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The Pathology of Faith

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Abstract

Portuguese republican ideology gained strength during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The medical community played a decisive role in the definition of this ideology. The republican medical community's main concern was to treat the country as a doctor treats a patient, using the language of science to align Portugal with the last stage of human development, as defined by August Comte or Herbert Spencer. This article focuses on the development of a medical discourse that supported the anti-religious actions of the first Portuguese republican governments.

Keywords

Republicanism; psychiatry; mystics; Portugal; medical community.

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On October 3 1910, Dr Miguel Bombarda, director of the Psychiatric Hospital of Rilhafoles in Lisbon, was informed by a nurse that Aparício dos Santos, a former patient, wanted to see him. Bombarda was quick to have him sent in; he was anxious to know if this lieutenant of the Portuguese army, who suffered from delusions of persecution, had benefited from his stay in Paris where some of the greatest psychiatric minds of the time had analysed his case. Santos walked into the middle of the director's office, waited a few seconds, took a gun out of his pocket and shot Bombarda, who died on the operating table later that day. As news of the doctor's death spread through Lisbon, many took to the streets in protest. Bombarda was one of the greatest opponents of Crown and Church and the republicans were quick to present him as a martyr to the cause of regime change. The Jesuits were blamed, their churches attacked and when the crowds were told that the doctor had been killed by a madman many, in the Republican Party, were quick to point out that religion was the source of this madness. Bombarda's death and the agitation that followed precipitated the country into a revolution that had been long in the making. October 5 1910 marked the end of almost 800 years of monarchy and the beginning of the Portuguese Republic.

Ideologically, republicanism had been, until the revolution, a big tent of grievances against the monarchy, the government, the politicians and the institutions. There was not a lot uniting the republicans but most would agree that there was an unresolved contradiction in their country's position in the world that undermined any attempt to modernise it. If Portugal was a part of Europe and Europe was at the forefront of all development it should follow that the Portuguese mentality should admire and even contribute to this development. To the majority of republicans this was not the case, in fact the opposite was true – instead of developing ways to leap forward into futuristic new worlds of radical thinking and scientific discovery, the collective mind of the Portuguese nation existed in the past, in a world of darkness and in perfect contradiction with the rest of Europe. The dangers of this contradiction were one of the favourite themes of the republican medical community. According to them, the Portuguese were trying to face the challenges of their European present with the tools of their obscurantist past and this was responsible for an epidemic of mental disturbances. For the most part, religion and all its manifestations were identified as the main cause of this problem. The country needed to be looked at as a hospital and its politicians as medical practitioners.

With the death of Bombarda, republicanism gained a martyr and a medical martyr was particularly important to a post-revolutionary parliament where this profession was so well represented. During the first months of the new regime the provisional government renamed streets and institutions after Bombarda in almost every city in the country. At the same time, the religious orders were expelled from the country and all public manifestations of piety, from the ringing of church bells to the customary processions, were forbidden together with the teaching of religion in schools and universities. Newspapers, in Portugal and throughout the world, showed images of doctors measuring the heads of Jesuits and although this was perceived by many as an unnecessary act of cruelty, to some republicans these pictures were of vital importance: they could be understood by everyone as a sign of a war in progress between the normal and the pathological; a war being fought, on one side, with the weapons of science and, on the other, with the weapons of mysticism.



Jesuit priests having their heads measured.

Joshua Benoliel, “Os jesuítas em Portugal”, *Ilustração Portuguesa*
7 November 1910.

The combination of martyrdom with a larger than life personality transformed Miguel Bombarda into a sort of secular patron saint of the medicalisation of religious feelings. Although his actual views on this subject were frequently ignored, the subject itself became very popular. Even though there was not a consensual republican interpretation of these feelings, the ruling elite was keen to institute an official view that would serve as a rational justification for the anticlerical and antireligious measures of the first republican governments. The importance of this subject was perceived by many young republican doctors who, inspired by Miguel Bombarda, produced several books, pamphlets and speeches with an enthusiasm that only a revolutionary period could justify. Amongst these, two came to represent the most accomplished presentations of the two competing points of view; they were Júlio de Matos (1856-1922) and Manuel Laranjeira (1877-1912). Matos, who in 1911 succeeded Bombarda as director of the Psychiatric Hospital of Rilhafoles, by then renamed after the deceased doctor, was increasingly becoming the great authority of republican psychiatry. Laranjeira was more of a fringe character, admired for his intelligence and artistic prowess but separated from the world of power by his nonconformism and pessimism, which culminated in his suicide in 1912.

The debate

According to Júlio de Matos, whenever someone felt the insatiable “desire to find a solution for the theological and metaphysical problem of the origin of everything” a door was opened to a world of undisciplined mystical feelings that inevitably resulted in madness.¹ This was not a new phenomenon; in fact, and according to Matos, mysticism had always been directly connected with mental illness, from the prophets of the Old Testament to the modern mystics. It was time for an intervention, not only on individuals but also on society. It was essential to take psychiatry out of the hospitals and into the chambers of power, thus eliminating the residues of an obscurantist past that was the source of many mental problems.

Matos was not alone in the defence of these arguments. He saw himself as following in the footsteps of the enlightened work of the *Encyclopédie* which had so vividly reported cases of

¹ Júlio de Matos, 1880, pp. 305-310

galloping melancholy caused by religious missions, of Pinel who had fought for the removal of all religious objects from asylums, or Calmeil and Littré who had described the demonomania and lycanthropy epidemics of the Middle Ages.² At a national level, and as a distinguished member of the Portuguese Republican Party, his opinions carried a great deal of weight. Amongst republicans, Júlio de Matos came to represent those who considered the men of faith – saints, martyrs, mystics, prophets, visionaries, hermits, or simply those who actually believed in religion – as degenerate individuals.

Another public voice, within this community, was that of Manuel Laranjeira, who wrote on the subject of mysticism and concluded that the men of faith were certainly abnormal but not degenerate. In denying the equivalence between the abnormal and the pathological, Laranjeira was working outside the sphere of the then widely prevalent biological positivism to establish a concept of mental normality that could not be used, in his view, as an instrument of intolerance. Mysticism was a deviation from the norm but it was not a pathology and, therefore, the mystic could not be institutionalised or expelled or even chastised.

The debate between these two perspectives reached a climax in 1910 when a republican revolution overthrew the monarchy. The political fragility of the new regime was seen as an expression of the mental fragility of Portuguese society: if the new republic was to last it needed the help of the medical sciences, particularly psychiatry, to remove the threat of obscurantism. Dealing with the men of faith was an essential part of this process and the choice between Júlio de Matos' and Manuel Laranjeira's views would have significant repercussions on the future of the country.

Manuel Laranjeira: normal/abnormal

Manuel Laranjeira's magnum opus on the subject of mysticism was his doctoral thesis presented to the School of Medicine of the University of Porto in 1907, with the suggestive title: *The Disease of Sanctity – a psychopathological essay on religious mysticism*. In this work, mysticism emerged as an “exaggerated tendency, and not a pathological manifestation, derived exclusively from this or that doctrinal system”.³

In tune with the republican discourse, Laranjeira saw the mystic as an abnormal individual; however he refused to medicalise his feelings or to portray him as dangerous or inferior. This point became particularly clear when he described the mystic as someone who was able to elevate himself above the rest of society, going through, in his life time, each of humanity's evolutionary stages in order to reach a new, individual and possibly higher stage.⁴ The mystic's abnormality was a sign of detachment from the majority, of a new path, and thus mysticism would blossom in every system, secular or religious, where individuals feel the need to solve the “enigmatic problem of universal happiness”.⁵ This conclusion was accepted by the university but vigorously attacked by Laranjeira's fellow republicans. Seen from this perspective, the very active and idealistic republican minority could be understood as being moved, in their actions and thoughts, by mystical feelings as much as contemplative monks. How could anyone suggest that the anti-clerical and anti-religious republican ideology was a form of mysticism?

In Laranjeira's opinion, the “tendency to exaggerate” revealed the presence of mysticism behind any type of ideology. Not only would the mystic mind exaggerate in its adherence to political or religious ideals but it would also do so when faced with any subject related to a doctrinal system or a moral paradigm. In other words, the mystic temperament was “an exaggerated tendency to act virtuously”.⁶ Therefore, mysticism was an expression of altruism and, even if the mystic committed the worst of crimes, he would be doing so “with the unshakeable conviction (many times reinforced by hallucinations) that he was doing something good and humanitarian”.⁷

² Júlio de Matos, 1884, p.22

³ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp. 13,14

⁴ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp. 13,14

⁵ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp. 13,14

⁶ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, p.33

⁷ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, p.4

This unremitting search for virtue manifested itself in four fundamental tendencies that could be identified in the actions of all mystics. First, the life of a mystic would follow an ideal capable of producing psychological appeasement. The acceptance of this ideal would naturally result, in a very Lamarckian way, in the selection and reinforcement of certain mental traits that were in tune with it. The criteria used to include or exclude these traits would determine the mystic's personality. Some forms of mysticism, such as that exhibited by Descartes, were based on intellectual elements; while others, such as Mohammad's mysticism, were the result of a focus on moral elements.⁸ The second tendency exhibited by the mystic was the need to universalise his will. Believing he possessed the secret to happiness, the mystic's altruism impelled him to spread the word about his discovery. If the population accepted him, he would become a hero; if he were rejected, the population would denounce him as a sectarian fanatic.⁹ The third tendency was the need to find moral support in the outside world. The fourth and last tendency was that of physical enjoyment derived from the mystic's activities.¹⁰

Laranjeira exemplified these tendencies by citing the interesting case of a woman, Ana de Jesus Maria José de Magalhães, known in the North of Portugal as the *Saint of Arrifana*.¹¹ He approached this case as any member of the republican medical community would. First, he analysed the woman's family tree and concluded that it was dominated by mystics and madmen: her father was insane, her uncle was a neuropath, her brother was a priest suffering from religious monomania and her sister was hysterical. He also analysed her names, which included the holiest of names in Christianity and this was, in his opinion, a "clear pathogenic sign".¹² He then described the *saint* as: hysterical, probably suffering from a persecution delirium since, according to her, "everyone was a freemason, including priests"; paralytic, probably due to hysteria and with grave problems of "the nutritive metabolism".¹³ Hers was presented as a classic case of brusque ecstasy characterised by levitation, suspension in a "position of beatitude" and an "attitude of cataleptic ecstasy". According to Laranjeira this was violent and disturbing but "easily understandable".¹⁴

The case of the *Saint of Arrifana* might appear to contradict the distinction that Laranjeira was trying to make between the mystic and the degenerate. However, according to the doctor, this case showed that degeneration could accompany mysticism but it was not a necessary condition for its appearance. To reinforce this position he presented another, even more controversial, example of mystical behaviour. It was his understanding that the actions of "some regicides and anarchists" were "essentially identical" to those of some Christian mystics; in other words, both were "expressions of the same mystic temperament, diverse only in its form, due to differences in social background".¹⁵ One year after these words were written, in 1908, two republican activists, Manuel Buiça and Alfredo Costa, shot the king and his eldest son and were then killed by the police. Although the monarchy survived for another two years the regicides became the greatest martyrs of republicanism. If the republican medical community were to accept Laranjeira's thesis, the heroes of their cause would belong to the same category as its greatest enemies – this was clearly intolerable. At the same time, this introduced an element of uncertainty in what was thought to be a positive law uniting mysticism and mental diseases. In this way, Laranjeira's thesis constituted a structural attack on the edifice of republican knowledge and authority and that is why it generated so much opposition.

Until the end of his life, Laranjeira maintained "that hysteria is an insufficient explanation for mysticism (...) there are mystics who are simultaneously hysterics, but it is also true that there are

⁸ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp.38-40

⁹ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, p.37

¹⁰ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp.43-47

¹¹ Arrifana was the name of the woman's village. The Catholic Church never recognised her sanctity.

¹² Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp.82,83

¹³ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp.84,85

¹⁴ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp.84,85

¹⁵ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp.20,21

many examples of mysticism where the great neurosis cannot be invoked”.¹⁶ In his view, it was undeniable that many mystics revealed a mental and emotional superiority and this could hardly fit with the notion of degeneration: “first, it would be necessary to demonstrate that intellectual and moral superiority are truly degenerative manifestations”.¹⁷ Indeed, Laranjeira was not far from admitting – but never openly – that mysticism was a purely spiritual phenomenon, which makes one wonder about the possibility of reconciling this point of view with Haeckel’s monism that he so readily professed.¹⁸

The *Disease of Sanctity* represents a serious effort to enlarge the scope of psychiatry, making it capable of analysing a subject that had so successfully resisted the incursions of modern science. At the same time, this work reveals the hesitations of a man who preferred the *via negativa* in his approach to mysticism, that is, he attempted to understand this subject by describing what it was not rather than by what it was. Clearly, Laranjeira was afraid to lose the mystery of a reality that so fascinated him. According to Bernard Martocq, this quasi paralysis of the Portuguese physician was grounded on the opposition between the two fundamental constituents of his thought: Haeckel’s influence and a certain religious nostalgia, which he often denied but never really abandoned.¹⁹ The result of these contradictions is a complex work, permeated by nuances, and strongly suspicious of generalisations and reductionism.

Júlio de Matos and degeneration

In his youth, Júlio de Matos wrote to his friend Teófilo Braga (the future head of the first provisional republican government and then president of the republic) about his near-descent into madness and how the positivist philosophy of August Comte had saved him from the abyss.²⁰ It was his contention that Comte’s ideas could have a similar effect on the entire country. With this almost messianic aura, positivism came to be seen by many in the republican medical community as a cure for all mental problems and the only method capable of composing a new science of the mind that could compete with the mystical tendencies prevalent in the country. According to Matos, this new science rejected the rational speculation of idealistic psychology that he saw as nothing more than a “symptom of indiscipline”²¹ but it also looked at materialism as a pointless “metaphysical pretension”.²² Mental life could not be entirely explained by what happens in the brain; society, for example, also played a very important role. It is only from this permanent connection between biology and sociology, he concluded in a truly Comtean fashion, that “we may infer the superior complexity of psychological facts”.²³

It was upon the rock of positivism that Júlio de Matos diagnosed the men of faith. In one of his most influential books, *Elements of Psychiatry*, written in 1911, he defined a man of faith as someone whose religious beliefs were so exaggerated that he lost sight of everything else. In search of the objectivity and clarity that, in his opinion, were lacking in the work of Laranjeira, Matos went on to define a clear connection between this exaggerated religiosity and degeneration. He started by admitting that, in theory, there might be social and biological causes to this condition: “they [religious concerns] prepare madness and, sometimes, they denounce the existence of madness”.²⁴ In other words, deep religious feelings might be the result of an exposure to irrational social environments or they might be the expression of a degenerate biological constitution. This duality, however, seems to disappear when we move from Matos’ theoretical considerations to his practice. In practical terms, he

¹⁶ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, p.64

¹⁷ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, p.48.

¹⁸ Bernard Martocq, 1985, pp.258

¹⁹ Manuel Laranjeira, 1993, pp.264,265

²⁰ Fernandes, 1966, pp. 46-54

²¹ Júlio de Matos, 1881, pp.331-338

²² Júlio de Matos, 1881, pp.331-338

²³ Júlio de Matos, 1881, pp.331-338

²⁴ Júlio de Matos, 1911, pp. 30,31

understood biology to be *the* cause of madness: “close to thirty years of observations have led me to consider that any case of mysticism without the presence of hereditary causes is absolutely exceptional, probably inexistent”.²⁵ In this apparent contradiction between theory and practice, Matos revealed his total adherence to the positivistic creed.

Between society and biology, the cause of the mystical temperament depended on the point of view: if we think in terms of the species, society gained the upper edge since “every useful or noxious modification that takes place in our being is dependent on the cosmic and social milieu”; if we think in terms of the individual “we have to consider the internal causes as being more important and significant”.²⁶ Matos’ choice of perspective had to provide him with a clear, objective and unilinear diagnosis while, at the same time, it could not reduce the scope of the new mental science by transforming it into the mere study of brain biology. His solution to this problem was to opt for August Comte’s perspective, which defined the individual as “the sum of the organic and differentiated causes that slowly acted on his ancestry”.²⁷ This was the key to the psychiatric system elaborated by Júlio de Matos: today’s human beings were “the result of increasingly complex mental systematisations,” in other words “increasingly extensive associations and inhibitions” representing “the actions of the world on the individual and his reactions to the world”.²⁸ Heredity brought about the accumulation of these systematisations and time, necessarily long, stabilised them.

In this way, what the psychiatrist saw when analysing an individual was not only his personal history but also a perfect depiction of his society and all the previous ones that had made human beings what they are. This approach had significant repercussions. If the orderly accumulation of systematisations brought about by heredity was disturbed – by internal contradictions, for example – then the most recent systematisations, which were also more disorganised and unstable, would be replaced by older ones.²⁹ This meant that the “systematic obsessions and deliriums” of the present were “partial and more or less extensive resurrections of one’s ancestral self”.³⁰ In this way, the degenerate was seen as an anachronic being, someone who was outside the normal pattern of development of his race, age and class; a normal person, on the other hand, would act and think according to his society’s stage in human evolution, as defined by Comte and Spencer.³¹

By establishing that the mad were degenerate³², Matos reduced the field of mental diseases to the regressive deviation of morality or intelligence. Anyone who in a scientific era assumed a theological way of thinking suffered from paranoia or delirium of reason; and anyone who in an era of altruism was consumed by his own selfishness suffered from moral madness or delirium of the will.

Moral madness was, to Matos, the most complex form of degeneracy. According to him, it was characterised by the total absence of feelings of sociability that were identified with the lack of respect for property and individuality.³³ In his view, the mark of moral madness was amorality; however, this criterion raised a serious question: how could anyone establish, within the boundaries of science, a pattern of morality capable of determining pathological deviations? Júlio de Matos’ answer was clear: Comte and Spencer established an objective line of evolution for humanity and this line was an unambiguous source for the formation of a type, whose regressive deviations constitute degeneracy in the anthropological sense of the word.³⁴ Hence, pathology was not defined by cerebral lesions but by the objectivation of historical truths, following the Comtean law of progress. Therefore, the

²⁵ Júlio de Matos, 1911, pp. 14,15

²⁶ Júlio de Matos, 1911, pp. 14,15

²⁷ Júlio de Matos, 1911, pp. 14,15

²⁸ Júlio de Matos, 1911, pp. 14,15

²⁹ Júlio de Matos, 1911, pp.166-168

³⁰ Júlio de Matos, 1911, pp.166-168

³¹ Ana Leonor Pereira, 1984, p.13

³² Ana Leonor Pereira, 1984, p.13

³³ Ana Leonor Pereira, 1984, pp.21-23

³⁴ Júlio de Matos, 1898, pp. 177-180

abnormal was always pathological; consequently, a man of faith could not escape the status of moral or rational degeneracy.

An exemplary case of moral madness, associated with hysteria, was that of Rosa Calmon. In the beginning of 1901, all newspapers in Portugal gave special attention to the destiny of a young woman, the daughter of the Brazilian consul in Porto, José Calmon Nogueira Valle da Gama, who wanted to join a religious order. Her family was adamantly opposed to this idea and the girl ran away from home, only to be found on a southbound train. Her father thought she was sick so he locked her up in the house. The Catholic newspaper *Alliança* considered this situation “a private jail – a crime, a scandal”.³⁵ The *Calmon case* gained such notoriety that it even came to strain diplomatic relations between Portugal and Brazil, inciting social unrest, ideological confrontations and forcing a re-evaluation of the relations between the Church and the State.³⁶

The Calmon family called Júlio de Matos to produce a report on the girl’s mental state. As a preliminary and extremely important observation Matos, by then clinical director of the Psychiatric Hospital Conde Ferreira, constructed a detailed family tree of Rosa Calmon and concluded that she descended “from a family of neuro-psychopaths”.³⁷ The tree showed clear evidence of the “law of progressive heredity”. According to this law, the first manifestations of mental pathology would be, as one finds in the genealogy of Rosa Calmon, a “senile dementia and simple encephalopathy” and the next generations were affected by more serious pathologies, such as “paranoia”, “hysteric-epilepsy” and “moral madness”.³⁸ This family tree was so important that it served as proof for two other laws: “the mutual fertilisation of germs, revealed in the effects of consanguinity” and the law of “accelerated transmission” demonstrated by the fact that the first generations of the family were very old when the alienations manifested themselves, whereas in the most recent generations the problems were precocious: “Rosa’s sisters were hysteric-epileptics (...) one of her cousins (...) was an idiot who died with convulsions, a clear evidence of the extinction of the race”.³⁹

Next, Matos explored the girl’s medical history devoting special attention to the relation between her sexual development and the appearance of the first pathological symptoms.⁴⁰ One of these symptoms, which manifested immediately after her first menstruation, was of special relevance to Matos and to the team of international experts with whom he collaborated to support his conclusions: a systematic aboulia, in other words, an abnormal alteration of the will, characterised by indecision and impotence of action.⁴¹ This, combined with her strabismus, understood as “a degenerative stigma”, was enough to characterise the entire family as degenerate.⁴²

Although, in Matos’ eyes, the presence of degeneration was obvious in the Calmon family, nobody realised it until 1898, when Rosa started to visit a family which was politically absolutist and religiously fanatical. Matos used this characterisation to insist that these sort of religious and political behaviours were two faces of the same coin, intimately connected with mental pathologies. This family introduced the girl to religious extremists, who convinced her to “dedicate her life to an exaggerated practice of Catholicism”: praying too much, “receiving communion too often, constantly going to confession and exclusively reading mystical books”.⁴³ This increased religious activity was accompanied by a reduction of interest in her social life. Rosa “abandoned her walks and the theatre”, she abandoned her dear piano and, to her mother’s despair, she “neglected her hygiene”.⁴⁴ Even so,

³⁵ In: Amaro da Silva, 1996, pp.208-213

³⁶ Amaro da Silva, 1996, pp.208-213

³⁷ Júlio de Matos, 1900, pp.50,51

³⁸ Júlio de Matos, 1900, pp.50,51

³⁹ Júlio de Matos, 1900, pp.50,51

⁴⁰ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.10

⁴¹ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.10

⁴² Júlio de Matos, 1900, pp.51,52

⁴³ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.12

⁴⁴ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.16

Matos described the patient as “lucid”, reasoning normally and trying to justify her acts. Nevertheless, she lied quite frequently and completely abandoned modesty, not hesitating to tell her story to the newspapers. Deep down “her present roughness and egotism differed clamorously from her old kindness – to the point of being jealous of her father’s tenderness to her sisters”. Her mother declared in horror: “this is not our daughter!”⁴⁵ Matos devoted particular attention to these changes, naming them “anomalies of rudimentary altruism,” or the essence of “moral madness”.⁴⁶

Matos was now able to produce a clear diagnosis: based on the girl’s “convergent heredity which was vesanic and neuropathic,” on her “incomplete attacks,” “physical and psychological syndromes and stigmas mentioned above”, and on her “radical change of character, feelings and conduct,” she was considered “a degenerate person with syndromes of constitutional hysteria and lucid madness (of the affective variety)”.⁴⁷ The consequences of this diagnosis were equally clear:

realising that religious passion led this eminently suggestible girl to narrow her consciousness, to a point incompatible with the free exercise of will and action, I propose she should be secluded.⁴⁸

Júlio de Matos sent a copy of this medical report to Dallemagne, Lombroso, Magnan, Maudsley, Morselli, Régis, Séglas, Ritti and to his fellow Portuguese republican psychiatrists Miguel Bombarda and Magalhães Lemos. All concurred with Matos’ diagnosis.⁴⁹

Matos understood that the case of Rosa Calmon was the perfect opportunity to enlighten the population and the decision makers: she was the living embodiment of moral madness, the perfect example of the “arid and dry profile of the hysterical mystics”, capable of mobilising the crowds and politicians.⁵⁰ Therefore, as an alienist, he recommended to all laymen interested in this question a series of novels capable of revealing, with the desired precision, the true identity of the mystic. Only then could everybody understand that “the morbid types repeat themselves, always and everywhere; we only need to educate our mental vision in order to identify them”.⁵¹

Final Considerations

The educated, republican mental vision saw no difference between Rosa Calmon, the medieval flagellants, the Irish revivalists or any other person with an absorbing proximity to the supernatural. Their teleological worldview was a clear sign of degeneration and this stood in the way of the republican ideal of perfect human development. Such an ideal could also be understood as teleological but this teleology was free from every degenerative trait because it was consistent with what Comte and Spencer described as the modern, scientific mentality. In this way, the Jacobin values of the eighteenth century were transported to the beginning of the twentieth acquiring, along the way, a new image of credibility by cloaking themselves in the language of the experimental sciences. It was with these values that, on October 5 1910, the Republic replaced the Monarchy.

Four days after the revolution, the *New York Times* reported on the Portuguese situation: “as the first step in their announced programme, the Ministry published this morning an official decree ordering all religious orders in Portugal to leave the country within twenty-four hours”.⁵² Before being expelled, some of these men and women were imprisoned and had their heads measured so that their degeneracy could be proved. With this, the new republican scientism wanted to show that the implementation of a modern, salubrious political system implied the biological condemnation of the unfit elements of society. In this sense, the establishment of a permanent social and political harmony

⁴⁵ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.16

⁴⁶ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.16

⁴⁷ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.16

⁴⁸ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.16

⁴⁹ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.49

⁵⁰ Júlio de Matos, 1900, p.54

⁵¹ Júlio de Matos, 1900, pp.53,54 He recommended books such as *The Evangelist* (1883) by Affonso Daudet.

⁵² *New York Times*, October 9, 1910

– that would bring about the full development of human beings – could only take place if all the conflict-generating elements of society were pathologised. This was what Júlio de Matos did when he identified the clergy and the proletariat as the main enemies of society and classified them as pathological elements. This was also what Miguel Bombarda did when he wrote that “we should identify as alienated, without the slightest hesitation, all those who clash with social conventions”.⁵³ Clearly, in the battle between those in the republican camp who understood the men of faith as abnormal, and those who understood them as degenerate, the latter were the ones to win and influence the policy of the first republican governments.

⁵³ Miguel Bombarda, 1902, p.187

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