EXOTIZATION IN THE COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL PERIOD: THE CASE OF PORTUGAL DOS PEQUENITOS

Antunes Rafael Kaiumba Pinto

Departamento de Língua e Culturas, Centro de Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal

Maria Manuel Baptista

Departamento de Língua e Culturas, Centro de Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the theme of Portuguese colonial representations in tourist spaces and mainly focuses on how the colonized are represented by the colonizer. For five centuries, Portugal maintained an extensive empire, which was the subject of representations of exoticism and of people in a state of civilizational inferiority. Such a superior and hegemonic point of view remains represented in the theme park Portugal dos Pequenitos, visited by thousands of tourists, children, and adults, from all over the world, feeding the tourist industry, while naturalizing colonial power relations. Therefore, in the present study, we examine the representations of Portugal, through a museological-tourist analysis of the discourse of the Portuguese World Exhibition of 1940, replicated in the theme park Portugal dos Pequenitos, in Coimbra. We conclude that it is a tourist discourse impregnated by the exoticizing look of the colonizer at the former colonies, which still corresponds to a lusotropicalist representation of an imperial Portugal.

Keywords

exotization; Portugal dos Pequeninos; colonial empire

A exotização no período colonial e pós-colonial: o caso de Portugal dos Pequenitos

RESUMO

Este artigo aborda o tema das representações portuguesas coloniais nos espaços turísticos e tem o seu principal foco de incidência na forma como o colonizado é representado pelo colonizador. Durante cinco séculos, Portugal manteve um extenso império, que foi sendo objeto de representações ligadas ao exótico e a seres em estado de inferioridade civilizacional. Tal ponto de vista, de um olhar superior e hegemónico, continua representado no Portugal dos Pequenitos, visitado por milhares de crianças e turistas adultos de todo o mundo, alimentando a indústria turística, ao mesmo tempo que naturaliza as relações de poder colonial. Por conseguinte, no presente estudo, questionam-se as representações das ex-colónias portuguesas, através da análise museológico-turística do conteúdo da exposição de 1940 e replicada no Portugal dos Pequenitos, em Coimbra, e conclui-se tratar de um discurso turístico impregnado pelo olhar exótico do colonizador sobre as suas ex-colónias, o que corresponde a uma representação, ainda, luso-tropical de um Portugal imperial.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

exotização; Portugal dos Pequeninos; império

THE BUILDING OF PORTUGAL DOS PEQUENITOS

It was between 1936 and 1939 that the park still known as Portugal dos Pequenitos was built, idealized by Bissaya Barreto and designed by the architect Cassiano Branco. The project, whose main objective was to represent the Portuguese Empire, was inaugurated in 1940. All the regional typical houses of the countries included in the "Portuguese world" are represented there, as well as illustrative and characteristic places from North to South of Portugal, with its monuments, squares, and streets reproducing the history of the metropolis, its heroes, and its most important achievements. There is also no lack of cultural representation of the colonies (their flora, fauna, and ethnography), including the archipelagos.

In the course of Estado Novo, the project was a demonstration of strength and was accompanied by practices and discourses formulated in different ways and manners. The Empire was presented to the world as a large one, but the whole complex called the "Portuguese world" was, in reality, just a utopia. Besides the five pavilions representing the African colonies, where their cultural and economic wealth was described, two others also appeared: the first represented the Portuguese colonies in India, and the second, called Portugal-Brazil, presented these two countries as brother countries.

Martins (2016) is of the opinion that Portugal dos Pequenitos is a field of demonstration of power and strength, as well as of instruments that characterized the regime that was always protected by the actions of the catholic religion:

this immanence of power, that Gilles Deleuze calls the "map" or "cartography", crosses, for example, the entire space of Portugal dos Pequenitos, that political toy that is also a reduced model of power, built in Coimbra in the 1930s. The spatial fit of a web of hierarchical controls is visible there. The village church and the colonial mission church are in Portugal dos Pequenitos what Christian morality is in the art of eugenic surveillance: a "dark room" in the great optical science that the Salazarist discipline constitutes. (Martins, 2016, p. 92)

The ideological and social conception, idealized during the administration of the overseas territory, had a pedagogical aspect that sought to narrate the practices of the colonizers:

the Portugal dos Pequenitos Park should not be considered a museum of architectural miniature in Portugal. This judgment would limit, too much, the intelligence and culture conveyed by this work, as they did not realize the pedagogical feature of this work, inspired by the methods recommended and disseminated by the greatest pedagogues. (Matos, 2006, p. 23)

The construction of Portugal dos Pequenitos also sought to answer those who cast doubts on the grandeur and imperial character of Portugal, while trying to reinforce the notion of portugality and project the idea of its beneficial influence on the world.

It cannot be accepted as a museum that tends to narrate a certain reality in an impartial way or, at least, in the most objective way possible, since what it does is naturalize colonial actions and, in effect, it is important to look at that reality from the point of view of post-colonial theories and realize that we are facing a colonial act of subordination, representing the mythological glory of an empire that never existed outside the imaginary, but which seeks, pedagogically, to construct it:

Portugal dos Pequenitos (PP) is a representation of Portugal designed for children. It therefore has a clearly pedagogical objective. Unlike other exhibitions at the time, this space has not been destroyed and, for that reason, can still be visited. PP is analyzed here in order to understand which and how the colonial images given to children were constructed. (Matos, 2006, p. 228)

Without adopting this critical view, in the year 2000, the Portuguese Government awarded Portugal dos Pequenitos the medal of tourist merit, not considering the fact that that place contributes to spreading a myth of ideological superiority, which reinforces the maintenance of certain elements of the past and that tells a unilateral story from the colonizer's point of view.

However, Portugal dos Pequenitos carries with it the idea of tomorrow. The homeland is projected for the future as a burden to be defined by the then inhabitants of the place. In fact, it is through them that this idea of homeland will be perpetuated and that, finally, the model ideal of "being Portuguese" will be found. (Paulo, 1990, p. 405)

TOURISM, CULTURE, AND IDEOLOGY

The origins of tourism are very remote, and several authors have already addressed this issue. The oldest forms date back to classical antiquity and refer to the Greeks, the Egyptians and the Romans, since the exchange of products from one region to another, as well as travel for different reasons, originated contacts between peoples. More recently it was the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century, which gave tourism a major boost.

The place has aroused more interest on the part of scholars, researchers, and academics, while it has attracted greater interest in new tourists who have a growing motivation to learn more about this theme (Costa, 2014, p. 570).

It puts Portugal in a position of hyperidentity due to the fact that, in a small space, it narrates the history of colonization to its former colonies, and the children who visit the location are given information about the generous and benevolent actions that the

Portuguese colonization allegedly had for the other peoples. The present and visible reality is a tourist itinerary about the colonization developed between Lisbon and the other colonies, a story that narrates the cultural diversity of the peoples.

Cultural tourism that is presented in Portugal dos Pequenitos is a means of providing a new approach to the superiority of Portugal disguised in Lusophone, which seeks to understand the interests of all peoples in an equal way. In order to retell the story from maritime Portugal to the colonized peoples, thus showing the colonizing genius. (Silva & Vasconcelos, 2014, p. 159)

For the subject in question, however, it is interesting to make an analysis of the relationship between tourism and culture, since these two agents are, hardly, separated. In reality, tourism can be done in several ways. For example, as referred by Dores (2015), there is a period when travel and the cultural world were associated, that is, traveling

consisted of a form of tourism practiced by the aristocracy, especially the English aristocracy, which began in the 18th century and in which the trip through Europe included visits to the great artistic and natural historical sites, thus stating that the cultural heritage is one of the oldest and important tourism-generating elements. (Dores, 2015, p. 61)

Through this quote, we see how tourism and culture are articulated around the notion of heritage and the desire to know the cultural heritage of peoples.

The term patrimony comes from the Roman *patrimonium* and is associated with the material goods of a family, having evolved into a collective concept related to a set of common goods (Audrerie, 1997).

In the case of cultural heritage, it reflects the concern of the present and the desire for this present to be linked to the recognition of a heritage from the past, thus assuming it as a fundamental factor of identity.

With regard to Portugal dos Pequenitos, and taking into account the field observation, at the time we prepared this study, we can say that it has more of a tourism than a cultural, or even, historical inclination. Tourism has come to dominate that space where the exotic has a notorious expression and marks the space and the tourist experience it provides. The articulation between tourism and culture is nearly absent because there are more explanations about what space is than about the meaning of the representations in the pavilions, which further accentuates the hegemonic power that, supposedly, Portugal has exercised on its colonies. As Baptista points out,

in this context, the question of the Other is either a mere division fuelled by the search for the exotic and the unexpected, or it is nothing more than the attempt to recover, now by other means, more biased and distorted, the subject's eternal search for itself, in a logic that is nothing innovative or surprising, but that can already be found in the phenomenology of the spirit. (Baptista, 2017, p. 19)

In fact, the apparent internal diversity of this space barely disguises the hegemonic representation of the colonizer, who writes more to himself than to the other. With that representation, Portugal projects itself as the subject of a civilizing action, relegating to a secondary plane spaces that, seeming to be represented, are, after all, invisible: what is represented there is the picturesque, the exotic that stimulates the tourist's gaze, uncritical and predatorily of irreducible difference.

However, we must reinforce the idea that culture cannot be held hostage by tourism. As stated by Dores (2015), cultural heritage is one of the oldest and most important elements that generate tourism and we should not overshadow culture and represent it in a caricatured way, according to the objectives of tourism.

Indeed, what is present and which was preceded by the world exhibition to which we will refer later, would still be resignified by lusotropicalism (Castelo, 1999) in the 60s, and pass unscathed by the 1974 Revolution.

Today, as one of the most visited tourist attractions in the central region of the country, it clearly shows how lusotropicalism is naturalized, the imperial mentality still persists and the self-representation of the Portuguese has never been totally eradicated. "The Portuguese Empire is essentially Portugal, while the other peoples are the Other of that empire" (Silva & Vasconcelos, 2014, p. 160).

As Baptista (2017) points out, "the Portuguese Empire in Africa never existed until the 19th century, as it achieved nothing more than territorially very circumscribed occupations on the African coast, essentially intended to maintain a commercial activity with the natives" (p. 63).

Speaking of a Portuguese world that, for some authors, never existed, a false idea of peaceful cohabitation between Portugal and the colonies was spread. Indeed, the idea of an overseas as a meeting place for cultures is theoretically based on lusotropicalism (Baptista, 2017).

The contact of cultures manifests a utopian desire to portray history and the relationships between different communities (...) as being a relationship without power, without conflict. (....) I am thinking, for example, of the rhetoric that presides over the celebrations of the Portuguese discoveries or the creation of the CPLP [Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa], or the very idea of lusophone. (Baptista, 2017, p. 17)

For all effects, Portugal dos Pequenitos is more a tourist space than a historical place with the categorical affirmation of a hegemonic power in which culture appears linked to tourism, contributing to an ideologically colonial representation of the Portuguese Empire.

HEGEMONIC REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL THROUGH TOURIST DISCOURSE

Since Portugal launched its famous civilizing mission, with the will and passion to conquer the world, it has become clear that everything that was land and where there was

life should be under its control, in the words of Luís de Camões, inscribed in a prominent place in Portugal dos Pequenitos, "if there is more world, there Portugal will be".

Starting from this maxim of an imperialist and hegemonic nature, in the sense referred by Gramsci (2007), "the colonizers serve as a model and as a measure that will be applied to the colonized peoples, an application seen not as an act of domination, but as an act of salvation" (p. 34), it was this hegemonic spirit that fed the ideological guidebook of colonial Portugal.

It should also be noted that this paternalistic position assumes several intensities depending on the chronology of the decolonization process. For example, since Brazil was the first ex-colony to become independent, it started to be recognized as a brother country, in a gesture that has a special context and historical significance.

EXHIBITION OF 1940

The idea of celebrating the double historical event of the foundation of the State of Portugal and the restoration of its nationality (1140 and 1640) was at the origin of the "Exposição do Mundo Português" (Portuguese World Exhibition), an idea that was launched in 1929 by the ambassador Alberto de Oliveira and which was assumed in March 1938 by Salazar, through an unofficial note from the Presidency of the Council. The exhibition followed the Portuguese participation in the great international exhibitions in Paris (1937), New York and San Francisco (1939) (Matos, 2006).

As in the expansion and the slave trade, Portugal had to find an opportunity to once again show itself to the world for its achievements, since its influence on the other powers was weakening. Thus, Martins (2016) states that the exhibition was held to reconstruct the history of an imperial and colonizing Portugal:

the exhibition constitutes a giant historical reconstruction in ephemeral material (stucco, wood, plastic structures), where the traditions of eight centuries of national life were reinvented. The aim was to proclaim to the world the greatness of a "united, multiracial and pluricontinental country". And in order to achieve that goal, it was necessary to mobilize the appropriate symbols and narratives, given the fact that history never speaks for itself. The Portuguese World Exhibition therefore reinvented a story to speak for the national identity. (Martins, 2016, p. 21)

The exhibition was held between the right bank of the Tagus River and the Jerónimos Monastery. It occupied an area of about 560 thousand square meters, and had two large perpendicular longitudinal pavilions: the Honor Pavilion of Lisbon, and, on the other side, the Pavilion of Portuguese in the World (Ribeiro, Alessandretti, Leandro, Martins & Moraes, 2017).

Portugal dos Pequenitos, proposed by Bissaya Barreto, was based on this latter one pavilion. It was built in Coimbra and, in the wake of the praise of Salazar's great work, it seeks to be the glorious and civilizing expression of the Portuguese empire. But, as

Baptista (2017) suggests, is it not the return of the repressed? We conclude that many of these representations, still in force in the Portuguese cultural imaginary, may be nothing more than the return of the repressed, or a failed encounter with reality (Baptista, 2017).

In the present case, the colonial representation never let the indigenous people speak for themselves, but always insisted on representing them as a backward people, standing in the confines of a primitive time and rescued by the civilizing mission of their colonizer. Indeed, if Portugal is praised for the greatness of its mission, "the black or the indigenous appears, at most, as an exotic note in the landscape" (Baptista, 2017, p. 55).

Indeed, this is the representation that structurally organizes Portugal dos Pequenitos, and it should be noted that, in 2017, according to a news story from RTP, published on January 9, 2018, the park was visited by 27.3000.00 people, 40% of whom were tourists and the rest were school audience. The majority of these visitors were Spanish, French, and Brazilian.

THE TOURIST DISCOURSE IN THE COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL PERIOD

In order to have an idea of the colonial and post-colonial discourse from the perspective of tourism, it is necessary to analyze the images found on the signposts that, supposedly, should be the letters of the pavilions of the garden of Portugal dos Pequenitos. We were surprised with one of them where the phrase "Portugal and Brazil, brother countries" can be read, and with another one on the front of the space, which describes Portugal as a metropolis. In order to understand its importance and significance today, we emphasize that it is still a matter of

conveying a certain image of Portugal, as a Portuguese Empire and, above all, of the "other" of that Empire, what we see is that many of these representations are still in force in the Portuguese cultural imaginary, perhaps not of the entire Portuguese intellectual elite, but certainly in a part of it and, to a greater extent, in Portuguese cultural memory (Baptista, 2017, p. 57).

In this line of thought, Dores (2015) considers that only in the imagination were African colonies the other of Portugal. Only Brazil was a Portugal-other or so unconsciously described (Caldeira, 2015, p. 76). The discourse of Portugal dos Pequenitos also plays with identities, in order to legitimize power relations and to naturalize the colonizer's superiority over the colonized, in the process of annexation of territories under the idea of empire. About this process of manipulation and construction of an imperial imaginary, Baptista (2017) points out the following:

one of the most impressive tasks of manipulating one's own identity and memory (and immediately of the Other's identity and memory) was the colonization process that Europeans carried out in different parts of the world and more intensely, in the late 19th and 20th centuries in Africa. (Baptista, 2017, p. 61)

The descriptions that in fact show the Portuguese presence, in Africa and beyond, representing the colonies in a small dimension, compared to the empire, reinforce the mechanisms of power in the relationship with the peoples under their dependence. As described by Castelo, lusotropicalism helped to consolidate this imperial imaginary:

this unity exists and Portuguese man is its founding and unifying element. His characteristics, already analyzed in Casa-Grande and Senzala – absence of racial prejudice, tendence for miscegenation, fraternal Christianity – give internal coherence to the world he created among peoples. (Castelo, 1999, p. 35)

However, nowadays, Post-colonial Studies challenge anthropologists, historians, museologists and tourism specialists to rethink their representations, and to exercise a constant criticism about them.

Postcolonial criticism introduced a radical critique of patterns of knowledge and social identities that was not authorized by colonialism or Western rule. This does not mean that colonialism and its legacies have remained unquestioned until today; just think, for example, of nationalisms or Marxism; it does mean that both worked thanks to master narratives that put Europe at the center.

Postcolonial criticism will thus seek to undo Eurocentrism, maintaining, however, the awareness that postcoloniality does not develop from a panoptic view in relation to history; postcoloniality exists as an after – after being worked on by colonialism.

The space occupied by Portugal dos Pequenitos shows that the enunciation of speeches of domination is located neither inside nor outside the history of Portuguese domination, but, rather, in a deep relationship with it.

In the current context, there are several views that have been built on the space under debate. Martins (2016) describes two types of scenarios:

we are discussing the much celebrated Portugal dos Pequenitos, which is not just an illustration of the national organization. It is also a political ingenuity, a reduced model of power: the obsession of Salazar, a meticulous dictator of the domestic little machine, of the well-disciplined family and corporate workshops, of prolonged exercises of memory, look and desire. (Martins, 2016, p. 165)

After visiting Portugal dos Pequenitos, where the Portuguese world is supposed to be represented, we see that the other continues to be represented without history or explanation, and little or nothing is known about it, an idea that comes from imperial times and, for the tourist, represents only an exotic curiosity, uncritically absorbed.

According to Martins (2016), since it is visited by children, it cannot be translated as a tourist place, but as a place to reinvent the acts that live in the collective memory of peoples, thus reinforcing the Portuguese hyperidentity, and increasing the subordination of peoples in the past, "in this sense, we will dream of children's visits who come to Portugal dos Pequenitos to learn the virtuous tendencies able to regenerate the ill nation: a living lesson or a museum of the regenerating order" (Martins, 2016, p. 93).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Definitely, as Baptista (2017) had already concluded, the image that the ex-colonizer has intended to show refers to an imaginary action of a supposed empire that, in the domain of the real, did not exist. Portugal dos Pequenitos is, in fact, a space created to replicate a cruel practice carried out by those who once thought themselves superior to others and who still seek to convey this idea to future generations, by valuing the exotic.

That said, privileging the exotic look in cultural tourism corresponds to a serious concealment of the truth of the peoples represented in Portugal dos Pequenitos. Valuing the component of attractiveness and leisure tourism, this garden explores the picturesque, bizarre and strange side of peoples that appear as primitive and are seen as backward and inferior.

However, it is important not to let these representations, staged for tourist purposes, remain to be decoded and it is important to understand where the discourses and representations behind these imaginary projections come from. As Baptista once again mentions:

tourism in Africa was limited to big game hunting, in the context of a tourism that today we would call hunting and adventure tourism, to the promenade through the great works of European colonization (farms and public works). In any case, African attractions for tourism were nature and the white human element, responsible for the slow and gradual transformation of Africa. The black or the indigenous appears, at most, as a note and exotic in the landscape. (Baptista, 2017, p. 55)

Today, although it has undergone some changes regarding the remodelling of details, Portugal dos Pequenitos continues to contribute to the degrading of ex-colonized peoples. It is open to the public and continues to make the colonial narrative prevail, telling history without any criticism or post-colonial perspective. It is thus a museum of today that narrates and seeks to maintain colonialism.

A more technical look at the architecture of the place shows that there is an action of subordination: in the same space two types of buildings, the former, representing the ancient colonies, in the form of tents, and the latter, representing the metropolis by the architecture of the time. If in the past the same territories were Portuguese property, why there are two types of architecture? However, Martins (2016) helps us to answer this question as follows:

let us also keep as a reference the architectural paradigm of Portugal dos Pequenitos, whose tactical functioning refers to the eugenic device of Salazar's discursive practice. Portugal dos Pequenitos is the architectural figure of a device that works according to the way of two political dreams that combine in the double composition of circular constructions (villages and colonies) and rectangular constructions (monuments, castles, and fortified squares). (Martins, 2016, p. 93)

Portugal dos Pequenitos is a great theme park for children: children who, when visiting the place, see a sad reality reported as a great one. Colonization is treated as entertainment, the narrative of colonial and imperial values that have become anachronistic and inhuman is constructed as something fun.

Translation: Larissa Latif

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Antunes Rafael Kaiumba Pinto is a PhD student in Cultural Studies at University of Aveiro, master in Curriculum Development, by the Agostinho Neto University in Angola and has a degree in History by the Agostinho Neto University in Angola. He is a researcher at the Languages, Literatures and Cultures Research Centre at the University

of Aveiro. The doctoral thesis addresses the narratives of representations of Portugal and Angola in primary school textbooks in the colonial period – a post-colonial perspective.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7183-1974

Email: antunespinto@ua.pt

Address: Campus Universitário de Santiago, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal

Maria Manuel Baptista is Full Professor at the University of Aveiro, with "Agregação" in Cultural Studies, at the University of Minho (2013). She has diverse and extensive work published nationally and internationally, with an emphasis on the area of Cultural Studies. She is President of IRENNE – Association for Research, Prevention and Combat of Violence and Exclusion. She is the coordinator of GECE – Gender and Performance Group and NECO – Group of Studies in Culture and Leisure at the University of Aveiro. She is the editor of the collection "Género e Performance: Textos Essenciais". Her research interests include issues of identity and globalization as well as migration and post-colonialism.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1465-4393

Email: mbaptista@ua.pt

Address: Campus Universitário de Santiago, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal

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