Phæacian Treasures in T. M. Hughes's *The Ocean Flower*

Filha do Oceano,
Do undoso campo flor, gentil Madeira!

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In the beginning there is an island. Not the *terra firma*, the 'inhabited world' of Asia, Africa and Europe, laying alone on a watery globe as conceived by writers of classical antiquity. No. There really is 'another' island, but, alas!, it is

> But one small wreck the Gods in pity left
> To mark the limit of Destruction's sweep,
> A highland of its continent bereft,
> A limb of greatness towering from the deep.[1]

Yes, it was all which was left of fair Atlantis, that solid ground once conjured up mid Ocean and often heard of by the sage in Plato's Academy.

Should this 'limb' be pitied? Certainly not! There, 'where rolls the vast Atlantic in his pride ... afar from Afric's coast'[2] the cliffs of this enchanted Isle arise. A 'new' Phæacia, a remnant of Eden, it lies 'on the confines of the torrid zone,/Yet [it is] tempered soft by milder Northern skies'[3]. 'There budding Spring and blooming Summer joined/With Autumn ripe in linkèd dance appear'[4]. These seem to be the three perennial graces of the year for 'There all the Seasons are so finely blent,/That Spring 'mid Winter charms the raptured year'[5].

Apparently depopulated, amidst slopes and ravines, peaks and chasms, (the finest of which, the sublime Curral, would provide the perfect amphitheatre for the combat between Jupiter and the Titans), this island of contrasts offers a flora of an apparently never ending variety. All in blessed cohabitation, 'Bananas arch their scimitar-like leaves'[6], 'Like mermaid's tresses there lie careless spread/The long, bright leaflets of the dulcet cane'[7], and flowers seem to have caught a tinge from Paradise. Chiefest and best, however, is its generous Vine, the premium gift the Thracian God could give to man. Here it 'Swells with nectareous juices more divine/Than Rhine's or Rhone's or Chryssus' banks bestow'[8].

Surely this Armida's garden could not have been a poet's dream!

> Know'st thou the Island where these marvels meet,
> The peerless Isle with all Earth's treasures strown,
> Know'st thou the Ocean-flower so softly sweet?
> Oh, surely 'tis Madeira's isle alone![9]

With its minutely described beauties cut short many fold, thus do we reach the end of Canto I of Terence Mahon Hughes's *The Ocean Flower*. It is a poem in ten Cantos consisting of quatrains interspersed with ballads which narrate various

episodes. Were it not for the fact that it is not in total accordance with Bachtin's three prescriptions for an epic[10], it could, in many respects, be considered one.

The poem is preceded by an historical and descriptive account of the island of Madeira, as well as of a summary of the discoveries and chivalrous history of Portugal, and an essay on Portuguese Literature. The first two explain and justify, to a great extent, much of the material in the poem.

Whenever I set my eyes on books on Madeira, published by Englishmen, my curiosity is always aroused, even though they are completely out of my way as far as my area of investigation is concerned. However, I do take interest in them, and carry my research a little further whenever I deem it necessary and worthwhile.

Such is the case. Moreover, it is a poem, a rarity amidst diaries, journals and travel impressions. I must, nevertheless, declare that I do not go about it with the ambitions of an historian, nor do I intend to scrutinise the poem aiming at a thorough literary analysis. Both would meet with lack of time and space, considering the amount of aspects and episodes to cover. I merely seek to make the contents of the poem known for the use of others who would like to explore an aspect or other of it more thoroughly than I have. Indeed, many episodes would, *de per se*, provide enough material for an essay. I myself intend to go deeper into the author's life and works, if I have the opportunity to do so.

As a matter of fact, it was this latter aspect which brought me some difficulties when dealing with the poem in discussion. Even though it was published in 1845, little is known about the date of its composition.

In the first chapter of Francisco Travassos Valdez's *África Ocidental* (1864), part of an Anthology of Madeiran texts edited by Cabral do Nascimento, there is a reference to Madeira as being 'a Flor do Oceano'. In a foot-note to this reference the author says that it had been his father, Conde de Bonfim, who had called the island so when addressing his troops in 1828, when he was Governor and Captain-General of Madeira. To this the editor adds – 'Na verdade, T. M. Hughes só em 1845 publicou o seu poema *The Ocean Flower*'[11]. Does this mean that the poem, or part of it, was already known by the Conde de Bonfim, but was only published much later?

On the other hand, José Augusto dos Santos Alves, in his paper '«Descobrimentos», Fenómeno de Opinião e de Recorrência Histórica na Imprensa Madeirense (1821-1850)'[12], shows us that the theme adopted by Hughes was frequently discussed and printed in the local press. From the given list of periodicals available between the afore-mentioned dates, that of the *A Flor do Oceano* (1836) stands out for the sake of its name. Globally, what they all expressed was that

> No discurso "neo-expansionista" da imprensa da Madeira está subjacente uma ideia de regeneração, de reencontro da Nação com o seu passado de glória em confronto com o seu carenciado presente, que exige uma mentalidade modernizante de acordo com o século oitocentista. [...] Os Descobrimentos fazem parte integrante da iconografia nacional, integração do tempo colectivo e do tempo do acontecimento, ao mesmo tempo explosão da factualidade em ondas temporal-espaciais. A saga marítima que tem início em 1415 é assim continuada e periodicamente renovada, espécie de corrente subterrânea com picos de sensibilidade que tanto podem ser à descober-

> ta da Madeira, como à conquista da Índia, à expressão cultural na China e no Japão ou às descobertas terrestres dos Jesuítas.[13]

Still bearing our poem in mind, the references I managed to find in relation to it in lists of bibliography, which supposedly exist and were compiled to aid the scholar, contained little help and also some inaccuracies.

In *Madeira – Investigação Bibliográfica*, for example, after the entry on Hughes's poem, one comes across the following information: 'Primeira parte. – Resenha histórica e descritiva da Madeira. Segunda parte. – Poesia portuguesa e inglesa e versão em inglês de alguns poemas portugueses'[14].

The list of bibliography in appendix to 'Testemunhos de Viajantes Ingleses sobre a Madeira' by Maria dos Remédios Castelo Branco, gives some additional clues informing that 'Escritor e jornalista, correspondente do *Times* na Península, casado com uma portuguesa, Hughes amou profundamente a terra de sua mulher ... [e] visitou [a ilha] pouco antes da sua morte, ocorrida em 1848', but is somehow misleading when stating that 'o poema é constituído por dez cantos, formando, no seu conjunto, a evocação histórica e descrição da ilha da Madeira'[15].

The truth is that Hughes shows that he is not the type of tourist that comes along and gives a ready at hand explanation for everything he sees without going deeper into the matter. Many of his fellow citizens are criticised by Hughes himself for doing the like. He shows that he knows what he is speaking about, and if by any chance he ignores historical evidence in his narration, he clearly states that it is for the sake of poetical achievement.

Despite being English one feels that he is a learned man as far as our history is concerned. He regrets that none of our great heroes were remembered as they ought to be. There was no statue to look up to, apathy prevailed, and nothing seemed to awaken people's lethargic minds.

One of the periodicals, 'O Patriota Funchalense', in its edition of August 4, 1821, remarked 'Quem te diria, ó imortal Zarco, quem te diria que nas idades futuras os Habitantes da Madeira por erro e por ignorância Haviam aborrecer ... aqueles admiráveis arvoredos que com tanto prazer soubeste respeitar .... Tais são os efeitos da rusticidade e da escassa educação!!!'[16]

Adolfo Faria de Castro, here, in Funchal, on June 10, 1928, did his best to revive the dying embers of our glorious past when delivering his conference on 'Camões e a Epopeia Nacional'. On that occasion he stated:

> Vivemos em decadência?
> Pois bem, ressurjamos.
> Que das cinzas dum glorioso passado, que Camões enalteceu na sua Epopeia, passado já desfeito e quási reduzido à expressão mais simples, nos levantemos todos nós, transmudados em Fénix, à maneira da lenda antiga.[17]

Hughes had, however, already pointed out the problem in 1845. In all areas, as well as that of literature there was, he asserted, 'abundant ability in the country, but politics and political intrigue absorb it all; I only wish I could inspire the youth of Portugal with a desire to produce a living literature worthy of their language'[18]. Fortunately for us, such works did appear!

Though praising our chivalrous history with its heroes, and the eminent figures of our literary scenario – Camões, Nicolau

Luís, Filinto Elízio, Bocage, Almeida Garret, Alexandre Herculano, to name but a few, he does not restrain from criticising. In relation to Madeira, albeit considering that 'the most authentic works in existence, with reference to [it], are the *Insulana* of Manoel Thomas, the *História Insulana* of the Jesuit Cordeyro, and the *Décadas* of Barros'[19], he has objections to make.

The *Insulana* could be generally relied on, but its weakness, though an ambitious imitation of the *Lusíadas*, stands out due to successive sundry mythological and classical allusions. Regarded by Madeirans as a work of unparalleled genius, its fame would probably never go beyond the shores of the island. The *Zargueida*, another modern poem, was likewise poor for it was a mere 'réchauffée' of the former.

After this slight digression, let us concentrate our attention on our poem once more. Again at sea, Canto II takes us along the island's Cytherean coast from Cabo Girão to Machico, where a chapel is spotted. Its sight immediately evokes the legend of Machin and Anna d'Arfet.

Much has been said about these figures and it would be pointless to refute their existence or to survey all the interpretations and opinions put forward in regard to this subject[20]. Hughes, curiously the first and only Englishman, as far as I know, to narrate this episode, actually stated that 'there was no necessity for rudely disturbing a pleasing fiction'[21], which was, for poetical purposes, the only interesting legend amongst the few interesting fables to be discussed.

David Pinto Correia, in his paper 'Da História à Literatura – Ainda o Descobrimento da Madeira', considers that when discussing tales of this nature, one should distinguish the historical elements – which he calls 'conjunto fulcral' – from those that are of a more literary nature – the 'conjunto envolvente'[22].

In spite of being familiar with the various existing versions of the legend, Hughes did try to gather material for the 'conjunto fulcral'. He visited Machico for three days in search of evidence, but the only thing he managed to see was a little piece of wood found in the beginning of the century by a Mr. Page, who insisted that it belonged to Machin's cross. As for the names of Machin and Anna d'Arfet, they were both good English names in their time, that is to say, during the reign of Edward III. The name Machin was still common in parts of Northamptonshire, and an eminent English singer in Hughes's days proudly bore the name.

As far as the second element is concerned, it is certain that the 'conjunto envolvente' brings about doubled difficulties for 'o produtor artístico enfrenta a dupla tarefa: conseguir a sua originalidade e, ao mesmo tempo, obrigar-se a uma obediência ao que tem de ser dito'[23].

Using the *Insulana*, *Orlando Furioso*, and Camões as sources, Hughes gave the legend that little extra colouring of the imagination which gives it a life of its own. The ballad form, conveying considerable intensity and immediacy to the narrative, greatly enhances its sentiment and mystery.

Toys in the hands of fate, Machin and Anna leave England on a vessel with a crew, but with love as their only pilot. Devoted to each other like Hero and Leander, they stoically face a seven day storm which echoes some of the passages in Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. After much distress and hardship, Mount Atlas eventually towers above their bark, both barring their passage and offering the couple a much desired cove of solid ground for shelter.

Another storm arises, however, and tears their ship and its crew away to the shores of the African coast, but they only realise this on the third day when calm and visibility are restored. It is interesting to note that Hughes recurrently uses the numbers three and seven throughout the poem. The reader is, thus, insistently reminded of their symbolism. Realising that their ship is gone and that there is no possible escape, Anna gives herself in marriage to Machin, becomes mute, pines away, and dies.

> So gently passed her soul away
> That Robert could not yet believe
> His kisses woke of life no ray,
> Until her bosom ceased to heave;
> Then loud arose his frantic wail,
> And hushed each warbler on the tree,
> And all the echos of the vale
> Gave back his agony.[24]

Sore-hearted and feeling responsible for Anna's death, Machin felt he could not outlive his adored. Carrying her corpse to a neighbouring cave, he lay her there and smote his 'youthful manhood's pride with his sword'[25].

There Zargo found their bones, together with the message of the smitten lover. In compliance to it 'from Machin [he] named the valley round,/and raised a chapel there'[26]. With this chapel, the circular structure of Canto II is completed and so is yet another version of the legend. A version which I believe, if translated, would surely join all the others written by Portuguese authors.

Maria Clara Pereira da Costa states, 'na medida em que a sua historicidade [da lenda] foi tomando corpo, igualmente começou a tornar-se um fenómeno social que ultrapassou a erudição dos intelectuais e passou a fazer parte do substrato cultural madeirense'[27]. Were it known to the Madeirans it would certainly have its place there. Within a mythical framework, the legend, as Vitorino Magalhães Godinho noted, 'liga-se à busca da ilha do Amor e da Morte, e à punição que segue a profanação do que está vedado'[28].

Bringing the looming figure of the island in Canto I back to our minds, Canto III opens similarly with

> Oh, Navigator Henry, Prospero grand!
> I see thy stately form o'er Ocean rise,
> A globe beneath thy feet, a chart in hand,
> And bright Discovery sparkling from thine eyes.
>
> Patron of sailors, planter of the Rood,
> Thy fine device—on Princely shield how rare!
> Shewed "all thy talent lay in doing good;"
> Methinks I trace thy English mother there.[29]

Albeit praising the Portuguese, Hughes's national pride is also evident here. Henry's English mother, Dom John's Queen, Philippa, was the grand-daughter of Edward III, at whose court she was reared. This 'pride' is also visible in other instances, for example when Hughes claims that 'England alone can rival the by-gone deeds of Portugal'[30], and when, during the Napoleonic wars, 'we held the Island as a British garrison in 1809, under Lord Beresford, [we] ceded it again to Portugal, greatly improved in condition, the following year'[31].

But, resuming the figure of Henry, it was he who made universal history possible with the accomplishment of the Portuguese discoveries. It is his open-mindedness too which enables our navigators to reach India, not without first having passed, as 'sweet Camoens' sang,

> ... a grande ilha da Madeira,
> Que do muito arvoredo assi se chama;
> Das que nós povoámos a primeira,
> Mais célebre por nome que por fama.
> Mas, nem por ser do mundo a derradeira,
> Se lhe avantajam quantas Vénus ama;
> Antes, sendo esta sua, se esquecera
> De Cipro, Gnido, Pafos e Citera.[32]

Reaching India was, with the Portuguese and according to the poet, a 'peaceful, joyous, free' process. Quite different was Alexander's means of getting there. In contrast, his was only rendered possible with the shedding of much blood and tears.

For the Portuguese, the real beginning is the conquest of Ceuta in 1415. This is *the* decisive step for our Atlantic solution[33]. Personally involved in these battles, for he was one who 'por dar ao Reino Paz amava a guerra'[34], Zargo and his use of naval artillery had become famous in the Peninsula, wholly justifying a familiar proverb in Andalucía

> El Zargo los cañones que trahia,
> Affrentavan al Mar quando enojado,
> Pues mostravan con sus pelotas solas
> Seren mas bravos que del Mar las olas.[35]

During one of these expeditions, Zargo captures João d'Amores, a pilot of Castile, who tells Henry the story of Machin, which he had learned from a surviving imprisoned member of Machin's former crew. With the king's permission, and quite determined to explore the Atlantic, Henry makes Zargo Captain of the expedition which would endeavour to find such an island as described by Amores.

Though Hughes follows Barros[36] when saying that three armed ships set out on the mission, we know that in the first expedition only one 'barca' came, and in the second 'um navio de armada, e um barinel'[37]. Hughes does mention that he chose the version in which Tristão accompanied Zargo on the first expedition because of 'its affording room for some contrast of character'[38].

During the journey, a 'trovador' tells the crew the story of 'The Reys of Coimbra', a ballad in which we learn how D. Sancho and Rosalinda (a poetic name chosen by the poet for Queen Dona Mécia) are usurped of their throne by Alonzo. The siege of Coimbra and the worthy behaviour of Old Freitas, in taking the key of the city to the already dead king in Toledo, are swiftly and patriotically unveiled.

Already two weeks at sea, faring into the unknown, with the intellectual background of the XIVth Century cloaked around their minds, Zargo and his men run into 'a cloud of densest vapour, of a 'sulphureous and mephitic' sort, a 'smoke/Vomited from the yawning gulf of Hell!' which blotted out the sun. There, to receive them, the Tartarus chasm!

The sailors were terrified. But one must bear in mind that they were challenging divine intervention and seeking to cope with the hitherto untameable savagery of the unknown ocean. As D. W. Waters acknowledges, we must

> appreciate acutely two things about these men, first, their spiritual and physical courage their, in a word, bravery and, secondly, for it arises from this, their intellectual daring, for they were not merely challenging intellectually the wisdom of the Ancients, they were defying it knowingly with their bodies and minds – at the risk of losing their lives.[39]

All these circumstances are borne in mind by the poet for the benefit of the topic of excess[40]. Camões had already used it in his *Lusíadas*: 'Vistes que, com grandíssima ousadia,/Foram já cometer o Céu supremo;/Vistes aquela insana fantasia/De tentarem o mar com vela e remo'[41].

With his men on the verge of mutiny, Zargo has to speak to the heart of his crew to prevent it. Under the protection of the Virgin and St. Francis the *Ave Maris Stella* soon rises in powerful hymn amidst the stormiest billows. And then, yes, then appears the blessed Isle! They round Point Lorenzo and realize that the vapours, 'The Hell-born smoke that so appalled their view' were merely 'exhalations from the Serra poured'.

Cantos IV and V unveil the island to the eyes of the discoverers. Tristan observes that the rocks and growth seem to protect this Eden from 'Satan's lance'. They dare fate, land, and are immediately overwhelmed with the scenery –

> A Paradise indeed! The gardens fair
> Of the Hesperides were here surpassed;
> Of Cyrus and Semiramis, Whate'er
> Romance or History tells outviewed at last.[42]

On this occasion, the gods were not as generous as they would be to Gama and his men. Though very much like an idyllic island for lovers, Zargo and his men had to settle for less.

> And Zargo and his comrades radiant brows
> With madresilva and with laurel crowned;
> And mindful of Donzells and plighted vows,
> With love-wrought silken vests their bosoms bound.
>
> And many an hour through the sweet sylvan scene
> They roved romantic musing on their love,
> Fresh garlands culling from the virgin green,
> And gazing oft where towered new tress above.[43]

After much toing and froing along the Southern coast of the island, 'calm, high souled Zargo found that it was good,/But rasher Tristan swore 'twas Paradise!'[44] In fact, both agreed that it was a perfect place in which to settle.

And so it followed that the island was dedicated to the Order of Christ by Dom John I, and equally divided between Zargo and Tristão. The latter was alloted with the Eastern and Northern parts and made Captain Donatário of Machico, whilst the former was made Captain Donatário of Funchal and given the Southern and Western part of the island.

The episode of the three French ships with Huguenots, who land in Praia Formosa in 1566 to attack, plunder and kill, is unfolded in Canto VI. The tale does not, however, follow its factual course. They actually ransacked the city of Funchal for ten days and left, with yet another two vessels they stole in order to take all they had robbed, before help arrived from Lisbon.[45]

Hughes, notwithstanding and still in obedience to the topic of excess, alters figures. The number of days during which Funchal was at the pirates' mercy is made to be fifteen. The number of the dead is doubled and, though praising the resisting figure of Da Câmara, the poet makes it possible for three of Dom Sebastian's ships to arrive and chase the French in retreat as far as Ponta do Sol where, at nightfall, they manage to escape.

The bravery of the settlers' descendants was kept high for a large period of time. Both Zargo's son, Joanne Gonçalves da Câmara, and his grandson, Simão Gonçalves da Câmara, maintain the tradition of Zargo's exploits against the moors.

The Lusitan's star, however, was doomed to grow pale. And so it does. With the ballad 'Dom Sebastian', in which his defeat at Alcáz'quivir in August 1578 is narrated, arrives that ill-omened hour, the effects of which will be most poignantly felt in 1580 and for the next six decades to come under the Spanish occupation.

Dom Sebastian's 'drunkenness for power' had the most contemptible consequences for the greatest of Lusitania's sons. Misery was in store for Pacheco, Albuquerque, Castro, and, of course, Camões. The latter, in a letter to D. Francisco de Almeida, laments – 'enfim, acabarei a vida e verão todos que fui tam afeiçoado à minha pátria, que não me contentei de morrer nela, mas com ela'[46].

Almost three hundred years past, Hughes still hears the exclamation 'Este é um dia de Dom Sebastião', and witnesses that the delirious hope that Sebastian will reappear is not yet even near to being totally extinguished.[47]

The negative effects of Philip II's occupation were more acutely felt in Madeira under the rule of the Spanish Governor Herrera. One should think that after the Glorious Revolution of 1640 things would improve. The truth is they did not, the reason being, as Hughes testifies, that

> successive Lisbon governments have for many years past treated this fine island with neglect, and one of the most delusive measures ever practised was that by which its status was raised from a Colony to the sterile dignity of a Province of the Kingdom. The consequence is that it has neither colonial advantages nor is it treated as an integral part of the realm.[48]

The whole of Canto VIII is dedicated to Inês de Castro. Hughes gives it a completely new tripartite configuration — The Murder, The Revenge, and The Atonement. It is an espisode which should be thoroughly looked into, for no Portuguese author had given it similar treatment. Both in Camões's *Lusíadas* and in António Ferreira's *Castro* there are references to the revenge and atonement, but not their actual minute description. Hughes achieves, at times, overwhelming dramatic intensity in the course of this episode. He writes lovingly of Inês and presents Pedro's ungovernable wrath very much in the nature of Achilles's.

Other ballads of a less haughty nature abound in the poem. Some have to do with ordinary life in the island, as is the case of the 'Song of the Grape-Gatherers' and 'The Vine is a Sociable Plant'. Another, 'The Sugar Loaves', justifies the existence of these loaves on the arms of the city of Funchal. The historical ballad 'The Eye of Camoens', on the other hand, tells us how Camões lost his eye in order to save his father's life. This came to pass during a battle against the moors which would prove his valour and earn him his knighthood. Yet other

ballads deal with tales told and retold like that of 'The Beautiful Nun' Clementina, 'The Song of the Pastora' or even 'Veríssimo's Beacon'.

Even though Hughes says the latter had been versified by an island poet, I have not managed to confirm its authenticity for no one I speak to, whether historian or anthropologist, seems to have heard of it.

It is the tale of yet another heart sore pair made to suffer by that which Camões so gracefully termed as 'Tu, só tu, puro amor, com força crua,/Que os corações humanos tanto obriga'[49], She, the lovely Beatriz, daughter of a wealthy 'Senhor', falls in love with Veríssimo, much beneath her socially. In fury, her father locks her in a tower in Santa Cruz, and Veríssimo raises a hermitage in Point S. Lourenço. There, every night, he lights a beacon she can see and so keeps her company and kindles her love for years. Unlike the former tragedies, this story has a happy ending for Beatriz's father eventually dies, she marries Veríssimo and he is made 'Senhor' of all her father's property.

However surprising it may seem, it is only in Canto IX that the poet encounters his muse. After having gone Eastward all the way along the Northern coast from S. Vicente, he eventually reaches and climbs the Penha d'Águia. Desolately, the poet remarks that this promontory is all that is left of Tristão's heritage. What a falling off there was! In default of heirs, his Captaincy reverted to the Crown in 1540, and the remnant was ruthlessly cut up during the Spanish occupation. A sole rock now represented a man in time so great.[50]

Meditating on these passings on, it is in his elegiac ballad 'Call to the Heart-Weary' that the poet shares his melancholy with his muse. Metamorphosed into the rocky wall itself, she gives her 'tresses to the wind,/Dishevelled, wild, austere'. With ecstasy on fire, the poet soon realises that the lyre of 'gay and festive tone' is for others. What might have seemed so in the poem was but a 'transient dream'. To us he ordains

> Dare not to touch my sacred lyre,
> With hand profanely rude,
> Ye who partake not the delights
> Which dwell in solitude.[51]

One cannot ignore the fact that the poet is already ill. He makes no effort to hide it towards the end of the poem. All his philosophising, on the binaries of life, on good and evil, on great men misunderstood by society because ahead of their time, on the craving of some for gold and power, gradually increases in tone from Canto IV onwards. In Canto X he openly admits that

> There is a joy which ev'n from sickness springs—
> To feel that while the clay's to ruin hurled,
> The struggling soul can soar on purer wings,
> And fly from that which calls itself The World.[52]

Though an island fit for the Gods, and equally fit for the convalescent invalids, Hughes knew that Madeira could do nothing for him, and this is perfectly clear in the last stanza.

> But I, whom God hath summoned, here i' the core
> Feel life ebb gently ere first manhood flee,
> And walk deep musing on the solemn shore
> That girds the Ocean of Eternity.[53]

The very same shores that lulled those who arrived in greatness and blessed those who departed for the sake of great deeds, are still, our shores, always and forever the repository of the island's own memory.

It is José António Monteiro Teixeira who best characterises the author and his work. The French Consul at Funchal when Hughes was here, Teixeira is, curiously enough, considered by him as 'the only genuine poet ever produced by the island'[54]. In a sonnet addressed to Hughes on May 16, 1845, Teixeira unavailingly wishes the poet long years, and in it best expresses the just value of *The Ocean Flower*, a living chest of Phæacian treasures which recreate and invigorate our collective memory.

Sonnet

Das aves desta Insula a harmonia,
Dos seus montes o quadro, o odor fragrante,
De Anna e Machim a história táo tocante,
Ah! tanto int'resse incognito jazia!
Cheio de éxtase, e insólita energia,
Ergues-te, qual Apollo radiante;
E exornas tudo em mágico descante,
Que do Lethes as agoas desafia.
Do teu estro a Madeira penhorada,
Ouvindo os meigos sons da tua lyra,
De um nobre orgulho exulta arrebatada!
Musa, em quem sacro ardor nas veias gira,
Longos annos a tí, que, destra Fada,
Sabes tornar em oiro o que te inspira![55]

Notes and References

1 T. M. Hughes, *The Ocean Flower*, Canto I, st. 34, p. 123.

2 Hughes, Canto I, st. 1, p. 117.

3 Hughes, Canto I, st. 2, p. 117.

4 Hughes, Canto I, st. 13, p.119

5 Hughes, Canto I, st. 36, p. 124.

6 Hughes, Canto I, st. 7, p. 118.

7 Hughes, Canto I, st. 10, p. 119.

8 Hughes, Canto I, st. 15, p. 120.

9 Hughes, Canto I, sts. 18, 27 and 41, pp. 120, 122 and 125.

10 1) O objecto da epopeia é o passado épico nacional, o 'passado absoluto', segundo a terminologia de Goethe e Schiller; 2) a fonte da epopeia é a tradição nacional (e não a experiência individual e a livre intervenção que dela deriva); 3) o mundo épico está separado do presente, isto é, do tempo do cantor (do autor e do seu auditório), por uma distância épica absoluta.', in Carlos Reis et al., *Dicionário de Narratologia*, p. 129.

11 Cabral do Nascimento, *Lugares Selectos de Autores Portugueses que Escreveram sobre o Arquipélago da Madeira*, p. 25.

12 José Augusto dos Santos Alves, '«Descobrimentos», Fenómeno de Opinião e de Recorrência Histórica na Imprensa Madeirense (1821-1850)', pp. 207-11.

13 Alves, p. 209.

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