

Book Review

Lino, Patrícia. *O kit de sobrevivência do descobridor português no mundo anticolonial.* Prefácio de Anna M. Klobucka, posfácio de Patrícia Martins Marcos, Douda Correria, 2020.

O kit de sobrevivência do descobridor português no mundo anticolonial, published in late 2020, is the creation of Patrícia Lino, a Portuguese researcher, poet, multimedia artist, and Assistant Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her book is ostensibly an instruction manual for forty items included in a fictitious “survival kit” meant to help Portuguese national chauvinists navigate the rough waters of contemporary political correctness, multiculturalism, and historical revisionism. Rather than freeze-dried meals, flashlights, and Band-Aids, Lino’s kit includes “DescobriMENTOS” (discovery-themed mints), a “banquinho racial,” or stool on which Portuguese neo-colonialists can stand “na eventualidade de cruzar-se com um ou mais membros das comunidades das ex-colónias portuguesas” (40), and the boardgame “Colónia,” “a versão colonial portuguesa do Monopólio” and a “jogo de vencedores” (96) in which the jail square is replaced by Tarrafal, the Estado Novo’s infamous prison camp, and players lay claim to territories simply by shouting “é meu!” Not even Portugal’s emblematic sour cherry liqueur, included here as “Engenhinha,” “a versão colonial da Ginjinha” (18), escapes her satirical gaze. Lino’s design principle is straightforward: rather than “putting a bird on it,” as recommended in the famous *Portlandia* sketch, she frequently puts the Portuguese national arms on it, whether “it” is a ticket, dish, or LP. Where the arms are absent, one may find a miniature image of Vasco da Gama or a caravel. This highly superficial version of Portuguese national self-branding is, of course, ridiculous—and intentionally so. Though as Anna M. Klobucka suggests in her thoughtful preface, it should resonate with those who have experienced Portugal’s recent tourism boom and associated proliferation of gift shops selling “authentic” Portuguese wares.

Portuguese and Portugal-literate readers can enjoy the *Kit*, with its silly items, pithy portmanteaus, and sight gags, for its ironic humor alone. That several of the items described, including my personal favorite, the “Sebastiana,” a fog machine used to conjure the still-missing Dom Sebastião, would be difficult if not impossible to fit into a reasonably-sized kit adds to the book’s comedic value. But Lino is doing something more than telling jokes: she is using humor as a vehicle to intervene in Portugal’s ongoing memory battles, which in Portugal as in the U.S. have centered of late on monuments and museums, such as Lisbon’s proposed Museu dos Descobrimentos. Lino has represented the latter in an art piece, a “poema miniatura” entitled “Museu dos Descobrimentos: Portugal 2019,” as a building composed of three stacked caskets—a visual depiction of colonialism’s human cost. Lino links what, per Nietzsche, we might term the “monumental” narrative of Portuguese history and the nostalgia for empire to the anxiety of aggrieved, mainly white, male Portuguese “navigators” in the face of their perceived marginalization in the post-colonial, multicultural present. A number of objects included in the *Kit* seek to alleviate their anxiety. For example, the directions for the “Bola Mapa-Mundi,” a squishy stress ball in the form of a globe, instruct the reader: “Use o marcador de cor preta para circundar o antigo império português. Repita PORTUGAL É O CENTRO DO MUNDO, até acalmar-se” (15).

Elsewhere Lino highlights colonialism’s repressive gender politics, as in her instructions for another game, “Quem Descobriu o Mundo?,” a question to which male players must respond “eu” or “nós,” while female players are required to respond with “eles.” In stating at the end of these instructions that “[a] duração do jogo depende inteiramente do grau de dedicação dos participantes,” Lino hits on one of the *Kit*’s central observations: imperial nostalgia and national chauvinism are both inane and self-perpetuating (146). As for the “Remendo Imperial Personalizado,” a patch created “para servir um dos propósitos centrais da lógica colonial: tapar buracos,” she notes that it can be applied to a man’s clothing “pela sua mulher, mãe ou irmã com o ferro de engomar, reminiscência metafórica do ferro de marcar” (74-75). Lino’s passing reference to the branding iron of slavery—an example of pitch-black humor and detached delivery that would make Machado de Assis proud—is one of several allusions to colonial brutality included in the *Kit*. Lino’s interlocking critique of empire and heteronormative masculinity—“espelhos dialogantes,” in the words of Patrícia

Martins Marcos, from her postface (198)—reaches its hideous, absurd conclusion in the *Kit*'s final entry, for the album *Um Amor Colonial*, by the fictitious Portuguese band, Esteróis do Mar. Over twelve tracks, the album details a colonial-era “love story” between Pedro, a Portuguese sailor, and Luciana, an enslaved Angolan woman. The album’s song titles reveal that their “relationship” consisted of repeated, attempted rape (“Luciana Foge de Pedro,” “Luciana Volta a Fugir de Pedro”), and murder (“Pedro Mata Luciana”). Pedro’s sadness after killing Luciana is described across two songs, in five (!) parts (see “Pobre Pedro I-III” and “Pedro Chora I-II”). And his crime is seemingly excused in the title to the album’s perfectly named soap opera adaptation, *Basta Ele Amar*. The message here is clear: colonialism represents coercion as love, and excuses the murder of a “colonial” woman, especially if enslaved, as a crime of passion less important than the male, Portuguese killer’s emotional plight.

To conclude, *O Kit de Sobrevivência do Descobridor Português no Mundo Anticolonial* is several things: a well-crafted and consistently funny exercise in ironic humor, a smart consumerist satire, and above all, a mordant critique of Portuguese colonialism and of those “navigators” still in the thrall of the “glória de mandar,” as the prophetic Velho do Restelo of the *Lusíadas* put it centuries ago, at the symbolic outset of Portugal’s imperial misadventures.

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