

Article

Pyrostories: New Historical Insights into Portuguese Burning Landscapes

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Abstract: This paper examines Portuguese literary texts in which fire is explicitly included in the narrative. These texts include descriptions of various occurrences and uses of fire and their intertwined social and ecological effects. They shed light on the origins, actors, practices, and impacts of fire, and they reveal past perceptions of fire, namely the role fire played in social processes and in the making of landscapes. It becomes evident that in literary texts, fire is not merely a physical element but also a powerful symbolic force of life, death, and transformation. Furthermore, the literary landscapes of different regions describe fire in distinct ways, reflecting particular geographical, social, and political contexts.

Keywords: fires; literary landscapes; ruralities; cultural geography; modern history; Portugal



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1. Introduction

The world has recently witnessed a surge in wildfires devastating landscapes and communities in North America, Australia, the Amazon, the Mediterranean basin, northern Siberia, and beyond. Concerns have grown about the connection between the increasing scale and intensity of these fires and climate change. One notable incident occurred in the Pedrógão Grande region of Portugal in June 2017, where more than 60 lives were tragically lost. Additionally, 200 people were injured, countless homes destroyed, and forest and agricultural areas suffered significant damage. The inquiry into the cause concluded that a lightning strike led to a wooden electricity pylon igniting. The rapid spread of the fire and the unprecedented firestorm that ensued were driven, as many scientists have noted, by a combination of high temperatures, low humidity, extremely dry vegetation, and strong winds [1].

The documentary *From Devil's Breath* (2021), produced by Leonardo DiCaprio, features testimonies from the survivors of the Pedrógão Grande fire, together with images of burning landscapes, smoke, and flames. “Smoke and flames [are] a symptom, not a syndrome,” wrote Stephen J. Pyne in his reframing of the historical and cultural dimensions of the “Earth’s fire crisis”. As he clarifies, the issue is not just about “the bad burns that trash the countryside and crash into towns” but equally “about the good fires that had vanished because they were actively extinguished or no longer lit” [2]. Historically, fire played a vital role in shaping rural socioecological mosaics, serving purposes such as shifting agriculture, pasture management, creating open habitats for crossing and hunting, controlling insect pests, and charcoal production. However, in the Portuguese rural landscapes, profound

changes during the 20th century—largely driven by rural flight, agricultural abandonment, and forest transition—led to the decline of once prevalent agropastoral practices where fire was essential. In recent decades, a new fire regime has emerged, marked by large and highly destructive wildfires.

The study of fire in Portuguese rural contexts has predominantly drawn from biophysical approaches rooted in ecology and forestry sciences [3], with only limited contribution from sociohistorical research (e.g., [4,5]). This paper addresses this gap through a socioenvironmental inquiry situated at the intersection of literature, cultural geography, and modern history. By examining literary texts, it offers insights into the history of fire and the related social memories that writers have incorporated into their works, thus compensating for the scarcity of other historical records. This study explores the meanings and social and political descriptors of fire in Portuguese literature, revealing a network of “more-than-human” agencies in which fire plays a central role [6].

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Literary Criticism and History*

The utilization of literature as research material is no longer a novel feature of social and environmental history. Literature has been recognized as a repository of memories and a product of the historical, geographical, and political context in which it was produced. However, Dominick LaCapra cautioned against exploring literature through its literal meaning. He advocated for an approach that envisages an understanding of the literary texts as sources and establishes a relationship between historiography and literary criticism, in which “texts are understood as variable uses of language that come to terms with [...] contexts in various ways that engage the interpreter as historian and critic in an exchange with the past through a reading of texts.” [7]. In the study presented here, literary texts are conceived as historically anchored events, with their initial publication year acting as a chronological reference. They are analyzed in order to provide spatiotemporal and socioecological answers to questions such as: How do the literary fires relate to the surrounding landscape, social life, and political circumstances? How can the combination of literature and historiography contribute to an environmental, cultural, and political history of fire?

This investigation is inspired by Franco Moretti’s works on a large collection of stories and novels from the 19th century to study the bourgeois class and its relationship to the development of capitalism [8]. He suggested that the novel served as a mirror to bourgeois society, reflecting its anxieties, aspirations, and contradictions. Through this literary form, the bourgeois class could articulate its evolving identity within the context of capitalist modernity. In the vein of literary geography, Sheila Hones proposed the idea of a reading process that might itself be understood as a spatial practice, regenerating and renegotiating the meanings in texts [9]. Additionally, Hou et al. highlighted that “writers often integrate the ecological concept of coexistence between human beings and the environment with their thoughts on individual identity and put their rich imagination into different regional literary creations.” [10].

2.2. *Literary Criticism and Cultural Geography*

In the specific case of analyzing the presence of fire in literature, the analysis of texts must consider the cultural dimensions of fire. The way authors construct their literary narratives results from a reimagination of lived experiences, knowledge, and/or social memories of fire, and therefore, the use of fire in literature is symbolically embedded in a certain context or a set of cultural contexts of fire. Fire has been analyzed symbolically and politically in the contexts of urban struggles in South Africa [11]; it has been described as meaningful to identity, kinship, marriage, gender, religion, politics, and landscape ecology in Indonesia [12], and fire-related mental processes have been described to shape religious behavior in Greece [13]. These are only a few examples of how fire has been assigned an important role in the making of meaning in ecological, social, and political processes

cross-culturally. Although overlooked, this multidimensional role of fire is expected to be present in the literature and/or oral traditions of different peoples and places in the world.

Additionally, the analysis we follow is not explicitly framed within a semiotic tradition that views landscapes as “texts” that need to be “read”. However, it links the two domains—texts and landscapes—in considering the writings as representations of (burning) landscapes. In this regard, it is aligned with a representational approach, which scholars such as Lindström et al. affiliate with the semiotic discourse that became more prominent in landscape studies as the “cultural turn” in geography increased awareness towards the role of language, meaning, and representations in the knowledge of reality [14]. Being aware that the representation is not mimetic, we read the texts as historical geography memories, as they bring an understanding of the social ecological systems and cultural landscapes, experienced with all the senses and the whole body, an approach consistent with the works of phenomenologists such as Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph [15,16].

Building on these insights, this paper examines Portuguese literary texts to illuminate the historical origins, actors, practices, and impacts of fire, as well as its past perceptions and role in social processes and landscape formation, capturing writers’ viewpoints as spokespeople for social memory.

3. Materials and Methods

For the purpose of this paper, pyrostories are defined as sections in larger literary texts (such as short stories, tales, novels, and chronicles) in which fire is explicitly included in the narrative. Pyrostories vary significantly in length and are presented as stories within the larger piece of writing. They are continuous excerpts from the writings or, less often, a composition of different parts that relate to each other in their depiction of the fire context. These stories are distinct from others in which fire is present as part of a multifaceted symbolism and an alternative reality. Herein, pyrostories are representations of fire that at once echo the rural experience and the imagery and political resources of the writers. They are “factions”^(a): stories in which fires are depicted through a combination of facts and fictitious elements [17]. Therefore, pyrostories outline the multiple uses of fire and its consequences to social and ecological domains, as well as the historical variation in the role of fire in the Portuguese literature; they reveal not only the origins, agents, practices, and impacts of fire in particular landscapes, but also the evolving literary landscape of fire.

By compiling the literary representations of the different types of fires in the landscape—i.e., tamed, wild, and feral fires [18]—this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of such fires in mainland Portugal. This is achieved by analyzing Portuguese literature from the 20th century to the present and using the previously compiled LITESCPE.PT database^(b). As in previously published papers that explore such literary material (e.g., [19]), this research aims to be comprehensive without being exhaustive, selective without being discriminatory, and illustrative without being misleading. The corpus of pyrostories analyzed here results from a selection of excerpts by the keywords *fogo* (fire), *incêndio* (wildfire), *queima/queimada* (agricultural burns), and *bombeiros* (firefighters). It comprises 55 pyrostories published from 1916 to 2021, set in 40 works by 28 writers (see Appendix A), and it includes both meticulous descriptions and brief allusions to fire in the landscape. Original excerpts in Portuguese are included in Appendix B, along with explanatory notes, referred to as (a), (b), (c), etc.

The examination of the pyrostories was guided by an iterative individual reading and collective analysis of excerpts as a basis for a consistent assessment through a standardized content analysis and interpretation. A three-level pyrostory classification grid (Table 1) with three main groups, each broken into categories (18 total) and subcategories (59 total), was developed based on an initial reading of the excerpts. This classification grid embraces the role of fire as part of the dynamic process of landscape maintenance, destruction, and regeneration, as a tool used by populations for the management of vegetation cover and residues, or as an out-of-the-ordinary disaster. Furthermore, it contemplates characters from different social, political, and/or professional groups, such as rural landowners,

peasants, shepherds, arsonists, forest rangers, and administrative officers. None of these categories exclude other classifications, as the content of a single text may cover multiple narratives and contain varied perspectives: fire, for instance, may be considered “friend,” “foe,” or both.

Table 1. Groups of fire categories considered in content analysis of pyrostories: A. Biophysical and environmental circumstances; B. Historical, social, and political circumstances; C. Representation features. Each group is divided into categories and those into subcategories. The subcategories, in uppercase in the text, are identified by a short name that includes the first letter of the category followed by the first letters of the identifying term.

| Group of Categories | Categories | Sub-Categories |
|--|-------------------|---|
| A. Biophysical and environmental circumstances | | |
| | Weather | W_WIND W_TEMP W_HUM W_RAIN |
| | Morphology | M_MOUNT M_PLAIN M_VALLEY |
| | Land use | L_AGER L_SALTUS L_SYLVA L_BUILT |
| | Ignition | I_LIGHT I_ACC I_MANAG I_PRES I_ARS I_UNK |
| | Seasonality | S_SUMMER S_AUTUMN S_WINTER S_SPRING |
| | Spread | S_EXTENT S_INTENSITY S_FIREBRAND |
| B. Historical, social, and political circumstances | | |
| | Historical | H_PAST H_TIME |
| | Perception | P_BELL P_CHEMICAL P_BURNING |
| | Actors | A_LOCALS A_AUTHORIT A_WORKERS A_EMPLOYERS A_FIGHTERS A_MEDIA |
| | Consequences | C_VICTIMS C_MATERIALS |
| | Living conditions | L_CONDITIONS |
| | State | ST_PRESENCE ST_ACTION |

Table 1. Cont.

| Group of Categories | Categories | Sub-Categories |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Sociability | S_INTEG S_ANOMIE S_CONFLICT |
| C. Representation features | | |
| | Illusion | I_ILLU |
| | Time | T_IMAG T_BEFORE T_ON T_AFTER |
| | Subjectivation | S_SCEN S_PERS S_NHUM S_SPNAT |
| | Adjectivation | A_FRIEND A_FOE |

Pyrostories were analyzed, classified, and coded by matching the information (about the occurrence of the fire) conveyed by each sentence with the respective hierarchical system of the classification grid. In addition to assessing each of the above-mentioned categories, this paper discusses the results, linking the literature to 20th-century fires and combining, as appropriate, politics, knowledge, and aesthetics. The size and richness of this literary corpus suggest several potential directions for discussion. Writers use their literary resources of language and writing, purposes and motivations, knowledge, personal experience, memories, and imagination to craft the literary narratives about fire. They make decisions as they depict communities and landscapes. According to the results obtained, this paper focuses on the following elements: ignition, burn and fire spread, and fire–people relations in places of political and social unrest.

4. Results

4.1. On the Distribution of the Literary Material

Every literary excerpt's geolocation is recorded in the LITESCPE.PT literary landscape database using the NUTS3 territorial subdivisions of mainland Portugal.^(c) While their distribution across the NUTS3 units in the database exhibits considerable geographical heterogeneity, a clear pattern emerges whereby coastal regions exhibit a lower prevalence of pyrostories than inland territorial units. In the interior of Portugal, two geographical clusters stand out: cluster 1, in the north-east of the country, with 24 pyrostories (44%) included in 21 writings, and cluster 2, in the south-east of the country, with 19 pyrostories (35%) included in 16 writings (Figure 1). Taking into account all the works recorded in the database for the NUTS3 units that are part of cluster 1 (n = 140) and cluster 2 (n = 145), around 15% include one or more pyrostories. This prevalence of fires in texts seems to correspond to natural and social conditions and certain rural practices linked to fire, as observed from the writers' point of view.

Over the course of the 105-year period (1916–2021), the temporal distribution of the pyrostories varied significantly (based on the decade of their first publication): Among the pyrostories, the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s account for 56%. Although these figures do not by themselves prove a greater occurrence of fires during these three decades, they suggest that fire was an important literary topic with a particular aesthetic and sociopolitical significance for the social realist and neo-realist writers of that period, who featured wildfires as an integral part of rural life, its internal conflicts, and social upheaval.

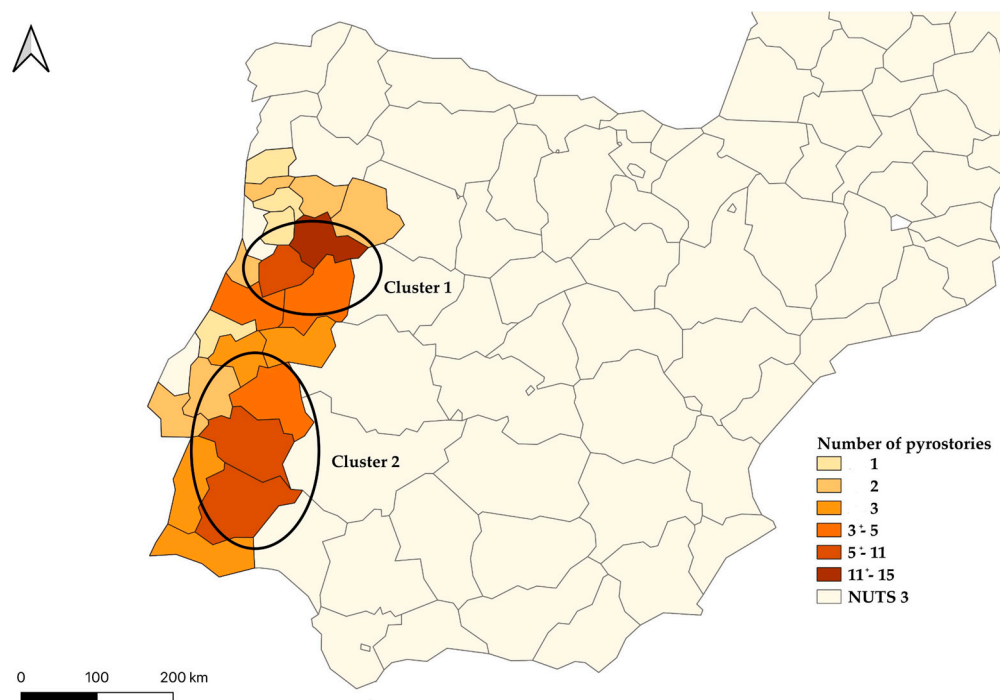


Figure 1. Geolocation of pyrostories in mainland Portugal by NUTS3 regions. Cluster 1: Douro, Beiras e Serra da Estrela, Dão-Lafões, and Região de Coimbra. Cluster 2: Alto Alentejo, Alentejo Central, and Baixo Alentejo.

Literary neo-realism emerged as a political and aesthetic movement in Portugal during the mid-20th century, viewing itself explicitly as a repository of memory and as representing a culture of inquiry, denunciation, and intervention opposed to the dictatorial Estado Novo regime that was in force from 1933 to 1974. Depicting the harsh realities of Portuguese society and often focusing on the lives of the rural poor, peasants, and the urban working class, it offers an unflinching examination of the human condition and societal issues. Portuguese neo-realists like Alves Redol, Fernando Namora, Manuel da Fonseca, Armando Antunes da Silva, Vergílio Godinho, and José Saramago, among others, took on the task of documenting society and exposing its hardships [20]. Their writings can thus be considered as objective exercises in the representation of reality, political engagement, humanism, and regionalism, all aimed at exposing social injustices, advocating for change, and giving voice to the marginalized in Portuguese society. McNab wrote that such writings were political weapons, as fires could also be [21]. Other historical sources suggest that the mid-20th century was the time when fires arose as a political and economic problem in Portugal [22].

4.2. On Reading and Interpretation

4.2.1. Ignition, Burn, and Fire Spread

The presence of combustible materials, oxygen, and a source of ignition are the necessary conditions for a fire to start. Certain weather conditions can support and exacerbate the spread of fires. Pyrostories provide rich descriptions of all these elements.

The “weather” category refers to wind, air temperature, humidity, and precipitation conditions. Writers rarely associated rain with fires ($n = 3$, 4%), while wind is frequently linked to the occurrence of fires or to suitable conditions for arson attempts ($n = 16$, 29%). Fires spread more easily through landscapes in conditions of low humidity, high temperatures, and prolonged drought. As J. Rentes de Carvalho puts it, “Such was the ferocity of the sun and the dryness of the hills and the plantations that it seemed that at any moment a fire could break out”^(d) [23]. In *A Lã e a Neve* (The Wool and the Snow) by J. Ferreira de Castro, “Three or four men were setting fire to a forest, from one end to the other, and with a favorable wind, [so] it was catching in an instant. By the time the

others returned from the first fire, in addition to them being tired, it would already be too late. One more fire in a row, no one could put out.”^(e) [24]. Aquilino Ribeiro describes the following scene: “The scrub had grown so much that it hit him often on his head. The gorse was high and dried out at its base. And he didn’t even bother to pile up the wood. He set fire to a gorse bush and soon the diffuse flame ran ahead, towering or low, spurred on by the wind.”^(f) [25].

The “morphology” category refers to landforms, which have a significant influence on climatic patterns, biodiversity, the agricultural mosaic, and economic activity. Mountains are particularly noteworthy, with 22 out of the total 55 pyrostories associated with this feature. However, the reference to mountainous areas varies between the two regional clusters, with cluster 1 occurring in the northern hilly region and cluster 2 in the southern plains region. The more homogeneous topography of the latter gives rise to a lesser connection between terrain steepness and the spread and intensification of the fire front. This reflects the diversity of the geomorphology of mainland Portugal, which is also depicted in the literary geography of fire.

Miguel Torga described a large fire in the Borralheda hills (the Portuguese *borralheda* refers to fireplace embers): “The fire was growing ever larger. In a gorse scrub, the flames looked like goats butting heads. Dusk fell, and as the light dimmed, the heat grew brighter. The drunkard’s eyes, blinded by wine and the intense glare, closed with the stubbornness of disobedient curtains. (. . .) The hills of Borralheda had now transformed into a furnace.”^(g) [26]. Most notable is the presence of flames that ascend a hillside in the Monchique highlands with great velocity: “The flames began to climb up the slope, as if something had driven them mad. That mass of flames fled, and I was absolutely astonished by what my eyes saw, the flames like a shapeless and colorful animal, running up the slope towards the fire line.”^(h) [27]. In the flat plain, the fire transforms the landscape into a smoky vision, as registered by J. Luís Peixoto: “What impressed me most was the smoke. There were huge columns that, seen from afar, drawn in the sky, did not seem to be made of smoke, but seemed solid. They were columns that rose into the sky like the claws of a giant bird, whose body was the earth and which clung to the sky. After some hours, the smoke blocked the sun, and it was a summer afternoon that darkened suddenly and that, because of the smoke, turned into the onset of night.”⁽ⁱ⁾ [28].

Seasonal references are made in 42% of the excerpts. In these cases, summer fires predominate in both the regional clusters (most of Portugal has a Mediterranean climate, with high temperatures and very little or no rainfall in summer months). In the literary corpus, “summer goes carried in fire and dust”^(j) [29]. There is a quantitative difference between the two clusters in terms of the references to summer, which are present in 29% of stories in cluster 1 and 47% of stories in cluster 2. Again, the biophysical conditions seem to inspire the literary imagination. The south of Portugal is usually the hottest region in the country from June to September. In recent decades, however, the north and central regions have experienced more fires than the south. Nowadays, the fire season in Portugal has been reconsidered beyond the summer period, as also reported in other countries [30–32].

The appearance of the first flame occurs after the activation energy needed to initiate combustion has been supplied. The “ignition” category refers to the causes, agents, and contexts involved in starting a fire. Lightning was only mentioned in two stories. Prescribed fires also appear in two stories. Accidental ignitions are more prevalent, and there are differences in the number of them (12% in cluster 1; 21% in cluster 2). They can be caused by negligence, recklessness, or even by sparks from steam trains that can ignite surrounding woodlands and moors, as in this passage by Alves Redol: “There were people who fled in terror, crying out for protection from the heavens, so that such an iron monster would not come back. In the furnace that sent out sparks and left fires, here and there, in the pine forests and chestnut groves, they felt that a curse was being put on their simple and quiet life”^(k) [33]. These technology-caused fires of the past can be associated with those fires related to the electricity grid today, as in the case of the megafires of Pedrógão Grande in 2017 in the center of the country and the Serra de Monchique fire in 2018 in the south.

There are also notable differences in the number of ignitions for management purposes (8% in cluster 1; 37% in cluster 2). “Management fires” (*queimas*, *queimadas*, *moreias*, or *roças*, among other regional names) refer to the burning of scrubland, wood residues, and pastures for various purposes. A plausible interpretation relates the dominance of this type of fire in southern Portugal to the traditional uses of fire for restoring soil fertility, renewing herbaceous cover, and clearing land, which the Portuguese geographer Orlando Ribeiro in 1945 blamed for the degradation of the primeval forest [34]. This mythical idea of a “ruined landscape” resulting from extensive and repeated fires in the past also appears in one of Aquilino Ribeiro’s pyrostories: “The Portuguese rural problem is more complex than it seems at first glance (...) there was once a forest there. We know from the brief references of ancient geographers, (...) that Lusitania was a thick and continuous forest from north to south. [...] Imagine the colossal fires, true images of the end of the world, which devoured the centuries-old forest!”^(l) [35]. The writer Aquilino Ribeiro followed the dominant scientific discourse, which identified human-caused fires as the cause of deforestation, erosion, and the loss of soil fertility, and used this idea to refer to the negative impact of human actions in his mountainous home region in northern Portugal. This idea of a continuous and dense original forest is called into question by recent findings in ecological history, which demonstrate that European forests were heterogeneous before human transformation, particularly in the Mediterranean, with a high proportion of woodlands with sparse tree cover (savanna-type) and open vegetation [36].

In starting a fire, however, arson is the most common cause of fires of known origin, and there are no major differences between the two regional clusters. Arson may be a reaction to the compulsory policy of afforestation in the mountains or a protest against the landowners in the plains. In Manuel da Fonseca, the farmhouse burns, drawing a show of revenge fire: “The flames lit up the houses and swayed, overcoming the darkness of the night, making shadows and flashes leap up the castle walls. Clinging to the poles, Doninha jumped, laughing and repeating incomprehensible words.”^(m) [37].

Writers also describe the way fire moves and how it burns: in 24% of the pyrostories, the extent of the fire and the area burned are mentioned, and in 20%, its intensity is mentioned. In 15% of the stories, firebrands are mentioned. *Uma noite com o fogo* (A Night with the Fire) by António Manuel Venda is an autofiction resulting from the writer’s night-time experience during the great fires of Monchique 2003, in which the nocturnal fire appears as a multisensorial experience. The presence of fire in the mountain range of Serra de Monchique is depicted as being actually a collection of different fires with their own strength and path [27]. Venda wrote: “A huge lamp, with a reddish light, seems to illuminate the surrounding lands”⁽ⁿ⁾; “The silence of the night in the hills, a silence that I knew so well, was broken only by the noise of the burning scrub, a noise that was accentuated every time the flames climbed one of the trees, as if someone suddenly burst out shooting”^(o); “The silence, broken slowly, sluggishly only by the fire, and from time to time some bigger noises, which I could soon accompany with the sight of the flames climbing a eucalyptus tree”^(p); “But the hills were full of fire. There, the line with the half-meter flames passed, it died out there, as it had died out in the village, and in the stream perhaps, and as it would die out at other points later. But there were the sparks that at any moment would lift up in the air, and there were places where the fires would not go out, where they would continue their progression for a long time. And there were other fire lines in other areas of those hills, for sure there were others, and isolated fires”^(q).

The atavistic fear of fire may also give rise to the illusion that the landscape is burning at sunset. An example can be found in *Casa na Duna* (House in the Dune) by Carlos de Oliveira, in which an imagined catastrophic fire is described. Even the rocks burn, and the people of the village are mortal victims of the uncontrolled fire: “In the distance, the late afternoon sun set the mountains on fire: the burning cliff was outlined in the sky; the people of those places would die in the dreadful bonfire; the masses of trees grew erect on the mountain back like tongues of flame”^(r) [38].

4.2.2. Living with Fires

For humans and non-humans, the burning sensation is associated not only with fire but also with dryness. It may be a shortage of pasture and the need to move to a greener land: “Burning summer, without a meadow growing green! (...) Because of this, the cattle had to look for pastures farther away, in the neighboring extremes, which the flames had not toasted,” wrote Tomás da Fonseca^(s) [39]. When fire breaks out, the cattle are left without pasture, while letting pregnant females enter the fields of ashes poses a huge risk of abortion: “Eight days the fire was in the mountains without anyone being able to put it out. At that time, everything was dry! It was already late in August, perhaps September had even begun. It was a disgrace for the cattle, who walked all over the hilltops. (...) When a shepherd is careless and the goats and sheep cross those burned areas, they empty their bellies,” wrote Irene Lisboa^(t) [40]. Management burning, however, is used to burn stubble or dry pasture and opens the land to new regenerated vegetation cover, as in this passage by Luís Carmelo: “The earth is open, fertilized by ashes, ready to receive the seeds. As soon as the first rains come.”^(u) [41].

Throughout the corpus, all types of land and vegetation burn, not only forests. In the southern flat plains, fires are more common in agricultural areas, as noted for fires associated with land management. In the pyrostories that take place in the mountainous areas of north and central Portugal, however, forests or plantations of pine, chestnut, oak, and eucalyptus burn more often. These are, as well, the regions most affected by the policies of afforestation and common-land expropriation implemented between 1930 and 1960, which became an emblematic intervention of the dictatorship’s power in the countryside. Regarding the latter, two pyrostories are particularly noteworthy: *A Lã e a Neve* (The Wool and the Snow) by J. Ferreira de Castro [24] and *Quando os Lobos Uivam* (When the Wolves Howl) by Aquilino Ribeiro [25]. In both instances, the arsonist is revealed to be the agent of a collective purpose or sentiment, which is expressed covertly in the opposition to the ongoing transformation. In *A Lã e a Neve*, the owners of the herds of the Serra da Estrela mountain range have been deprived of their grazing land due to the recent state-led pine afforestation. In *Quando os Lobos Uivam*, the mountain communities have been deprived of their communal lands and want the pine plantations destroyed. The arsonist is at the center of both plots; he has seen his daily rural life profoundly altered and has lost both his family and his farm. The fire is a manifestation of revolt and a form of grandiose revenge against the national forest service and its local guards.

The mosaic of different land uses comes to the fore in the fire described by Almeida Faria. On a large estate in Montemor-o-Novo in the southern Alentejo region, a combination of farming and forestry is practiced. The arsonist aims to destroy the wheat crop that represents the landowner’s wealth. The fire starts in a pinewood, spreads to an eucalyptus grove, and from there to the fields. In just one hour at noon, the hottest time of the day, the fire “covered the entire wheat field in an instant, now spreading through the neighboring fields, over the knolls; it was certainly more than a kilometer in flames.”^(v) [42]. It only stopped when it reached an open cork oak grove, which had been ploughed to turn the soil and remove the weeds: “all the smoke came out of the strong fire nearby in the wheat field, from which, passing the open unplastered shed where they kept the farm tools, it arrived, shallow and thin, through the valley and over the knoll that rises from the farmhouse to near the line of ploughed ground where the cork oaks grew, full of shade.”^(w) [42].

The “actors” category refers to the characters of narrative, social or professional agents, and relationships involved. Locals are prevalent in the two regional clusters as ignition agents (cluster 1: 50%; cluster 2: 37%) and/or as involved in firefighting, while actual firefighters had a low presence in the literary fire suppression efforts (cluster 1: 8%; cluster 2: 16%). The bell would toll as soon as a fire was perceived, as Bento da Cruz recalls: “The bronze bell began to scream in the night, and the farmers woke up in a nightmare, shuddering, stumbling, and gesticulating (...) screaming at and shoving the sleeper ones; they went out into the street armed with whatever containers they found on the way”^(x) [43]. From their window, António Cabral describes a couple seeing flames on a nearby hilltop

and a valley filled with smoke. The man quickly develops an uncommitted battle strategy to save an agricultural warehouse: “For me, the best thing was to catch fire from there, against the other one, which is how it is”^(y) [44].

None of the pyrostories praise the work of the firefighters, but rather the solidarity and collective effort of the people united against the destructive fires. In this respect, Venda even refers to the passivity, inefficiency, and collusion between firefighters and police who stay on the roads and not in the burning areas, representing both institutions negatively [27]. Miguel Torga writes that wildfire occurrences have the quality of blurring individuality and uniting people in the fight against the fires [45]. According to the novel by Ferreira de Castro as well, a group of peasants hesitates in the face of a forest fire. At first, they watch the fire in fascination, astonished and emotional, ambivalent when weighing up its consequences: the recovery of the pastures, which they feel are theirs, and the destruction of the plantations, which do not belong to them. Ultimately, most of them run to put it out [24].

Fire can be described as either a friend or a foe. In the north-east cluster 1, fires are more frequently described as foes (58%) than in the southern cluster 2 (42%). This difference can be understood in terms of the different uses of fire most frequently described. As noted above, fire is often used as a tool to manage pastures and fields in cluster 2. Given the complexity of the social and agroecological realities in which fire thrives, it can also appear as friend and foe at the same time. This is the case with the pyrostory of José Saramago, the 1998 Nobel Prize winner for Literature: “The laborers already advanced into the wheatfields. (...) The foreman says, It’s the master. The sergeant, Give him my thanks, and always at his orders. The foreman says, I’ve got my eye on those scoundrels. The sergeant says, Go without fear, I know how to deal with them. Some from the south say, We’ll set the wheatfield on fire. Others say, It’d be a soulful pity. Everyone says, There’s no pity for these souls.”^(z) [46]. The dialogue takes place against a backdrop of great inequality and unrest, common in the southern latifundia during the years of the dictatorship. The impoverished peasantry perceives the act of setting fire to the crop field as a means of challenging the authority of the landowner. However, they believe it would be a shame to damage the harvest. This ambivalence is evident throughout the text but is ultimately resolved in the final sentence. While the harvest is viewed as an exclusive gain for the master, no one has pity for the miserable lives of his laborers.

Fire appears in the literature primarily as an element of reality, not as an illusion or as an imagined or future scene. The focus is either on fires taking place at the time of the narrative or on fires that had already taken place, as suggested by the “Time” category. Discourses about the risk of fire and expressions of the anticipation of a fire event (7%) are less prevalent than descriptions of fires that are happening in the narratives’ present (44%) or remembrances of fires that occurred in the past (47%). Fire, therefore, appears either as an agent playing a role in the literary present or as an element of the past that has brought novelty to the landscape and social life. Fire is not understood as a future threat that determines the plot, but as the plot itself.

In the “sociability” category, conflict is present in 37% of the pyrostories. In cluster 1, conflict is recognized in seven of the pyrostories, with a strong correspondence to political actions against the forestry service, the supervisory of the dictatorial regime’s forestry policy. In cluster 2, conflicts against large landowners appeared in nine stories. This reflects not only the common literary use of fire to convey drama and/or discord but also the historical use of fire as an instrument of protest and/or sabotage, as recorded in the state correspondence from the mid-20th century [47]. We may refer to the circular letters addressed by the Ministry of the Interior in 1961 and 1964 to the regional governments asking about the causes of the unprecedented forest fires in previous years and their possible political configuration.^(aa)

Figure 2 explores the cross-occurrence of categories belonging to different analysis groups. It shows the links established with the three types of time of narrative in relation to fire occurrences (T_IMAG, burning wishes or an imagined fire; T_ON, description of the

burning moment; and T_AFTER, consequences and effects in the socio-ecological system) with the corresponding allocation of the conflict, scenery, night, victims, locals, friend, and foe subcategories. The strongest correlations are represented by “spikes” or projections away from the contours. When fire takes place in the present of the narrative, it is mainly represented as an enemy and is often described as breaking out at night and existing in relation to local actors involved in conflict situations. A similar relationship is found when the representation of fire is that of a memory of past fires. In the descriptions of fires that have already happened, the scenery subcategory, that is, the background or the local conditions in which the action takes place, becomes important. This suggests that fire, once extinguished and suppressed, is used as a literary resource to reconstruct the biophysical, environmental, social, and political contexts or, in other words, to reconstruct a particular landscape in a post-fire stage of the narrative.

In the “subjectification” category, the two subcategories relating to either the human personification of fire or its non-human figuration have a small but significant presence in the corpus. They were used respectively when the fire either behaves like a character who takes on human behavior and moral values (24%), or takes on animal, plant, or geological characteristics (13%). The north–south differences suggest that fire finds its way through the human figure more often in the south (cluster 2: 26%) than in the north (cluster 1: 8%), while the opposite is true in the case of non-human figuration (cluster 1: 21%; cluster 2: 5%). This contrast might be due to the socioecological landscape in which social conflicts are situated. In the southern plains, social conflict takes place in the large farmlands through oppressive forms of labor exploitation and social subjugation; therefore, the human realm is the center of the action. In the northern mountainous regions, social conflict is staged in terms of access to the mountain soils and of the ecological tensions between pastureland, grain crops, hunting and gathering, and compulsory forestry. As a result, conflict extends into the non-human realm at the intersection where various animal and geological forms converge.

The category that identifies the intervention of a supernatural being is present in 16% of the pyrostories. The relationship between fire and the devil is present when a supernatural entity fans the fire after an ignition [26], when the fire is liquid gold and devils and witches jump out of it [48], or when the fire is actually the devil, as in this excerpt by J. Ferreira de Castro: “May the devil take all the forests! All of them!”^(ab) [24].

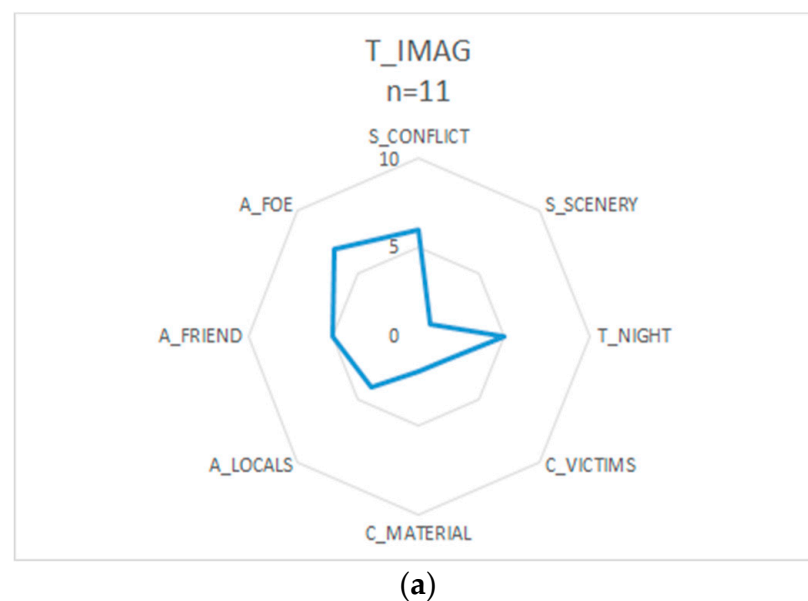


Figure 2. Cont.

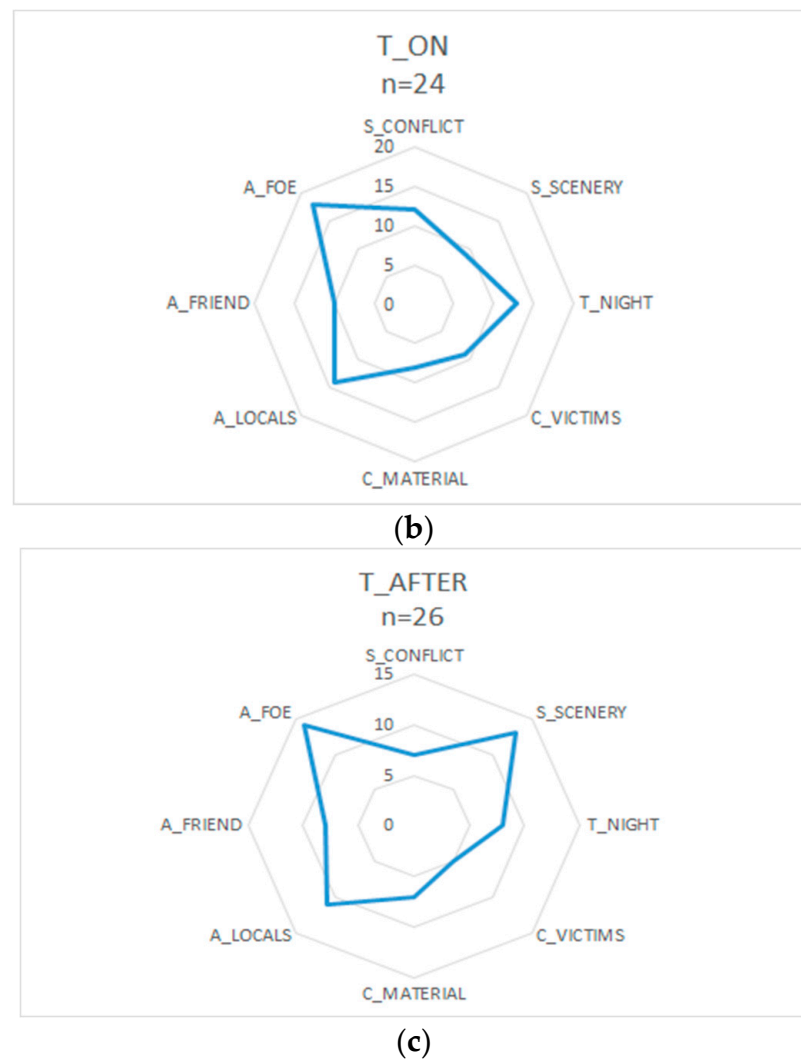


Figure 2. Diagrams of the relationships between the three types of time of fire in narratives and eight selected categories of analysis. (a) T_IMAG: a fire that is imagined or wished for and that becomes, even if for moments, a sidetrack of the narrative; (b) T_ON: the burning moment; and (c) T_AFTER: the effects of a fire in a certain socio-ecological context.

5. Discussion

Neither in real life nor in fictional terms can fires be easily understood, predicted, or simplified. Pyrostories are fertile grounds for hybrid and more-than-human narratives and for an imagery of life, death, and the spaces in between. Fires serve as carriers of misfortunes, vehicles of justice, agents of loss or renewal, and causes of major destruction and pain. Paradoxically, they are also endowed with qualities of life: animation, heat, and regeneration. The analyzed texts displayed the multiple uses of fire and their socioecological and political consequences and revealed the origins, the agents, the practices, or the impacts of fire in particular landscapes. Fire is incorporated into stories as a historical subject and often as an active character that influences the narrative. Although they are rarely the main characters, fires appear, produce effects, carry meanings, change the course of the argument, and then vanish as they burn. In literature, whenever present, fire always seems to have an important role in the narrative. In sum, regardless of whether it is described as frequent or sporadic in the scenario of the story, fire is never mentioned without importance being ascribed to it.

Fire also plays an aesthetic function, a function that engages multiple senses: sight, hearing, smell, and touch. Writers describe the colors and glows; the smells announcing the

arrival of fire or persisting after its passage; and the sound of flames violently consuming the vegetation or a later crackling in the aftermath. Fire appears as a glowing ember, and the sensation of heat is also occasionally present in the descriptions. Literary fires convey a set of strong emotions, experienced individually and collectively. Its imagery resorts to the symbolism associated with fires and their uses—passion, desire or rage, rebirth and resurrection, eternity, destruction, hope, hell, and purification—generating a complex ambivalence of attraction and fear.

Additionally, pyrostories are informed by differences in the biophysical structure and land cover of Portuguese landscapes, as revealed in the distribution, behavior, and uses of fire in the mountain ranges of the north and the plains of the south. This socioecological context of fire and its regional differentiation further reinforces the value of literature as a lens for understanding past fire realities and how fires were once portrayed and perceived. In literature, fire is often embedded in social relations as a disruptive element used to resolve or transform a given status quo or incorporated into the descriptions of postfire landscapes and of social life after a certain fire is put out. Significantly, the set of pyrostories analyzed here highlights the role of fire in Portuguese 20th century history, particularly regarding popular dissent against the state forestation policies in the common lands of the northern hinterland [49,50] and peasant labor struggles against latifundia landowners in the cereal-growing southern plains [51,52]. While the southern Alentejo is now relatively free of wildfires and fire-related conflict, literature places the region firmly on the map of fire's historical geography in the context of social strife. On a national scale, the authors of this paper found that 20th-century writers did not associate arsonists with mental illness, as pyromaniacs arguments did. Instead, they portrayed them as figures who reshape landscapes and drive change in rural environments [53].

Literature also reveals an ancestral approach to scrub management in slash-and-burn agriculture. The agricultural use of fire and land cover appear as elements linked to the ignition, spread, and intensity of fires in the past. In contrast, writers, even those publishing after the raising of global awareness of climate change largely brought with the Quito Protocol in 1997, do not include it as a significant factor in the occurrence of large fires. Amitav Gosh highlighted this marginal relation between literature and climate change in 2016, a situation that appears to have shifted somewhat in recent years [54]. However, the connection between fire, climate change, and literature remains poorly studied for more recent periods and across different geographies. In the pyrostories analyzed here, fires are embedded within local ecologies and social life, disregarding broader planetary forces as literary agents.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Historical and Cultural Significance of Fire in Portuguese Literature

Although this paper addresses the literary representation of fire in Portugal over a 105-year period, a significant number of pyrostories (56%) were published in the 1940s to 1960s, suggesting that fire was a critical theme for social realist and neo-realist writers, capturing the tumultuous rural life and societal conflicts during the Portuguese dictatorship. Literature also accounts for the conditions necessary for fires to ignite and spread, highlighting the role of weather—especially wind and dry conditions—as frequent contributors to fire outbreaks. As expected, literary fires predominantly occur in summer, reflecting Portugal's Mediterranean climate. This seasonal reference is more pronounced in the southern regions, which face higher temperatures and drought conditions. The descriptions of fire spread across varied landscapes (mountains vs. plains) also reveal the influence of geography on fire behavior, reflecting regional differences in biophysical structure and land use. These contexts inform the understanding of fire's historical and cultural significance. The primary causes of fire in the literature are arson and accidental ignitions, with a notable absence of natural causes, like lightning. Management fires, often used for land rejuvenation, are more common in southern Portugal, where traditional practices prevail.

6.2. Causes and Representations of Fire in Rural Communities

The analysis of pyrostories underscores the significance of fire in shaping rural identity, community dynamics, and socio-political landscapes in Portugal. Five key conclusions may be excerpted. First, fire is portrayed as a contemporary and historical agent rather than a mere threat, shaping narratives that reflect social and political tensions, particularly against state policies regarding forestry and land use. Second, pyrostories frequently incorporate conflict, illustrating fire as a tool of protest against socio-political injustices, particularly in the context of land ownership and labor exploitation. Third, burnings serve as a catalyst for community solidarity and collective action against threats, portraying the local communities as central actors in both the ignition and suppression of fires. In contrast, firefighters are often depicted as passive or ineffective. Fourth, fire is depicted not only as a physical force but also as a transformative agent of the landscape, reshaping both the environment and the social fabric of rural communities. Finally, the narratives reflect a historical awareness of deforestation and environmental degradation.

6.3. The Dual Nature of Fire: Destruction and Renewal

Pyrostories evoke a deep emotional response to fire, illustrating its dual nature as both a destructive force and a necessary tool for agricultural practices. The portrayal of fire often conveys feelings of fear, nostalgia, and communal struggle. Burnings embody paradoxical qualities—they can be destructive and a source of pain, yet they also symbolize renewal, animation, and warmth. This duality contributes to their representation as both agents of misfortune and vehicles for justice.

6.4. Final Remarks

At last, pyrostories provide a nuanced exploration of fire as both a literal and metaphorical element in literature, emphasizing its role in shaping social relations, cultural memory, and ecological understanding within specific regional contexts.

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Data Availability Statement: The original contributions presented in the study are included in the paper; further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. Literary Corpus

Full references (43), first editions, and number of pyrostories (n = 55).

| References | 1st ed. | n |
|--|---------|---|
| Bivar, Manuel, <i>A Charca</i> . Língua Morta, 2021. | 2021 | 1 |
| Cabral, António, <i>A Noiva de Caná</i> . Notícias, 1995. [44] | 1995 | 1 |
| Carmelo, Luís, <i>A Falha</i> . EEA, 2009. [41] | 1998 | 1 |
| Carvalho, Manuel Vaz de, <i>Poemas do Solstício</i> . Colibri, 2011. | 2000 | 1 |
| Castro, José Ferreira, <i>A Lã e a Neve</i> . Guimarães & C ^a , 1955. [24] | 1947 | 1 |
| Cruz, Bento da, <i>Planalto em Chamas</i> . Arcádia, 1963. [43] | 1963 | 1 |
| Faria, Almeida. <i>A Paixão</i> . Assírio e Alvim, 2013. [42] | 1965 | 1 |
| Ferreira, Vergílio, <i>Aparição</i> . Bertrand Editora, 2001. | 1959 | 1 |
| Ferreira, Vergílio, <i>Mudança</i> . Livraria Bertrand, 1979. | 1949 | 1 |
| Fonseca, Manuel da, <i>Cerromaior</i> . Inquérito, 1943. [37] | 1943 | 1 |
| Fonseca, Manuel da, <i>Nortada</i> . Fomento de Publicações, 1955. | 1942 | 1 |
| Fonseca, Tomás, <i>Filha de Labão</i> . EEA, 1972. [39] | 1951 | 3 |
| Godinho, Vergílio, <i>Calcanhar do Mundo: Romance de Costumes</i> . Edições Gama, 1942 | 1942 | 2 |
| Gomes, Soeiro Pereira, <i>Esteiros</i> . Avante, 2009. | 1941 | 1 |
| Lisboa, Irene, <i>Crónicas da Serra</i> . Presença, 1997. [40] | 1962 | 1 |
| Maria Angelina and Raúl Brandão, <i>Portugal Pequeno</i> . Veja, 1985. | 1930 | 1 |
| Namora, Fernando, <i>Retalhos da Vida de um Médico—Primeira série</i> . EEA, 1979. | 1949 | 2 |
| Namora, Fernando. <i>A Casa da Malta</i> . Bertrand, 1978. | 1945 | 1 |
| Oliveira, Carlos de, <i>Finisterra</i> . Paisagem e Povoamento. Sá da Costa, 1978. | 1978 | 2 |
| Oliveira, Carlos, <i>Casa na Duna</i> . Assírio e Alvim, 2004. [38] | 1943 | 2 |
| Peixoto, José Luís, <i>Abraço</i> . Quetzal, 2011. [28] | 2011 | 2 |
| Pires, José Cardoso, <i>Alexandra Alpha</i> . Dom Quixote, 1999. | 1987 | 1 |
| Redol, Alves, <i>Fanga</i> . Caminho, 1996. | 1943 | 1 |
| Redol, Alves, <i>Porto Manso</i> . EEA, 1979. [33] | 1946 | 2 |
| Rentes de Carvalho, José, <i>Ernestina</i> . Quetzal, 2010. [23] | 2009 | 1 |
| Ribeiro, Aquilino, <i>A Via Sinuosa</i> . Círculo de Leitores, 2008. | 1918 | 1 |
| Ribeiro, Aquilino, <i>Aldeia. Terra, Gente e Bichos</i> . Bertrand, 1964. [35] | 1944 | 2 |
| Ribeiro, Aquilino, <i>Andam Faunos pelos Bosques</i> . Bertrand, 1985. [29] | 1926 | 1 |
| Ribeiro, Aquilino, <i>Quando os Lobos Uivam</i> . Bertrand, 1999. [25] | 1958 | 1 |
| Rodrigues, Urbano Tavares, <i>Campos da promessa</i> . ATAEGINA, 1998. | 1998 | 1 |
| Rodrigues, Urbano Tavares, <i>Estórias Alentejanas</i> . Caminho, 1977. | 1977 | 1 |
| Rodrigues, Urbano Tavares, <i>Filipa Nesse Dia</i> . EEA, 1988. [48] | 1988 | 1 |
| Saramago, J. <i>Levantado do Chão</i> . Porto Editora, 2014. | 1980 | 1 |
| Seves, António, <i>Leomil</i> . CP Leomil, 2013. | 1921 | 2 |
| Silva, Armando Antunes da, <i>Alentejo É Sangue</i> . Livros Horizonte, 1984. | 1984 | 1 |
| Silva, Armando Antunes da, <i>Suão</i> . Portugália, 1960. | 1960 | 3 |
| Silva, Armando Antunes da, <i>Terra do Nosso Pão</i> . Bertrand, 1975. | 1964 | 1 |
| Teixeira de Pascoaes, <i>A Beira (num relâmpago)</i> . Assírio e Alvim, 1994. | 1916 | 1 |
| Torga, Miguel, <i>Contos (A Terceira Voz)</i> . Dom Quixote, 2001. [45] | 1934 | 1 |

| References | 1st ed. | n |
|--|---------|---|
| Torga, Miguel, <i>Contos da Montanha (O Vinho)</i> , in <i>Contos. Dom Quixote</i> , 2001. [26] | 1941 | 1 |
| Torga, Miguel, <i>Diário, vols. V a VIII (Diário VII)</i> . Dom Quixote, 2001. | 1956 | 1 |
| Torga, Miguel, <i>Novos Contos da Montanha (O Leproso)</i> , in <i>Contos. Dom Quixote</i> , 2001. | 1944 | 1 |
| Venda, António Manuel, <i>Uma noite com o fogo</i> . Quetzal, 2009. [27] | 2009 | 1 |

Appendix B. Notes and Literary Excerpts in Portuguese

- (a) The term “faction” was coined in reference to Jules Verne’s narratives, which, despite their fantastical content, refer to factual technical and scientific innovations that the author identified as marking his time [17].
- (b) LITESCPE.PT—Atlas of Literary Landscapes of Mainland Portugal, <https://ielt.fch.unl.pt/en/portfolio/atlas-of-literary-landscapes-of-mainland-portugal/> (accessed on 1 september 2024). By exploring the relationship between literature and territory, it identifies excerpts in Portuguese literature in which landscapes are depicted (“literary landscapes”). As of 10 July 2023, it comprised more than 7000 excerpts, 6972 of which were published from 1900 onwards, included in 947 writings written by 176 writers.
- (c) NUTS3 is an abbreviation referring to the Eurostat Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, level 3.
- (d) Original text: *Era tal a braveza do sol e a segura dos montes e do plantio, que dava a impressão de que a qualquer momento poderia rebentar um incêndio* [p. 223].
- (e) Original text: *Três ou quatro homens lançavam fogo, de ponta a ponta, a uma floresta e com vento de feição, aquilo ia num instante. Quando os outros voltassem do primeiro fogo, além de estarem cansados, já seria tarde. Um fogo seguido, ninguém o poderia apagar. . .* [p. 73].
- (f) Original text: *A selva crescera tanto que lhe dava muito por cima da cabeça. O tojo era alto e ressequira no pé. E nem se deu ao cuidado de amontoar a lenha. Pegou o fogo a uma tojeira e dali a pouco a chama difusa corria a toda a frente, alterosa ou baixa, tocada pelo vento* [p. 400].
- (g) Original text: *O incêndio cada vez era maior. Num tojal, as lambras pareciam cabras às turras. Anoitecera, e, à medida que se toldava a luz, avivava-se mais o brasido. Os olhos do borracho, que o vinho e o clarão cegavam, fechavam-se numa teima de cortinas insubmissas. (. . .) Os montes estavam agora transformados numa fornalha* [p. 281].
- (h) Original text: *Começaram a subir pela encosta, como se alguma coisa as tivesse enlouquecido. Aquele volume de chamas fugia, e eu absolutamente pasmado com o que os meus olhos viam, as chamas como se fossem um animal disforme e bem colorido, a percorrer a encosta em direção à linha de fogo* [p. 101].
- (i) Original text: *Aquilo que me impressionava mais era o fumo. Eram colunas enormes que, vistas ao longe, desenhadas no céu, não pareciam feitas de fumo, pareciam sólidas. Eram colunas que subiam pelo céu como garras de um pássaro gigante, cujo corpo era a terra e que se agarrava ao céu. Depois de algumas horas, o fumo tapava o sol, e era uma tarde de verão que, de repente, escurecia e que, pelo fumo, se transformava em início da noite* [p. 85].
- (j) Original text: *[O] Verão lá vai levado em fogo e poeirada* [pp. 125–126].
- (k) Original text: *Houve gente que fugiu espavorida clamando protecção ao céu, para que aquele monstro de ferro não voltasse mais. Na fornalha que expedia faúlhas e deixava incêndios, aqui e ali, nos pinheirais e soutos, eles sentiam que se gerava uma maldição para a sua vida simples e quieta* [p. 295].
- (l) Original text: *As chamas iluminavam as casas e oscilavam, vencendo o negrume da noite, fazendo sombras e clarões até às muralhas do Castelo. Agarrado aos varões, Dòzinha pulava, dando gargalhadas e repetindo palavras incompreensíveis* [p. 300].
- (m) Original text: *O problema rural português é mais complexo do que parece à primeira vista (...) ali houve floresta. Sabemos pelas breves referências dos geógrafos antigos (...) que a Lusitânia era espessa e contínua mata de Norte a Sul (...) Imaginem-se os incêndios colossais, verdadeiras imagens do fim do mundo, que devoraram a floresta secular!* [pp. 125–126]
- (n) Original text: *[U]ma lâmpada enorme, de luz avermelhada, parece iluminar as terras em redor* [p. 11].

- (o) Original text: *[O] silêncio da noite nos montes, um silêncio que tão bem conhecia, era quebrado apenas pelo barulho do mato a arder, um barulho que se acentuava de cada vez que as chamas subiam a uma das árvores, como se alguém de repente desatasse aos tiros [p. 17].*
- (p) Original text: *O silêncio, apenas com o fogo a quebrá-lo devagar, pachorrenho, e de vez em quando uns barulhos maiores, que eu poderia logo acompanhar com a visão das chamas a subirem a um eucalipto [p. 56].*
- (q) Original text: *Mas os montes estavam cheios de fogo. Ali passava a linha com as chamas de meio metro, apagava-se ali, como se tinha apagado na aldeia, e na levada se calhar, e como se apagaria em mais pontos a seguir. Mas havia as fagulhas que a qualquer momento levariam pelos ares, e havia sítios onde as manchas não se apagariam, onde iriam continuar a sua progressão por muito tempo. E havia outras linhas de fogo noutras zonas daqueles montes, de certeza que havia outras, e fogos isolados [p. 92].*
- (r) Original text: *Ao longe, o sol do fim de tarde incendiava as serras: a fraga a arder recortava-se no céu; o povo daqueles sítios morreria na fogueira medonha; os maciços de árvores, erectos cresciam sobre o dorso da montanha como línguas das chamas [p. 93].*
- (s) Original text: *Estio ardente, sem um lameiro a verdejar! (...) Por isso os gados tiveram de procurar pastagens mais longe, nos limites vizinhos, que a labareda não tostara [p. 56].*
- (t) Original text: *Oito dias andou o fogo na serra sem ninguém o poder apagar. Naquele tempo estava tudo seco. Eram já uns tantos de Agosto, talvez fosse mesmo entrado o Setembro. Foi uma desgraça pro gado, que andava todo pelos altos. (...). Q' ando um pastor se descuida e as cabras e as ovelhas atravessam aquelas queimadas, botam a barriga [p. 105].*
- (u) Original text: *A terra está aberta, fertilizada pela cinza, pronta para receber as sementes. Assim que venham as primeiras chuvas [p. 153].*
- (v) Original text: *[C]obriu toda a seara num instante, alastrava agora pelos campos, pelos cabeços, era por certo mais que um quilómetro em chamas [p. 126].*
- (w) Original text: *[T]odo o fumo saía do forte fogo perto, da seara de trigo que, passando o barracão aberto, sem reboco onde guardavam as alfaias, chegava, rasa e rala, pelo vale e pelo cabeço que sobe desde o monte, até junto da linha de chão charruado onde os sobreiros cresciam, cheios de sombra [p. 30].*
- (x) Original text: *O bronze começou a gritar na noite e os lavradores acordaram em pesadelo, estremunhados, a tropeçar e a gesticular (...) aos berros e aos empurrões nos mais dorminhocos, saíram para a rua munidos de quanto vasilhame encontraram no caminho [p. 28].*
- (y) Original text: *[C]á para mim, o melhor era pegar fogo dali, contra o outro, que é como é [p. 187].*
- (z) Original text: *Os ratinhos já avançaram pela seara dentro. Diz o feitor, É o patrão. Diz o sargento, Agradeça por, e sempre às ordens. Diz o feitor, Tenha-me olho nesses malandros. Diz o sargento, Vá sem receio, com eles sei eu lidar. Dizem uns do sul, Deitamos fogo à seara. Dizem outros, Seria uma dó de alma. Dizem todos, Não há dó para estas almas [p. 38].*
- (aa) Circular n.º 11, PT/ANTT/MAI/GM/JE0032, Cx. 217, 1961; Circular n.º13/1964, PT/AMS, Diversos—Correspondência com várias entidades e Governo Civil, Proc.1, Cx.4, Pt.2 (30/07/1963 a 29/07/1964).
- (ab) Original text: *Que o diabo leve todas as florestas! Todas! [p. 98].*

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