

Book Review

Santos, Gilda, Luci Ruas, and Teresa Cristina Cerdeira, editors. *Sena & Sophia: Centenários*. Bazar do Tempo, 2020.

Sena & Sophia: Centenários collects reflections from dozens of scholars situated throughout the Portuguese-speaking world on the bodies of work produced by two of the twentieth century's most prodigious Portuguese poets—Jorge de Sena and Sophia de Mello—following the international congress held in Rio de Janeiro in 2019 in honor of the centennial anniversary of their respective births. Sena and Sophia were lifelong friends whose work has often been drawn together by the coincidence of their having been born four days apart in 1919. This volume celebrates the works of both separately while also engaging with their correspondence and respective influence on each other as poets. Due to its nature as a celebration, *Sena & Sophia* rarely takes a harsh critical stance against either poet or their works, which makes this book a pleasant read, though at times a little unbalanced.

The book contains contributions by a variety of authors, including Ana Luísa Amaral, Federico Bertolazzi, Margarida Braga Neves, and Rui Vieira Nery, among others, which have been arranged into a cohesive volume by Gilda Santos, Luci Ruas, and Teresa Cristina Cerdeira. Santos founded the Jorge de Sena Center at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) in 1999 and directed it until Cerdeira assumed her position in 2005. Cerdeira ran the center until 2011, during which time she also edited the journal *Metamorfoses*. Ruas currently teaches Portuguese literature through the Jorge de Sena Center and is the current editor of *Metamorfoses*. These three scholars have combined their intellectual zeal for literature to create a lucid volume dedicated to the namesake of their program and his lauded counterpart, Sophia.

Sena & Sophia contains a total of twenty-one essays, divided into three major sections with two introductory pieces. These introductions, written by Cerdeira and Luís Filipe Castro Mendes, reflect generally on the lives of Sena and Sophia and the importance of the centenary celebration. The first section, “Sena: ‘Capitão de tempestades,’” includes sixteen essays focused on Jorge de Sena. One standout is Rui Vieira Nery’s “O ‘Pick Up’ de Jorge de Sena: Sobre o suporte material da Arte de música,” in which Nery examines Sena’s passion for music and the musicality of his work. The second section, “Sophia: ‘No esplendor da maresia,’” features twelve essays on the work and legacy of Sophia de Mello. Of note is Constance

von Krüger's "Paisagem e palavra; Sophia e silêncio," a short but impactful exploration of Sophia's relationship with the ocean in her poetry. The final section of the book, "Sena & Sophia & outras vozes: 'Cartas poemas e notícias,'" contains eleven essays that consider the works of both Sena and Sophia in contrast to each other and several of their contemporaries, including Natália Correia, Cecília Meireles, and Gastão Cruz.

Each of the authors featured in *Sena & Sophia* demonstrates a wide breadth of knowledge about their subjects. Though the style and content of their essays are wildly disparate, they share a consistent tone of scholarly affection for Sena and Sophia, which gives the book a unified identity, as opposed to feeling like a haphazard collection. While some of the contributors are more verbose in their prose, the readability of the book overall is not too prohibitive for non-scholars. The readability and variety of the collection are the book's greatest strengths, as each essay is accessible enough for those not familiar with either Sena or Sophia while also substantive and diverse enough to provide significant interest for experts.

Because *Sena & Sophia* is such a joy to read, it is hard to pinpoint any major weaknesses. However, two minor ones do rise to the surface for the critical reader. First, due to its nature as a celebration of both Sena and Sophia, the authors rarely approach either with less than veneration. This is not a weakness for a celebratory event, but in book format, it can leave the reader wondering if the subjects could do no wrong. Second, there is a small imbalance in the number of essays dedicated to each poet: the section on Sena contains sixteen essays, while the section on Sophia contains only twelve. This is perhaps nitpicking, but for a volume devoted to two authors lauded as equally important, equal coverage of both should have been a top priority.

Sena & Sophia would prove a fruitful addition to the libraries of those who work with the mid-twentieth century in general, especially because of the third section on the correspondence between the poets and their contemporaries. While this engaging collection of essays is naturally perfect for the shelves of scholars interested in either poet, it is also accessible enough to interest non-experts as well.

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