rome, colo signified I live on, I occupy the land, and by extension, I work on and cultivate the land” (27). As expressed in their shared etymological root, traditional cultures arose from the relationship of a people with their land, or “colo,” consolidated through “cultus” or religious rites. Colonization, of course, entails the imposition of one people’s culture over another along with the occupation of its land. As Bosi reminds us, “colonization is a totalizing process whose dynamic forces can always be found at the level of colo: in the occupation of new land, the exploitation of its resources, and the submission of its inhabitants” (Colony 31).

The first three words of “Canção do exílio,” “Minha terra tem,” grounded in the discourses of colonization, exploration, and the acquisition of land and power, configure prominently in the dialectics of Brazil’s post-colonial identity. In fact, “terra” is the most frequently repeated noun in all 500 interrelated texts under analysis in this book. Appearing 1245 times in 407 of the 500 texts, “terra” is three times more frequent than the second most frequent noun, “sabia.” A pivotal component of the most common three-word phrase in the 500 texts, “terra” typically appears after the word “minha” (repeated a comparable 1205 times) and before
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the verb “tem” (1486 times). These three words forming the opening line of “Canção do exílio” are part of a centuries-old dialectic of identity politics. The phrase’s syntactical structure, placing the emphasis on “land,” evokes subsequent descriptions of what it possesses or “has” and establishes the role of all nouns in the original as signifiers for what the land or, by extension, the nation is.

The absence of adjectives in “Canção do exílio,” an attribute first noted by Aurélio Buarque de Holanda, further emphasizes the role of nouns as the primary descriptive variables (33). While Brazil holds more “estrelas,” more “flores,” and more “amores,” the poem’s nouns describe the general nature of the Brazilian land, not from an Indianist perspective (as one might expect in the period), a voice entirely absent from the poem, but from a colonial one through the differentiation of Brazil by degrees from Portugal. Portugal simply does not possess the same quantities of beauty and charm as Brazil and, reproducing the imperial logic of colonialism, more—whether it be land and power or, in this case, flowers and loves—is always better. Portugal is therefore rendered inferior. José Guilherme Merquior, in his essay “O poema do lá,” in dialogue with Holanda, writes: “O Brasil, na ‘Canção do exílio’, não é isso nem aquilo; o Brasil é sempre mais” (qtd. in Castro Rocha, O exílio 130). João Cezar de Castro Rocha, expanding on Merquior’s analysis, points out the patent circularity of the logic of nationalism inherent in “Canção do exílio” where Brazil is articulated as “more” only because it is the poet’s homeland: “Trata-se somente da operação mental do poeta que compara os elementos comuns à pátria e aos demais lugares, julgando-os superiores sempre que podem encontrá-los ‘lá’, isto é, em sua terra, pois ele se encontra temporariamente desterrado” (O exílio 129).

Not surprisingly, in Portuguese literature, the concept of nation is also so connected to the word “terra” that one sees a similar pattern in Os lusíadas, despite it being an epic about the sea. In Camões’s long-form poem, “terra” is one of the two most frequently repeated nouns alongside “gente,” the former appearing 271 and the latter 281 times (in the singular or plural). In third place is the noun “mar” with 214 appearances. Of course, at the heart of the Portuguese prowess over the seas was the search for new routes to distant lands where the peoples were to be controlled and colonized. The word “terra,” not by chance, is also one of the three most frequent nouns in Brazil’s foundational
document, the letter written in April 1500 by the accountant and Cabral’s scribe, Pero Vaz de Caminha (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3). In Caminha’s letter, “terra” appears 46 times. The other two most frequent nouns are “todos,” appearing 57 times, mostly in reference to the indigenous, and “capitão,” appearing 50 times in reference to Cabral. As Bosi observes, “It is not coincidental that whenever the various types of colonization are distinguished, so are two processes: that which attains to the populating of the colony and that which refers to the cultivation of the land” (Colon 27). Both Os lusíadas and Caminha’s letter highlight the intentions of the Portuguese colonizers while portending those of Brazil after independence.

Similar to his Brazilian predecessors and contemporaries, such as Gonçalves de Magalhães, José de Santa Rita Durão, and Manuel Botelho de Oliveira, Gonçalves Dias dreamed throughout his short career of composing Brazil’s nationalist epic, a would-be response to Camões’s Os lusíadas, the definitive Portuguese long-form poem in the tradition of Homer. This was the author’s explicit hope for his Indianist poems such as I-Juca-Pirama, published in 1851, and Os timbiras, published a few years later. The author’s contemporary, José de Alencar, in his “Carta ao Dr. Jaguaribe” (published as an appendix to Iracema), famously praised him for these efforts. He proposed that Gonçalves Dias had become “o poeta nacional por excelência; ninguém lhe disputa na opulência da imaginação, no fino lavor do verso, no conhecimento da natureza brasileira e dos costumes selvagens” (81). In the words of Darlene Sadlier, Gonçalves Dias’s Indianist poems played the role of empowering “a population that over the centuries was seen and described but never heard” (140). Nonetheless, Indianism was ultimately an oversimplified misappropriation of indigenous culture, despite the best intentions of its authors.

Bosi describes Indianism as being motivated by the egoism of nationalism: “Para a primeira geração romântica, porém, presa a esquemas conservadores, a imagem do índio casava-se sem traumas com a glória do colono que se fizera brasileiro, senhor cristão de suas terras e desejo de antigos brasões” (História concisa 106). Due in part to the incompatibility of a would-be nationalist epic founded in the narratives of indigenous peoples who were silenced, enslaved, and slaughtered in order to create that very same nation—much of their culture extinguished by those doing
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the myth-making—none of these long-form Indianist poems would have the same permanency that Camões’s *Os lusíadas* had for Portugal. On the other hand, the diminutive “Canção do exílio,” a seemingly inevitable evolution of Caminha’s narrative, would be more suitable as an expression of its nation’s mythic foundations.

In the fictional imaginary of “Canção do exílio,” Brazil is not a nation with a complex pre-colonial history in confrontation with European colonization. It is a paradisiacal land on the verge of re-invention, an unnamed, uncomplicated, and beautiful land. It is a virgin territory ripe for occupation and development, awaiting colonization like a blank page. For this reason, despite his later Indianist attempts, Gonçalves Dias had already invented Brazil’s hallmark nationalist text when he wrote “Canção do exílio” and, not coincidentally, from the same locational perspective (Portugal) as those who had named and colonized it. As will be shown, the thousands of subsequent imitations and parodies leave no doubt of the central position of “Canção do exílio” in the articulation of this idealistic national ethos, an ethos defined by an unending Cabralian journey of re-discovery and a perpetual re-staging of his arrival in hopes of one day re-inventing Brazil and ridding it of the ills and egoism stemming from that first encounter. In this vein, commenting on the journey of Mario de Andrade’s *Macunaíma*, Castro Rocha observes, “Logo, para ser *bem* brasileiro é necessário nunca encontrar *o* brasileiro … já que através de operações tais como o modo comparativo aperfeiçoado por Gonçalves Dias, *o* incaracterístico se torna estimulante, favorecendo uma constante *auto-apresentação*” (*O exílio* 131).

Long before “Canção do exílio” was written, many other Brazilians had already attempted to capture this same ethos. Half a century before the publication of Gonçalves Dias’s poem, Santa Rita Durão would compose his own “braziliada,” his term for an epic poem about the European discovery of Brazil. Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagem in *Florilégio da poesia brasileira* attributes the following words to the eighteenth-century poet: “Os sucessos do Brasil não mereciam menos um poema que os da Índia. Incitou-me a escrever este o amor da pátria” (343). In consequence, *Caramuru*, the poet’s only published work, appeared in 1781, narrating the Brazilian landscape at the moment of Cabral’s
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arrival in the Americas. With themes similar to those found in
“Canção do exílio,” Santa Rita Durão writes: “Da nova região, que atento observa / Admira o clima doce, o campo ameno / E entre arvoredo imenso, a erva fértil / Na viçosa extensão do áureo terreno” (“Descobrimento” 352). This is just one example of how Santa Rita Durão’s poem evokes the leitmotiv of an exceptionally fertile and beautiful land, its inviting climate and docile fields awaiting the inevitable plow of the colonizer. In Santa Rita Durão, the fact that the land is also described as “golden” might likewise bely the capitalistic impetus behind the colonial enterprise, alluding not only to the color of the fields, but veiling what the Portuguese hoped they would find beneath.

In the poetry of Manuel Botelho de Oliveira, at times written with the pseudonym Anônimo Itaparicano, one finds other literary precedents for Gonçalves Dias’s glorification of Brazilian flora and fauna. In his “Descrição da ilha de Itaparica,” the poet describes the nationalist resolve of his verse: “Cantar procuro, descrever intento / Em um heroico verso e sonoroso / Aquela, que me deu nascimento, / Pátria feliz, que tive por dito” (Oliveira, “Descrição” 157). Afterwards, he explains that, had he been born in any other land, he would exalt it with equal zeal. Foreshadowing the same tautological trope found in “Canção do exílio,” he offers the following words of advice: “Nunca queiras, leitor, ser delinquente, / Negando a tua pátria verdadeira; / Que assim mostras herdaste venturoso / Ânimo heroico, peito generoso” (157). Later, in the fourth stanza, he explains, “Em o Brasil, província desejada / Pelo metal luzente, que em si cria, / Que antigamente descoberta e achada / Foi de Cabral, que os mares descorria … / Jaz a ilha chamada Itaparica, / A qual no nome tem também ser rica” (158). The poem goes on to describe in detail the natural wonders of the island, including numerous fruits, trees, birds, and other wildlife.

In another of the author’s poems, “A ilha da Maré,” about an island off the coast of Bahia, Oliveira provides an equally long and exuberant exposé of the beauties of the title’s namesake, finishing the poem with a lighthearted slight to the Portuguese: “Tenho explicado as frutas e legumes / Que dão a Portugal muitos ciúmes; / Tenho recopilado / O que o Brazil contém para invejado” (“A ilha” 142). As will be discussed in the next chapter, this assertion of the superiority of Brazil, evident in its literature since colonial
times, and an essential element of “Canção do exílio,” would be vehemently opposed by the Portuguese immigrants’ nineteenth-century responses to Gonçalves Dias.

By the time “Canção do exílio” was composed, Brazil’s oedipal impetus to rail against imperial powers despite its continued dependency was already a clearly defined tradition in its literature. The Brazilian-born Gregório de Matos, in the seventeenth century, long before the consolidation of any national identity, demonstrated this tendency while also presaging Gonçalves Dias’s dialectic of “câ” / “lá” (Portugal / Brazil). Coming to the end of his university career at Coimbra, Matos, a master of satire, expresses his desire to return home to Brazil. Beginning his poem with the same two-word phrase as does the traditional student song, “Balada dos estudantes,” one might imagine that Gonçalves Dias perhaps sang this tune too on occasion alongside his classmates in the “cidade do conhecimento.” The musical allusion in the title of Gonçalves Dias’s original, articulating his poem as a “canção,” along with the shared experience of a Coimbra education, further draws the texts together. Matos’s poem begins: “Adeus Coimbra inimiga, / Dos mais honrados madrasta, / Que eu me vou para outra terra / Onde vivo mais à larga” (“Adeus” 20). Another “canção” written by Domingos Caldas Barbosa likewise employs the “câ” / “lá” dialectic, and in a mode much closer to “Canção do exílio.” Citing Barbosa’s eighteenth-century “Doçura de amor” in which the poet, while abroad in Lisbon, compared a tempered “câ” (Portugal) with a “lá” (Brazil) “mais doce,” Castro Rocha places this iconic adverbial play at the heart of Brazil’s search for an identity (“A lírica” 363–68). Coincidentally, in 1892, a certain Brazilian author using the initials B.C.S. would publish “Adeus a Coimbra” in which he references “Canção do exílio” while saying his own goodbyes to the storied university town, yet he seems to prefer Coimbra over Brazil: “Vou partir! Adeus Coimbra … / Quanto me custa deixar-te … / Oh! formosa Lusa Athenas / Não deixarei de amar-te … À sombra das palmeiras / Dessas terras de lá … Meu peito te enviará / Ecos de minha paixão / Donde trina o sabiá” (105–06).

Alongside his Romantic contemporaries, Gonçalves Dias also further guaranteed the permanence of the “sabiá” within the lexicon of Brazilian literature. In 1836, a decade before the publication of Primeiros cantos, the iconic bird had already made
appearances in the work of Gonçalves de Magalhães. In his monumental *Suspiros poéticos*, this first-generation Romantic published “O dia 7 de abril em Paris” wherein the songs of the “colibri” and the “sabiá” are explicitly associated with a Eurocentric longing for the Brazilian paradise. For this reason, according to Castro Rocha, “Canção do exílio” can be read as a simplified, if more impactful, re-writing of “O dia 7 de abril em Paris”: “o ‘mimoso colibri’ ou o ‘sabiá canoro’ transformam-se simplesmente no ‘Sabiá’” (*O exílio* 129). As Domingos Gonçalves de Magalhães describes his sadness for being away in France, he writes, “Mas em vão, que nos ares ambruscados / O mimoso colibri não adeja, / Nem longe do seu ninho o canto exhala / O sabiá canoro. […] Quicâ na ausência da querida Pátria / Pudesse, inda que rouco, / Mais um hino ajuntar aos outros hinos” (“O dia” 327). In the same volume, the “sabiá” makes an appearance in at least four other poems. These are “O vate,” “A tempestade,” “Por que estou triste?” and a poem dedicated to Dona Joanna Marques Lisboa.

The “sabiá” makes a number of Romantic cameos in Joaquim Norberto de Souza Silva’s *Modulações poéticas* from 1841, too, where its song represents the longing for lost loves and lost innocence. In “Uma Tárde em Nighteroy,” Souza Silva writes, “Saudoso o sabiá nos ares solta / Gratas modulações, ternas endeixas” (147).

Thus, when Gonçalves Dias penned the iconic phrase, “Minha terra tem palmeiras / Onde canta o sabiá,” he was simply re-emphasizing an already well-established theme of exile from an Edenic Brazil, abundantly represented in both colonial poetry and the work of his Romantic predecessors and symbolized by the song of the “sabiá.” Yet, an aspect much less explored in the criticism is that his exposure to popular Portuguese verse while in Coimbra also played an influential role in the composition of “Canção do exílio.”

Despite the somewhat novel appearance of the “sabiá,” an American species of bird, Gonçalves Dias’s expressions of “saudade” and use of the Portuguese meter “redondilha maior” make “Canção do exílio” almost indistinguishable from much of popular Portuguese poetry of the time. Its style and even certain turns of phrase are, to put it bluntly, cliché, finding abundant representation in the period. In his prologue to *Primeiros cantos*, Gonçalves Dias confesses as much at least in terms of form: “ado-tei todos os ritmos da metrificação portuguesa, e usei deles como...
me pareceram quadrar melhor com o que eu pretendia exprimir” (5). In Portugal, at the time, dozens of publications were filled with similar themes of longing. The dislocation of young men to Portugal’s urban centers—Porto, Coimbra, or Lisbon—in search of employment or learning, or at times their enlistment in the military and overseas expeditions, among other reasons, were common enough occurrences to serve as the impetus for the expression of a perpetual longing for home in the Portuguese imaginary. Likewise, the bucolic imagery expressed by these Portuguese poets often concentrated on the flora and fauna of a native region or town, further approximating Gonçalves Dias’s poem.

In 1842, only one year before “Canção do exílio” was written, Gonçalves Dias’s friend and collaborator, the poet A. M. Couto Monteiro wrote a short piece entitled, “Coimbra.” This poem contains a refrain repeated numerous times which, unlike Matos’s poem, exalts the famed college town: “Louçã, formosa Coimbra,/ Linda flor de Portugal,/ Belezas que os Céus te deram,/ Na terra não tem rival” (52). In these superlative verses, it is impossible to ignore Couto Monteiro’s saudade, an untranslatable noun that, among other emotions, evokes a bittersweet longing for bygone times, origins, and absent loved ones. This expression of saudade was quite common among many other Portuguese poets who, with equal zeal, defended their hometowns with superlatives, as the best, the most beautiful, the greatest, etc. Coincidentally, this short poem also shares a number of descriptive nouns in common with “Canção do exílio,” such as “flor,” “céus,” and “terra.” These general terms, all found in the second verse of “Canção do exílio,” were extremely common in the anthologies of popular Portuguese poetry of the nineteenth century.

Written in Porto in September of 1843, only a few short months after “Canção do exílio” (but years before its actual publication), Evaristo Basto’s “A partida” also displays many similar features in common with “Canção do exílio.” Composed in the same “redondilha maior” form, where each line contains seven syllables, the beauties of the Douro region are described in detail for the reader. As Basto reminisces about the joys and innocence of his youth, he laments his necessary departure and longs for a return to the simplicity and natural beauty of home. He also employs the same images and terms as Gonçalves Dias to express these sentiments.
A partida
Cara estancia onde eu nasci,
Berço meu que me embalaste,
Puro céu que me cobriste,
Doce mãe que me criaste.

Teixo que a sombra me deste,
Em dias de sol ardente,
Verdes prados que eu corria,
Que eu saltava alegremente.

Fontinha que tantas vezes
Me mataste a dura sede,
As brancas pombas que eu tinha,
Que eu caçava em minha rede.

Gorjeio das avesinhas,
Doce harmonia do céu,
O sino da minha terra,
Lindas margens, Douro meu.

Cara estância, prados, rio
Berço, céu, frondoso teixo,
Doce mãe, pombinhas, fonte,
Tudo alfim, saudoso eu deixo!

Beneath a Portuguese “céu,” under the shade of the “teixo” tree, and listening to the “gorjeios” of the “avesinhas,” the poet immediately evokes for the attuned reader the “palmeiras,” “sabiás,” and “céu” of Gonçalves Dias’s Brazil. If the singing birds are not a direct enough hit with “Canção do exílio,” as the poem employs the same terminology (“gorjeios”) and, for the birds (“avesinhas”), albeit in the diminutive, then the phrases “minha terra” and “Douro meu” further demonstrate an intertextual affinity between the two poems.

In fact, the theme of longing for home was so common by the time that O bardo was published, an anthology of Portuguese poetry printed in Porto in 1851, that the editor, Faustino Xavier de Novais, satirizes the theme in the volume’s versified introduction. Considering his publication commonplace, he opens it with these lines: “Eis aí mais um jornal / De versos, à luz do dia! / E ninguém tome isto a mal; / Haja, ao menos, de poesia / Abundância em Portugal” (3). Later in the introduction, the poet conveys some of the most common tropes that readers should expect to find in the volume: “D’afamados escritores / Pilharei lanças, arnezes, / Estrelas,
prados e flores; / Roubarei até mil vezes / A paciência aos meus leio-
tores” (4). The italics in the original denote these terms’ prevalence
at the time and, of course, “estrelas,” “prados,” and “flores” are also
key elements of Gonçalves Dias’s poem: “Nosso céu tem mais es-
trelas, / Nossas várzeas têm mais flores, / Nossos bosques têm mais
vida, / Nossa vida mais amores” (9–10).

Published in O bardo by a certain R. V., “Saudades do Tejo:
canção” is an 80-line poem that describes the author’s childhood
memories along the banks of the Tagus River. As the poet describes
how he, as a youth, bathed in its waters and sailed in its currents,
the poem repeats the phrase, “Rio da minha saudade!” Then, in
the last stanza, he employs another familiar rhetorical device.
Specifically, the poet, similar to Gonçalves Dias, fast-forwards to
the hypothetical scene of his death in which he would return to
the river of his youth: “Tenho Saudades do Tejo, / Não morrerrei
senão lá; / É de fogo o meu desejo, / Nas águas se apagará!” (R.V.
291). In this scene, a final return to the Tagus becomes the fulfill-
ment of the poet’s earthly desire, allowing him to extinguish, or
“matar,” as the colloquial phrase goes, at long last, his “saudades”
of home.

A hallmark of Gonçalves Dias’s poem, this hypothetical scene
of death is another common trope of the period and, when there
is no prospect of return, the thought of death, often appearing
in the final lines, becomes a reason for lament. Such was the case
in “Recordação da infância,” written by Luiz Augusto Xavier de
Palmeirim in 1845. Found in the first volume of Lisia poética, the
poem closes with the following lines: “Morra pois … distante dela,
/ Mas não ouça ecos da serra, / Trazer-me na viração, / Saudades
da minha terra” (160). The village bell, signaling the return of
the writer, whether in the spirit or in the flesh, also configures
prominently in João de Lemos’s “O sino da minha terra,” written
in 1843, but published in O trovador in 1848: “Se ainda aqui vier
morrer, / Chora no meu funeral, / E se for em terra alheia, / Repete
o alheio sinal. / Tange, tange, augusto bronze, / Teu som casado
comigo, / Inda na morte me agradas, / Inda ali sou teu amigo”
(25). As noted by Castro Rocha, Gonçalves de Magalhães’s “Adeus
à Europa” also shares this similarity with “Canção do exílio” (O
exílio 132), ending with the verse: “Adeus, ó terras da Europa! / Adeus, França, adeus, Paris! / Volto a ver terras da Pátria, / Vou
morrer no meu país” (Gonçalves de Magalhães, “O dia” 368).
Thus, the last verse of “Canção do exílio” is clearly inspired by contemporaneous texts in both Portugal and Brazil: “Não permita Deus que eu morra / Sem que eu volte para lá; / Sem que desfrute os primores / Que não encontro por cá; / Sem que ainda aviste as palmeiras / Onde canta o sabiá” (Gonçalves Dias, “Canção” 2).

In the seventeenth century, by way of religious allegory, Matos’s “Em quarta-feira de cinzas,” written with his brother Eusébio, tells the story of a sailor in search of a promised land. Having overcome the perils and temptations of sin and worldliness, represented by the tempests of a perilous sea, the unnamed sailor’s arrival to a new land is a metaphor for admittance into celestial paradise: “Se acaso, de mundano mar batido, / Atento o teu baixel chega a tal terra, / Nesta terra há de ser bem recebido; / Que nesta terra todo o bem se encerra” (“Em quarta-feira” 126). In this poem, Matos’s sailor seeks God’s protection as the ship searches for safe harbor beyond Africa’s Cape of Good Hope: “Caminha para a terra sem mudança; / Passa este mar de culpas desastrado; / Chegarás logo ao Cabo da Boa Esperança, / De tantos navegantes desejado” (125). The opening lines of the closing stanza of “Canção do exílio” echo with a similarly religious anxiety. In comparing “Canção do exílio” with this poem, certain re-occurring nouns, especially “terra” and “Deus,” are also hard to ignore. Grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition of the Exodus, both texts are not only bound to the Israelites’ comparable search for Zion, but they also harbor the same belief in a God-given entitlement. Specifically, the land, whether Canaan, India, or the Americas, to include its people and its resources, despite to whom it may have belonged prior, now belongs to these newly arrived believers.

In a much more distant antecedent, hearkening back to the Age of Discoveries, Camões’s “Sôbolos” locates the protagonist’s misfortunes in an allegorical Babylon and his ideal past in a lost Zion (the same Promised Land referenced in Matos). “Sôbolos rios que vão / Por Babylonia, me achei, / Onde sentado chorei / As lembranças de Sião,” Camões writes (“Sôbolos” 101). The poem then closes with the following lines: “Ditoso quem se partir / Para ti, terra excelente, / Tão justo e tão penitente, / Que depois de a ti subir, / Lá descanse eternamente!” (117). It makes sense that the word “terra” dominates not only Matos’s and Gonçalves Dias’s narratives, but also Camões’s and Caminha’s, as it does in Genesis, considering the thematic of colonization and conquest at play, whether explicit or implied.
Chapter Two

From Camões to Gonçalves Dias, all of these depictions of longing underscore a hope for a felicitous reunion, a dramatic end to a hero’s successful journey, as death becomes the gateway to the poet’s definitive and final return to paradise, national, religious, or otherwise. Camões’s adaptation of the Biblical theme of Jewish exile so foundational to Judeo-Christian cultures courses through centuries of Portuguese literature, making its way into Brazilian literature. Propagated by the Crusades, by sailors’ long absences, and symbolized by the frustrated Messianic return of Sebastião, this tradition survives transplanted still today, especially within the intertexts of “Canção do exílio.” Thus, when considering its many antecedents, “Canção do exílio” reads as just one text among many. A diminutive response to Camões and other writers from Portugal, it articulates post-colonial attitudes founded in an anxiety of comparison, tapping into centuries-old themes of longing for a paradisiacal home. But, if just one among many in Portugal, once published in Brazil, “Canção do exílio” would take on a life of its own, one probably unimaginable to the young aspiring writer at the time.