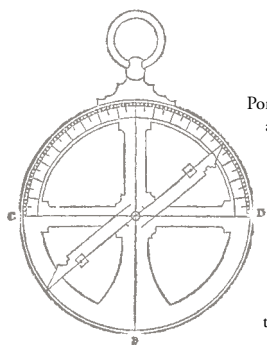




Lisbon to Macao: The Occluded Geographies of Portugal's Discoveries

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Portugal's was the pioneer empire in more ways than one, and it exhibited all the defects as well as all the glories of the age it inaugurated. No nation of the fifteenth or sixteenth century ever saw more, reported a greater variety of things, or left more of its imprint on the modern world, whose chief characteristic, after all, is mobility. (Diffie and Winus 1996: 434)

Macao makes much of its Portuguese past, and the winding alleyways and colonial architecture are constant reminders of the first Europeans to settle in the Far East. (Cheng 2003: 1)

INTRODUCTION

TWIN(ED) TOWERS

On what basis do the claims to primacy embodied in the two citations above rest? To consider this question, this paper will examine several emblematic buildings and the relations between them. We begin five years ago in Manhattan, when on 4 July 2004, the start of construction of the Freedom Tower that replaced the fallen twin towers of the World Trade Center was marked by a ceremony. The cornerstone, laid at Ground

Zero, forms a base to what is scheduled to be amongst the world's tallest buildings. At the US Independence Day ceremony, New York State Governor George Pataki described the anticipated tower as 'a new symbol of American strength and confidence.' But while New York's mayor and the state governor were unveiling the stone, another televised drama was taking place across the Atlantic. In Lisbon, the Portuguese national team faced Greece in the finals of the Euro 2004 Football Championship. The sporting events in Lisbon gained much larger television audiences than the ceremony in Manhattan. For both Greece and Portugal this match was a significant national event. Neither had qualified for a major final before. The match was eagerly anticipated all over Europe. Millions tuned in to watch Portugal lose to Greece, in front of a shocked Portuguese home crowd. The authors of this paper both watched the match via the BBC. Coverage began with shots of Lisbon, the gathering crowds in the stadium and moments of drama from the elimination rounds of the tournament. The BBC had billed this game as 'Founders of Civilisation' versus 'Discoverers of the World' and before the reporting moved to the pitch, viewers were told of Portugal's key historic role in discovery and exploration. The opening panoramas included Lisbon's

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waterfront Tower of Belém; a monument to those discoveries and every bit as symbolic as the Freedom Tower promises to be. This paper will return to that riverside Tower of Belém—and to its links with other towers. Our wider focus however will be on another international spectacle that was staged a decade ago in Portugal: EXPO '98, the last universal exposition of the 20th century, which received nearly 11 million visitors in the summer of 1998. EXPO '98 opened in Lisbon on 22 May and ran until 30 September, 1998. An officially sanctioned world exposition, as recognized by the BIE (*Bureau International des Expositions*) this was to be a 'specialized exposition', with a specific theme: '*The Oceans: A Heritage for the Future*.' EXPO '98 aimed to take its place as part of a rich tradition of international expositions alongside (for example) the first generally recognized world exposition of London

in 1851. The intention was to raise national self-confidence and 'to convince Portuguese people that they are as able as they were 500 years ago' (White 1996 cited in Corkill, 1999: 41). The idea for holding an international exposition in Lisbon was originally voiced by the National Committee for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries, a body set up in the mid-1980s to highlight the historic importance of the Portuguese discoveries made during the last decades of the 15th century (a period that reached its culmination with the first sea passage to India, by Vasco da Gama in 1498, and the discovery of Brazil in 1500 by Pedro Álvares Cabral). The overall EXPO '98 project was of strategic importance for Portugal as a whole and Lisbon in particular, since it would revitalise an urban area covering nearly 340 hectares of ideally situated, eastern Lisbon, Tagus riverfront real estate.¹ Over the course of its one hundred and thirty-two days, some 11 million visitors came to the Lisbon World Exposition

Torre de Belém, Lisbon.



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to celebrate the heritage of the world's oceans and to commemorate Portugal's vision of a heritage of imperial discovery.

This paper examines the ways that EXPO '98 drew upon imaginative geographies of exploration and discovery. It does this, however, in order to destabilise these narratives and to open them to creative reinterpretations. Official Portuguese narratives about the Portuguese key role in discovery (like the claims of the imperial order in Portugal that persisted until the mid-1970s) cannot be understood in their own terms (Santos 2002). Thus we examine how the vision of Portuguese empire and discovery offered by EXPO '98 occluded other geographies that were intrinsic to the 'discoveries.' Such critical thinking about EXPO '98 (in the context of prior Portuguese expositions earlier in the 20th century) is thus suggestive; for Portuguese historical and geographical narratives continue to claim a pioneering and original Portuguese role in exploration and discovery and hence in the making of a putatively Western-centred modernity.

Our study opens in the Lisbon suburb of Belém (a few kilometres from the main EXPO '98 site) which served as the location for earlier Portuguese expositions, notably the Exposition of the Portuguese World organised by the right-wing imperial *Estado Novo* (New State) in 1940 and whose monuments—as we briefly examine below—were incorporated into that exposition and remain key tourist sites and icons of 'Portugueseness'. We will begin, therefore, in Belém, and set out some of the ways that it has become an iconic place within Portuguese narratives of identity. This serves as a prelude to our examination of EXPO '98 and allows us to trace the continuities in the way that discovery and exploration are narrated as Western projects whose key point of origin is held to be Portugal. In this task, we will focus on the famous medieval tower at Belém, which has found itself appropriated with prior Portuguese colonial expositions (such as that of 1940) as a symbol of Portugal's genius for exploration. Noting how the tower at Belém has since been officially twinned with an even older riverside tower in Seville (*Torre del Oro*)² and is now echoed by a new *Vasco da Gama* tower upstream at the EXPO '98 site enables us to uncover more hybrid geographies of exploration and discovery and the making of modernity.

Torre Vasco da Gama, Parque Expo, Lisbon.



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THE POINT OF ORIGINS?

In his collection *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes critiqued the bourgeois and clerical rendition of 'landscapes' and 'sights' found in tourist guidebooks. He was particularly scathing about what later commentators have described as the 'tourist gaze' and the ways in which it was being directed to monuments and vistas divested of their deeper political and contested contexts and of the social relations of their production. Thus Barthes (1993: 76) commented on the famous series of *Blue Guides*: 'By reducing geography to the description of the uninhabited world of monuments, the *Blue Guide* expresses a mythology.' Barthes (1993) thus notes how, for example:

Spain according to the *Blue Guide* knows only one type of space, that which weaves, across a few nondescript lacunae, a close web of churches, vestries, reredoses, crosses, alter-curtains, spires (always octagonal) [etc].... To select only monuments suppresses at one stroke the reality of the land and that of its people. (pp. 75-6)

Allow us, however, to cite from the 1996 edition of the *Blue Guide to Portugal*. The guide directs visitors to Lisbon towards the suburb of Belém along the shores of the *Tejo* [Tagus], where, amongst other icons of Portugal's and Europe's 'heroic' age of colonial 'exploration and discovery, they may visit the 'splendid' *Torre de Belém*:

Constructed by Francisco de Arruda between 1515 and 1520, and dedicated to St Vincent.... Its main external features are the square tower adorned with *ajimece* windows [an arabesque style] and Moorish balconies and the advanced platform whose battlements bear the shield of the Order of Christ.... On either side are columns topped by armillary spheres [globes], the device of Dom Manuel.... Stairs climb to the flat roof, providing a fine panoramic view of Lisbon and towards the mouth of the Tagus estuary. (Robertson, 1996: 133)

More widely, Belém (the Portuguese name for Bethlehem) signifies birth, origins and claims of divinely ordained destiny. This essential tourist site/sight for visitors to Lisbon (and in representations of the city), contains an extraordinary concentration of icons of Portuguese exploration and discovery; a gigantic mid-20th century monument to the discoveries above a mosaic map of the world (a gift from Portugal's ally of

apartheid South Africa in the 1960s), the 15th century *Mosteiro dos Jerónimos* (which houses the tombs of the navigator Vasco da Gama and Luís de Camões, the poet who described the Portuguese exploits in his epic poem *Os Lusíadas*), and of course the *Torre de Belém*. Both the tower and the monastery are constructed—as the *Blue Guide* tells us—in a classical style, termed (since the 19th century) *Manueline* (after Dom Manuel I, 1495–1521). This is an architectural genre rich in colonial motifs such as nautical ropes, tropical palms, sails and sextants. Moreover, as Cheng (1999) notes:

The Jerónimos Monastery not only contains several magnificent examples of the flamboyant Gothic style (known in Portugal as Manueline style), but also gains its fame by housing the sarcophagi of Vasco da Gama and Luís Vaz de Camões. The former was Portugal's most valiant navigator while the latter was one of its most famous poets who composed the epic *Os Lusíadas*... (first published in Lisbon in 1572). The hero in the epic is the historical Vasco da Gama... [Camões] aspiration in *Os Lusíadas* was to do for Portugal what he believed Homer had done for the Greeks and Virgil for the Romans: the epic was to chronicle heroic deeds in order to reawaken his countrymen to the values and pride that would renew the nation... The ten-canto *Lusíadas* interweaves with historical reality and myth-making. It is a collection of lyrical hymns and poems celebrating the epic grandeur and the Portuguese 'atrevimento' (pride and presumption) in venturing into the seas during the Age of Discovery. Camões obviously modelled the literary tradition after the inventions of Homer's and Virgil's classical epic fictions. Like the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, *Os Lusíadas* has given the poem its place in 'world literature.'... However, similar to da Gama's presumptuous transgression into uncharted seas, Camões stacked his own claim—another version of overweening pride—in considering his poem superior to Homer and Virgil because it celebrated a heroism that was not fictitious. (pp. 12-3)

A more recent cultural centre (constructed in time to host a 1992 EU summit) and a sombre memorial to the thousands of Portuguese dead of the colonial wars reinforce the sense that this place embodies Portugal's world-historical mission of discovery and colonialism (as

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well as the violent struggle for decolonization and post-colonial rehabilitation). A guide to recent architecture in Lisbon notes how the Belém Cultural Centre:

is a bold symbol of Lisbon's architectural, economic and political renewal.... The origins of the centre's urban framework lie in the urban design policy of the [1926-74] New State... when [at the end of the 1930s]... it staged 'The Portuguese World Exhibition' to exalt the country's nationalism. The modern building is constructed on the same site and is now the largest cultural edifice built... since the downfall of Salazar's dictatorial rule. (Santos 1998: 112)

Indeed, Belém also formed a central part of a series of state-sponsored expositions through the 20th century, most prominently in 1940 under Portugal's right wing New State regime led by António Salazar (Louro 1996), culminating in the EXPO '98 World Exposition, where a number of symbolic voyages of discovery were re-enacted by replica caravels.

IMPERIALISM AS EXHIBIT

Nearly two centuries of world fairs have become a fertile subject for critical commentary as sites where a commodity world was on show, as imperial spectacles, and as pictures of capitalism and a world of 'resources' (Olds and Ley, 1988). From London's Great Exhibition of 1851 (generally acknowledged as a forerunner), through the World Exhibition held in Paris in 1889, through attention to further imitations and elaborations of expositions in places such as Barcelona, Berlin, Seville, Chicago and Toronto, critical accounts have excavated the mode of representation evident at the world's fairs. According to Gregory, who re-examines the work of Mitchell (1989), these exhibited landscapes of bourgeois and imperial ideology have rested upon a:

process of enframing... [that] conjures up a framework that seems to exist apart from, and prior to the objects it contains... a highly particular way of thinking about—and, indeed being in—the world, so Mitchell argues, which is peculiar to European modernity. (Gregory 1994: 37)

Subsequent work on world's fairs has examined a wide range, from 19th century Stockholm (Pred 1995) and Chicago (Domosh 2002) via inter-war Paris (Gouda 1995; Strohmayer 1996) to late 20th century

Seville (Harvey 1996) on the quincentenary of the putative 'discovery' of the Americas and the Swiss tradition of worlds fairs (Söderström 2001)—all sites of what Mitchell (1989) had described as 'The world-as-exhibition.' However this critical literature has largely overlooked Portuguese events. Thus, Power (2002) and Sieber (2001), on whose accounts we shall draw here, are—as far as we are aware—the only sustained critical accounts of EXPO '98. Both locate it as an elaboration of a tradition of large-scale Portuguese expositions earlier during the 20th century (notably Porto in 1934 and Belém in 1940). Moreover, Power and Sieber show how such past Portuguese expositions and EXPO '98 have all been 'exemplary' in what came to typify expositions more widely: the mix of money-making (in particular related to dealings around land and property), imperialist ideology and privileging of Western science and 'civilisation' and its putative contribution to progress and modernity. Domosh (2002) for example, points out that world fairs have classically embodied:

The discourse of civilization/savagery...an ideology that orders both time and space in a hierarchy [an] ideology that 'naturalized' the 'superiority of some humans over others'.... Within this discourse human history was envisaged as an evolutionary process that began in a remote past as a stage of savagery, and that moved inexorably and inevitably through various stages of barbarism to reach civilization. (p. 186)

Moreover, this evolution was held to be pioneered by a self-confident 'West,' and expositions served as sites in which this western role could be celebrated amidst a parodying of the non-West. This imperial aspect of world fairs has lessened with the decline of formal empires. However, key aspects of it endure and are reformulated in the technological and commodity celebration of more recent expositions.

We will examine the forms of this reformulation at EXPO '98. This requires a return to earlier Portuguese expositions. All these are shown to have rested on the myth of the originality (and with this, the frequently assumed 'superiority') of Western knowledge. We will reconsider the claims of Portugal's (and wider European and Western) uniqueness as a pure source of science, commerce, civilisation, and modernity and as the original points of discovery and

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progress. We begin the next section with an account of the extraordinarily dense history of expositions in Portugal, culminating in a critical account of EXPO '98—the last universal exposition of a century characterised by an excess of world's fairs and similar events. The account of EXPO '98 enables us to specify how imperialist discourse (developed as an ideology of empire in Portugal's right-wing regime from the late 1920s to the revolutionary rupture of April 1974, when Europe's most enduring overseas empire was finally swept away) has been reworked in 'post-colonial' Portugal. It also permits an interrogation of the wider geographical and historical assumptions on which imperial discourse rested and suggests a means whereby they may be deconstructed; enabling occluded geographies and alternative imaginaries to (re)surface.

CONSTRUCTING PORTUGAL

A CENTURY OF PORTUGUESE EXPOSITIONS

As the dictatorship of Salazar deepened its hold on power in the 1930s, it drew increasingly on a number of historical and imperial themes in an attempt to bolster its hegemony and legitimacy: what critical observers have termed 'the labyrinth of myths' (Guimarães 1987) or have referred to as the 'metaphysics of colonialism' (Figueiredo 1975). This official 'mythology/metaphysics' celebrated Portugal's *missão de civilização* (civilising mission), through the construction of a particular mythology—a potent mix of historical, religious and geographical themes and metaphors that scripted Portugal as a crucial font of civilisation with a grand mission to *lusitanizar* other peoples and by extension, as a great power at the heart of an empire that stretched *de Minho a Timor* (from the Minho to Timor) (Cairo 2006; Sidaway and Power 2005). Whilst these re-incorporated earlier expressions of mission (and messianic claims), the *Estado Novo* increasingly had at its disposal the modern ideological state apparatuses of mass media and education (as well as the 'traditional' religious modes). These made for an increased administrative capacity of the state to codify and disseminate an imperial geopolitics, perpetuating the legend of Portugal as a centre of world history. In particular, the *Estado Novo* was able to draw (from the early 1930s onwards) on an imperial broadcasting service that was in turn closely mirrored by and linked

into specific 'local' broadcasting networks across the empire (Power 2000). Lisbon (despite the dire poverty of many of its residents) was energetically promoted as the great imperial capital (see Fernandes 2003; Ferreira 1987). A key expression of this was the series of conferences, expositions and spectacles in Lisbon and Porto in the 1930s and 1940s which were aimed at 'reformulating Portugal's wounded sense of incomplete modernization in a newly affirmative light' (Pina-Cabral 2002: 68). Led by the National Propaganda Secretariat, these were associated with wider urban renewal programmes aiming to shape local infrastructures in areas where they were staged, leaving a lasting physical legacy that still shapes the urban cultural landscapes of Portugal today and is still very much a part of the economy of its 'visual culture' (Sapega 2002).³ This includes the decorative motifs that adorn the interior and exterior of many public buildings, whole neighbourhoods constructed during the fascist impulses of this period, and the many statues, public parks, gardens, castles, palaces and churches carefully restored by the regime. All of these key sites and places of imperial memory stand as testament to the attempts by the New State to embed and enshrine (within the popular political and cultural imagination of Portuguese citizens) a sense of Portugal's historical destiny in the empire. They were replicated in all Portuguese 'overseas territories,' from Angola to East Timor. State buildings, banks and monuments, maps, school textbooks and the postage stamps that enabled communication within the imperial space all celebrated an historic sense of Portugal's destiny as a font of discovery and exploration (Cusack 2005). Moreover, these discourses continue to shape the national imagination of what it means to be Portuguese.

This moment framed an enduring vision of Portugal, marking out the notion of it as a pioneering metropolitan centre (Sieber 2001; Ribeiro 2002). In discussing the conferences, expositions and museums of Salazar's cultural vision, da Silva notes something of their frequency, scope and number, which is worth quoting at length:

[in 1930] the National Colonial Congress; in 1933, the National Imperial Congress; in 1934, the Military Colonial Congress, the First Congress of Colonization, the Porto Colonial Exposition, the First Congress of Commercial

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“PORTUGAL NÃO É UM PAÍS PEQUENO”



"Portugal não é um país pequeno" (Portugal is not a small country). Map organised by Henrique Galvão. Penafiel: Câmara Municipal, ca. 1935.

Interchange with the Colonies and the First National Congress of Colonial Anthropology; in 1936 it was the occasion of the First Economic Conference of the Portuguese Colonial Empire and of the Conference of Colonial High Culture and, a year afterwards of the Historical Exposition of Occupation and of the First Historical Congress of the Portuguese Expansion in the World. Publications as diverse as *Cadernos Coloniais* [Colonial Notes], *O Mundo Português* [the Portuguese World] and the *Boletim da Agência Geral das Colónias* [the Bulletin of the General Agency of the Colonies] broached the imperial theme on the most varied angles... the Portuguese Colonial Library (on the XIX century), the Collection for the Empire and the Collection of the Classics of the Portuguese Expansion in the World; in the schools were organised 'colonial weeks'... annual competitions

of Colonial Literature were also organised... (Silva 1992: 372)

In 1940, when much of Europe was enduring occupation, Belém witnessed a grand *Exposição do Mundo Português* [Exposition of the Portuguese World]. A few years earlier, in its second city of Porto, the Portuguese authorities had staged a similarly opulent *Exposição Colonial Portuguesa* [Portuguese Colonial Exposition] where reconstructed villages from various parts of the empire and a 'typical' Macao street were major attractions. Whilst Portugal remained formally neutral in the War, the fascist elements and orientation of the regime led by Antonio Salazar were evident at both expositions. More strikingly however, the imperial pretences of Portugal's variant of fascism and the geography of its own occupation of other lands were celebrated, amidst claims that 'Portugueseness' [*Portugalidade*] amounted to a special vocation for exploration and discovery.

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Thus, in Porto in 1934, the *Palácio da Exposição Histórica da Ocupação*:

had a high patriotic significance...as a maximum expression of the genesis of our force, of our sentiment as a colonial people that, five centuries ago initiated their history overseas [*do Além-Mar*], upon giving new worlds to the world, charting routes, destroying myths, discovering, conquering, teaching, peopling, civilising and spreading faith to the remote parts of the earth! (Santos 1937: 6)

For the New State and its 'provincial' representatives, these and other smaller scale expositions represented a living colonial 'lesson' of the highest moral value, illustrating the 'values and heroisms of the *Pátria*', demonstrating the effort in terms of

'lives, dedications and sacrifices made in the name of maintaining Portugal's historic heritage' (Santos 1937: 6). The *Exposição do Mundo Português* (Exposition of the Portuguese World) in 1940 marked the high point of this nationalist-imperialist propaganda (Almeida 2005) and sought to illustrate the 'modernisation' of Portugal since the 'national revolution' in 1926, depicting the country as progressive and modern. The Estado Novo used this exhibition to diffuse and legitimate the dictatorship's values, ideology and specific representation of historiography through the use of carefully planned myths, images and symbols, including a number of decorative sculptures of Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan (Fernão de Magalhães). The aim was to symbolise the spirit of discovery and to construct this as something irrevocably woven into the ancestral fabric of

the nation, part of Portugal's 'indelible connection' to the seas. The exhibition site in Belém took over two years to complete and involved some 5000 workers. With the *torre* incorporated into its fabric of empire and nation, the exposition was scripted as an embodiment and celebration of Portugal's place in the world and global destiny.

Related construction also took place in Macao in 1940, a place that 'played an important symbolic role in the Portuguese empire' (Pina-Cabral 2002: 68). In front of the Leal Senado (the main government building in Macao located in the town square) a statue of a Macanese military officer, Colonel Vicente Nicolau de Mesquita (who had led Portuguese forces against the Chinese military and 'secured' continued Portuguese rule in



Monument to the Discoveries, Belém, Lisbon.

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the 1840s), was unveiled in 1940 along with a statue nearby of the mid-19th century Portuguese governor Ferreira do Amaral, who had been killed in attempts to extend the territory under Portuguese control at the expense of China. Both statues coincided with the *Exposição do Mundo Português* back in Portugal. Both stood 'as blatant affirmation of colonial pride' (Pina-Cabral 2002: 68), while their presence 'shouted Portugueseness' and aimed 'to prove' to the Chinese what actual diplomatic negotiations had never managed to do: that Macao was an inalienable part of Portugal.'

After years of pressure from Beijing, Amaral's statue was eventually shipped to Lisbon in the early 1990s, where it now resides in a park. Vicente Nicolau de Mesquita's suffered a worse fate. It was torn down from in front of the Leal Senado in disturbances in late 1966 (at a time when the Cultural Revolution was sweeping the mainland and heightening political passions and pressures in Macao). Subsequently, the square and surrounding roads were redeveloped into a pedestrian thoroughfare, and a decorative fountain was built on the site where the statue had stood. Just before the establishment of the Chinese administration in 1999, the Portuguese authorities reconstructed the fountain with an armillary sphere over it 'representing the universalizing achievements of the 'Portuguese Discoveries'' (Pina-Cabral 2002: 77).

While Macao was the setting for new statues in 1940 reaffirming Portuguese authority, back in Portugal, for Salazar and his ideologues, the significance of the year was not just that events in Europe seemed to have moved decisively in favour of the Axis (making for a difficult Portuguese balancing act), but that behind a frontier with Spain secured by agreement in 1939, Portugal could celebrate the tri-centenary of the (1640) restoration of independence (from 60 years of Castilian dominance) and look to new glories. Employing more than 100 artists for a year in the second half of 1940 (and occupying some 560,000 square metres), around three million visitors made the Exposition of the Portuguese World one of the leading spectacles and celebrations of Portuguese imperialism.

The organisers were explicit about the aims of the exposition in terms of it representing a particular set of relations between the past, present and future. According to the declarations offered at the inauguration of the exposition on 23 June 1940 and in the words of its *Comissário Geral*, Augusto de Castro (1956):

In the first place, the projection on the past, as a gallery of heroic images of the foundation and of the national existence, of the universal Christian and evangelistic function, of the race, of the maritime and colonial glory, of the empire; in second place, the affirmation of moral, political and creative forces of the Present; in the third place, an act of faith [*auto-de-fé*] in the future. These three objectives come together in one: testimony and support of the national Consciousness. (p. 44)

The Exhibition site (described by de Castro as the 'symbolic city of Portuguese history') comprised a range of pavilions devoted to the foundation of the nation, the discoveries, independence and the Diaspora. A pavilion dedicated to contemporary Portugal (Portugal 1940) highlighted the achievements of the *Estado Novo*. Smaller pavilions housed exhibits for Lisbon and Brazil (the only foreign country invited to participate) and visitors could also enjoy a Portuguese boat (*nau*), replicas of Portuguese villages, tropical gardens, and an amusement park. Built as the Exhibition's centrepiece on the seaboard opposite the Jerónimos Monastery, the *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* (monument to the discoveries) was originally constructed from temporary materials but later rebuilt as a permanent structure for the Henrician anniversary celebrations in 1960. Meanwhile, in the colonial section, the popular attractions included a Mozambican village and a 'typical' street from Macao. A number of items remain today including the marina, the marine horses (sculpted by António Duarte) and the tropical gardens. This and some of the other grand imperial expositions of the 1930s and 1940s had constructed Portugal's Maritime Empire as one of the 'greatest achievements of mankind' and depicted *Portugalidade* as something irrevocably woven together with an ancestral 'spirit of discovery.' Similar resonances of the 'discoveries' were to return in 1998.

POSTCOLONIAL REORIENTATIONS

Faced with increasing armed insurrection in its African territories, most of the Portuguese empire was swept away (amidst revolutionary turmoil) in 1974-5. Thus in April 1974, the Portuguese armed forces—realising that the colonial wars were unwinnable—staged a successful coup which quickly brought about the end of the right-wing colonial regime. Portugal's

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colonial territories (with the exception of Macao, which retained the status of 'Chinese territory under Portuguese administration' until 1999 and East Timor which was annexed by Indonesia) were all independent within eighteen months. Within Portugal itself, the political balance swung dramatically left. Only in the latter part of the 1970s did Portuguese politics stabilise and the prospect of further leftward turns and wider social revolution recede. By the mid-1980s therefore, Portugal, in the words of a preface to a recently published *Traveller's History* of the country (destined, like the *Blue Guides* before it, for Anglophone tourists in Portugal) 'was able to cleanse and rehabilitate itself as a 'normal' western European state' (Judd 2002: x).

However, this particular *Traveller's History* also touches upon the ways that Portuguese imperial discourses have proven more enduring than the empire itself:

On realizing what some might describe as 'political maturity', in developing her economy, and having displayed a remarkable capacity to adjust rapidly to the very different world in which she found herself after weathering the turmoil of revolution, Portugal now enjoys her well-merited place in the community of Europe. Although one of the smallest, she is one of Europe's longest-surviving independent nations and retains her characteristic individuality. One should not forget that she was also the foremost, by her 'Discoveries', in expanding Europe's horizons during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (Robertson 2002: 157)

The references here to 'Europe' epitomise the wider ways that Portuguese imperial discourses are reworked and re-narrated as Portugal sought to accommodate itself to its relatively peripheral position in contemporary Europe. At EXPO '98, Portuguese geographers, navigators and cartographers were celebrated and commemorated for their 'gift to humanity' and to the making of (European and hence Western) modernity. Portugal—through its pioneering role in overseas discoveries—was being ascribed a key position in the making of a wider European identity.

Designed to be visited on foot, the EXPO '98 site was oriented along two perpendicular axes, one running north-south, along the Alameda Avenue, with the north and sea (now south) entrances at either end. The east-west axis started at the Sun Entrance (now the

Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre), crossed the *Estação do Oriente* (a new metro station) and ended on the banks of the Tagus estuary. The thematic pavilions on the site included a Nautical Exhibition and Water Gardens, the Garcia da Orta Gardens (named after a Portuguese physician who lived in Goa in the 17th century, of whom more will be said later in our paper), the Knowledge of the Seas Pavilion, the Pavilion of the Future Oceans, the Portuguese Pavilion, the Virtual Reality Pavilion and the Utopia Pavilion. In addition to the Thematic Pavilions, dedicated to the theme of the oceans and situated at the centre of the exposition, were the pavilions of the various participants, in five separate sections: North International Area, South International Area, International Organizations Area, National Organizations Area and the area dedicated to Corporations. The EXPO grounds also included restaurants and shops.

Additionally there was a *Pavilhão de Macau* built at a cost of US\$ 3.2million, which, according to *The Economist* was 'by far the most popular feature of Lisbon's EXPO '98.... receiving some 4 million visitors, ten times the population of the Chinese enclave itself' (*The Economist* 1998).⁴ Indeed it was popular, with Disney offering to buy and re-enact the 600 square metre pavilion in Florida (MET Studio 2008). The design focused on a 80% scale replica façade of the 17th century baroque Sao Paulo church—combined with a high-tech interior to create a walk-through 'quadroscope' culminating in a six-minute finale film show projected onto a wrap-around screen and interactive models linked to a dramatic audio visual show in the round. Just as several colonial expositions had done, the pavilion also boasted an entire Macao street and a large Chinese garden complete with thirty-six live dancers, jugglers and gymnasts. Visitors could sample Chinese tea or buy 'genuine and authentic articles from Macao' in the pavilion shop, they could visit the craft *A Lorcha* (built in Macao and transported to Lisbon) or eat at the Macanese restaurant. Vegetation from Macao was on display in the *Garcia da Orta* gardens while *Dia de Macau* [Macao Day] was celebrated on 23 June featuring a Chinese orchestra, Chinese artists and martial arts performances.

Overall, the exposition attracted 11 million visitors. Although short of the predicted 15 million, this was still viewed largely as a success story for the Portuguese state in finessing the image of Portugal. Portugal was on show. Special collections of national

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coins and stamps were offered throughout 1998 in association with the exposition organisers (EXPO '98 Informação 1998: 13). The site chosen for the exposition was also adjacent to the Vasco da Gama Bridge, which stretches ten kilometres across the river Tagus, the largest civil engineering project of its kind in Europe.

EXPO '98's grounds were located in the declining Lisbon docklands area on the Tagus River and included what had become largely disused nodes of imperial trade and power; a former dockyard, a refinery complex and a military depot. Funded by €240 million of EU subsidies (about half the EU urban regeneration budget for Portugal for five years), and with the other half of its construction costs met by the Portuguese state, the construction of the exposition was closely linked to wider urban and regional regeneration plans for transport and communication infrastructures and local urban and regional economies.

Moreover, EXPO '98 projected a national and international vision of the Portuguese as European pioneers, as a nation that responded to its destiny and a 'longing for the sea'. In so doing, Portugal is shown to have bestowed the gift of geographical and scientific knowledge of the oceans on all humanity. In the words of the then Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio, EXPO '98 began by welcoming everyone to one of Europe's oldest nations:

Welcome to Portugal, a country with a history of many centuries, a language spoken by many people, a culture of many horizons. A European, Atlantic and Mediterranean country. The country which greets you, is a country of freedom, open to modernisation, a nation which left its imprint and many memories in all continents and made the sea its own destiny because, as Fernando Pessoa once put it, 'It heard the present sound of that future/sea the voice of the earth longing for the sea.' (Sampaio 1998: 33)

Yet the reference to the imprints of Portuguese culture and memories, stretching across all continents is reminiscent of the language of the *Estado Novo* that dominated Portuguese affairs between 1926 and 1974. The organisers actively turned to the history of its empire, particularly the late 15th and early 16th centuries, in search of the reaffirmation of what it meant to be Portuguese at the end of the 20th century. An evocation of this past became a necessary pre-condition for anticipating a national and global future.

Thus EXPO '98 stressed the contributions of Portuguese navigators and explorers, botanists and cartographers during the beginnings of Europe's imperial adventure. An image of Vasco da Gama adorned a range of national postage stamps to coincide with EXPO '98 and appeared on the tickets used to enter the exposition itself. Visitors not arriving via the specially constructed connection to the Lisbon metro system, the *Estação do Oriente* (Station of the Orient/East), might have crossed the river Tagus on their way to EXPO '98 and thus travelled across the Vasco da Gama bridge to reach an area of the Lisbon docks once utilised by Portuguese naval vessels destined for the Empire. Shortly after the exposition closed, the 'Columbus' shopping mall in Lisbon opened, adopting the decorative theme of the 'age of discovery', with plazas and 'streets' of the mall named for lands 'discovered' by Portugal and decorated with frescos and mosaics depicting old maps, navigational tools and 16th century galleons (Klimt 2000: 546). Alongside the Expo 98 site a similar 'Vasco da Gama Mall' has been constructed, and today, a decade on from the exposition, visitors are lured to the site by this mall, the nearby restaurants alongside the *Avenida da Índia* and the views across the city and the Tagus from the *Torre Vasco da Gama*.

In these senses the exposition is best viewed as forming part of a 20th century repertoire of exhibitions that prioritised the era of the *Descobrimentos Portugueses* (Portuguese Discoveries). At EXPO '98, the Portuguese pavilion represented this spirit of discovery and curiosity about the oceans as particular to the Portuguese and irrevocably woven into the national cultural fabric. Indeed, official Portuguese narratives of the nation are invariably based on what Madueira (1995) terms a sense of 'temporally confined spatial displacement', on a longing for the sea and the era of 'the voyages' overseas in the 15th and 16th centuries. These are a legacy of the New State:

In the Salazarist period, the constructions of Portuguese 'identity' which accrued to themselves an unquestioned hegemonic status were those which emphasized a national 'specificity', a specific national *difference*. This distinguishing feature of Lusitanian identity finds its most cogent expression in the myth that the Portuguese sense of nationhood is (paradoxically) grounded on a temporally confined spatial displacement: the voyages of discovery. (Madueira 1995: 18)

This sense of national specificity is intimately

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connected to the history of the geographical discoveries and was powerfully illustrated in a series of interviews in 1963 between George Ball (an American diplomat working for John F. Kennedy's new democratic administration) and António Salazar (Ball 1983). In many of the interviews the dictator continually harkens back to the classic text of the entire Portuguese literary tradition, the 16th century epic *The Lusiads* by Luís de Camões (Medina 1996; Seixo 2002) composed as an heroic story of an imperial voyage of discovery. The diplomat quickly realised that heroic tales of discovery were the ground upon which Salazar justified his approach to the contemporary 'colonial question.' George Ball later concluded in a telegraph to Kennedy that Portugal was run by 'a triumvirate consisting of Vasco da Gama, Prince Henry the Navigator and Salazar' (Ball 1983: 276).

Salazar and the Portuguese empire may have gone, but EXPO '98 must be seen within a longer historical timeframe of imperial Portuguese expositions. Moreover, EXPO '98 placed itself within a wider narrative of Portugal's key role in a putatively European *telos* of discovery and forward motion. In other words, EXPO '98 acted as a pronouncement and celebration of the Portuguese (and thereby European) essence of discovery and exploration, whereby, being European amounts to the supposed possession of a special spirit of discovery. Derrida (1992) has noted:

In its physical geography, and in what has often been called... its *spiritual geography*, Europe has always recognized itself as a cape or headland... the point of departure for discovery, invention, and colonization... that of an advanced point... and thus, once again, with a heading for world civilization or human culture in general. (pp. 19-20 and 24)

In this spirit, Portugal positions itself as the exemplary European nation, insofar as it was the supposed pioneer of exploration; the site of departure. This is not a simple repetition of colonial discourse, however, but its reworking and reformulation. For in staging the last world fair of the 20th century, Portugal was also constructed as a 'prosperous and go-ahead European country' focused on the *future* and not held back by the traumas of the often violent and chaotic end to the empire in the 1970s. Nor would there be much reference to the ensuing dramatic swing to the left or the mid-1970s revolutionary turmoil in Portuguese cities

and much of the impoverished countryside that had so troubled the Cold Warriors in Washington, Bonn and London, petrified the fascists in neighbouring Spain and alarmed conservatives everywhere. Instead, *Parque EXPO* offered visitors the chance to learn about Portuguese imperial discoveries, to join in the 'spirit' of exploration and to follow in the footsteps of Pedro Cabral, Bartolomeu Dias or Vasco da Gama while simultaneously embracing future-orientated connections and responsibility for the world's oceans.

CONCLUSIONS: OCCLUDED GEOGRAPHIES

In this paper, we have traced how Portugal was presented at EXPO '98 as occupying a space at the centre of the world: a point of origins for putatively Western exploration and discovery. We have argued that this represents a reworking of the imperial ideology and *claims* about Portugal's mission, identity and role that were promoted by the right-wing *Estado Novo* and evident in prior 20th-century Portuguese expositions. However, there are interesting dissonances that enable us to uncover other (occluded) geographies that are enfolded within and yet provide the very conditions of possibility for such claims. By way of conclusion, we seek to trace some of these, via a return to the starting point of this paper—the *Torre de Belém*.

As the *Blue Guide* tells us, the *Torre de Belém* has endured for centuries. It has often been cited, viewed and incorporated into imperial narratives as the durable symbol of Portugal's key world role. For example, in this paper, we have traced how it was incorporated into colonial expositions and has been joined by a new *Torre Vasco da Gama* at the EXPO '98 site a short distance upstream on the Tagus. However this is not the end of the story, for the *Torre de Belém* contains other histories and geographies. Thus, during the 1992 exposition staged across the Spanish border in Seville (EXPO '92, which had as its theme the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the Americas), the *Torre de Belém* was twinned with Seville's own riverside tower, the *Torre de Oro* [Tower of Gold]. Under the auspices of the Portuguese pavilion in Seville, a plaque was placed on the Tower of Gold proclaiming its twinning with the *Torre de Belém*.

The Tower of Gold, named after the golden tiles that once adorned it, predates that of Belém by three centuries. It was built by the Arab-Berber sultanate of

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the Almohads along the *Wadi-al-Qadir* [today's *Rio Guadalquivir*]. It now houses a small naval museum replete with instruments of navigation, including an astrolabe inscribed with its original Arabic script. On one level this twinning is inconsequential, yet when a monument of European discovery is twinned with another that was constructed by people who are now customarily seen as exterior to Europe, a dissonance opens which we might usefully prise open a little more. John Law (1986) has claimed:

It is not possible to understand this [Portuguese] expansion unless the technological, the economic, the political, the social and the natural are all seen as being interrelated... the Portuguese effort involved the mobilisation and *combination* [italics added] of elements from each of these categories. Of course kings and merchants appear in the story. But so too do sailors and astronomers, navigators and soldiers of fortune, astrolabes and astronomical tables, vessels and ports of call, and last but not least, the winds and currents that lay between Lisbon and Calicut. (p. 235)

Yet this combination cannot be reduced to properties or technologies of Portugal or Europe. Ocean space is hybrid, a complex domain of movement and collective interactions (Steinberg 2001). Thus as Shohat and Stam (1994: 14) point out: 'Even the caravels used by Henry the Navigator were modelled after lantern-sailed Arab dhows.' Some recent Portuguese (and much other) writing thus recognises the intricate routes/roots and the diversity of interactions and knowledge that underlay Portuguese and other European 'pioneers' of navigation. Critical scholarship (and more popular accounts, such as Bergreen, 2003) have sought to reposition the European explorers as reliant on others. Working with these, Borschberg (2002) observes:

For many centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese, Chinese and Arab traders had plied the waters of the South China Sea. Portuguese sources readily concede that the great Lusitanian captains made good use of local pilots and local expertise.... in finding their way not only from the East coast of Africa to India in the fifteenth century, but later also from Melaka to the Spice Islands and even onwards to China. (p. 36)

There have been claims that charts constructed by the early Ming dynasty China were in the hands of, and thus provided a basis for, later European navigators:

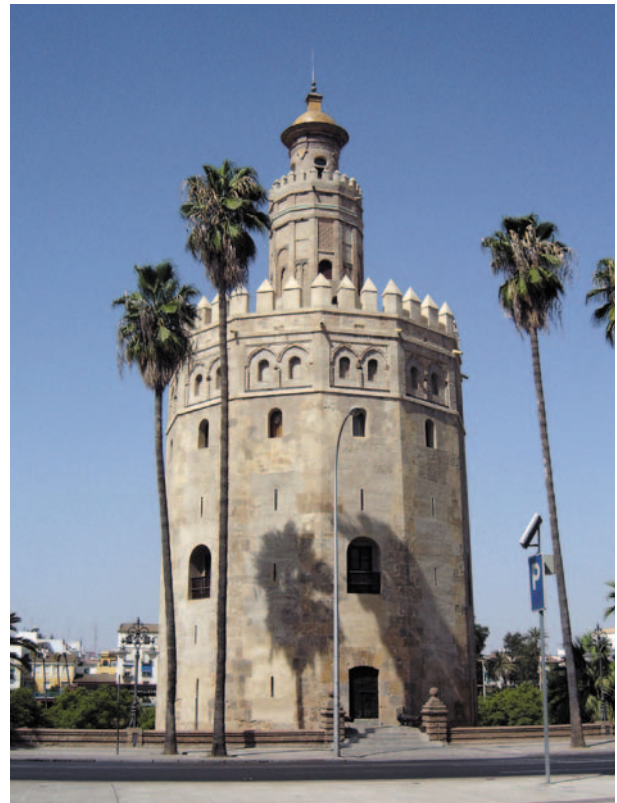
Columbus, da Gama, Magellan and Cook...all knew they were following in the footsteps of others, for they were carrying copies of the Chinese maps with them when they set off on their own journeys into the 'unknown.' (Menzies 2002: 12)

It is not necessary to fully accept such claims to recognise the profoundly *hybrid* origins of 'European' geographical knowledge. Thus as Jerry Brotton (1997) has noted:

The pragmatic Portuguese persistently assimilated the alien knowledges which they encountered and fed them straight into the maps and charts which they gradually built up as they sailed further into unknown waters.... The information gleaned from local pilots and cosmographers appears to have been rapidly assimilated into the early Portuguese charts of the seas and territories to the east of the Cape. (pp. 80-1)

The work of Garcia da Orta (after whom the gardens at EXPO '98 were named) exhibits similar hybrid origins and global consequences. Garcia da

Torre de Oro, Seville.



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Orta's compilation of the medicinal botany of the Indies quickly became an influential text after publication in Goa in 1563. The original Portuguese text was soon translated into Latin and published in a compendium with a parallel study of new world medicinal botany that had just been published in Seville. These informed new practices of establishing botanical gardens throughout Europe and the European empires. In turn these became key nodes in vast global ecological and social transfers and transformations; including the establishment of plantations and whole new industries of food and commodity processing. Yet Garcia da Orta's text and the compilations of which it formed an essential part are, according to Richard Grove's scrutiny:

profoundly indigenous texts. Far from being inherently European works they are actually compilations of Middle Eastern and South Asian ethnobotany, organized on essentially non-European precepts. The existence of European printing, botanic gardens, global networks of information and material medical transfer, and the increasing professionalization of natural history seem actually to have facilitated the diffusion and dominance of an Ayurvedic and Ezhava epistemological hegemony. (Grove 1996: 126-7)

In other words, Western geographical (and associated) knowledge and the discoveries have thoroughly hybrid origins. If, as Diffie and Winus (1996: 434) claimed, 'Portugal's was the pioneer empire in more ways than one', it is now clearer that its making drew on multiple technologies and knowledge which cannot be reduced to a single (purely Portuguese) origin. While this may have been occluded in 19th and 20th century expositions (and official historiography of the discoveries), the 'non-West' is thereby present within the very heart of the Western venture. The claim that Portugal or a wider 'Europe' or the 'West' bears sole responsibility as the privileged source and the unique origin of this venture is unveiled as a myth. Thus, the example of these interconnected towers is symptomatic of a wider possibility—one that is being based on the broadening field of postcolonial and allied scholarship seeking to move beyond Euro-centric analysis and categories. Developing a strand of such scholarship, Mitchell (2001) notes:

If modernity is defined by its claim to universality, this always remains an impossible universal. Each staging of the modern must be arranged to produce the global history of modernity, yet each

requires those forms of difference that introduce the possibility of a *discrepancy*, [italics added] that return to undermine its unity and identity. Modernity then becomes the unsuitable yet unavoidable name for these discrepant histories.

In the act of twinning the towers in Belém and Seville, such discrepancy has been cast into relief. The *Torre de Belém* stands witness on the Tagus and is twinned now with the *Torre de Oro* and mirrored by the new *Torre Vasco da Gama*. Yet once the occluded geographies of discovery are acknowledged and more fully taken into account, the ideological edifices of Portugal's (and with it Europe's or Western) singularity (as *the* pure sources of the making of modernity) begin to collapse. A fuller account of this is beyond the scope of the paper, like other trans-histories and geographies, it requires what Paul Van Dyke (2005: xv) calls 'multi-archival research'. In the Portuguese case alone, it would require critical scrutiny of the vast archives deposited in another tower—the *Torre do Tombo*. This building was purpose-built in the 1980s to re-house the state archives. The *Torre do Tombo* is described in an architectural guide as, 'a monolithic and monstrous concrete structure in a large and open site... It announces itself quite forcibly with a brutal and austere composition' (Santos 1998: 154).

Named after the tower in Lisbon's medieval Saint George Castle that originally housed important state and commercial records, the millions of documents now in the *Torre do Tombo* relating to the discoveries collectively draw upon, rework and contain knowledge from elsewhere. As texts, like the structures that house them, they thereby take the forms of, 'a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces' (Derrida 1979: 84).

Today, new towers are under construction elsewhere. From Manhattan and Moscow, to Shanghai and the Pearl River delta, to Dubai and Seoul: like those before them, these modern statements of identity and expressions of power (McNeil 2005) rest upon intricately entangled global geographies. **RC**

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NOTES

- 1 Following the closure of the exposition, the city embarked on a ten year regeneration programme constructing the *Parque das Nações*, which by 2010 will be one million square feet of residential development, 1.5 million square feet of retail shopping and more than three miles of open space along the Tagus riverfront. This is the biggest project of regeneration in Lisbon since 1755 when an earthquake and tidal wave destroyed much of the city. For further details of the urban regeneration programmes linked to EXPO '98 see Commissariat of the Lisbon World Exposition/Parque Expo '98 (1998), Costa (1998), Leigh-Evans (1998), Corkill (1999) and Carriere and Demaziere (2002).
- 2 The *Torre del Oro* (Golden Tower or Tower of Gold) is one of the most emblematic buildings in Seville. It was originally constructed by the Arab-Berber *Almohade* dynasty alongside the Guadalquivir River in the 13th century. The tower was used as an element of defence and storage in the harbour and was subsequently named the Tower of Gold by the Spanish because of its proximity to the building where coins were minted and because it was used to store treasures brought from the Indies.
- 3 In Lisbon this was led by Duarte Pacheco (Minister of Public Works and Communications), who undertook an extensive urban renewal, restoration and public works programme to make the city a worthy imperial capital. The aim, in part, was to establish 'visual texts' designed to convey the regime's preferred readings of history (Sapega 2002).
- 4 Further details of the pavilion can be found at: <http://www.fundacaocasamacao.pt/>.

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