

## WHAT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY CAN LEARN FROM TRAVEL AND HISTORICAL WRITING

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### ABSTRACT

The success of commercial activities often depends on the capacity to understand and accommodate unknown others coming from different social and cultural backgrounds. This is particularly true in the tourism industry. However, though this may appear a simple exercise, as Casey Blanton and Brigitt Flohr demonstrate in *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (1997) and “Representations of the Self and the Other in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature” (1999) this is not always easy, requiring preparation on the part of all involved as one is rarely neutral when encountering hitherto unknown others. Nonetheless, as Martin Page demonstrates in *The First Global Village* (2002), natural bias can be overcome and this is beneficial to all parties.

In this essay, we will look closely at Page’s construction and representation of the Portuguese *other* found through the author’s contact with the Portuguese and his research into their history. We will also question if the controversy associated with *The First Global Village* is not due to the fact that the book breaks the rules of literary genre thus disconcerting readers; implying that innate bias is associated with all hitherto unknown others, whether these be individuals or literary objects.

**KEY-WORDS:** self, the other, Portugal, travel writing.

### RESUMO:

O sucesso das actividades comerciais muitas vezes depende da capacidade de compreender e acomodar outros, provenientes de diferentes origens sociais e culturais. Isto é particularmente verdadeiro na indústria do turismo. No entanto, embora isso possa parecer um exercício simples, tal como Casey Blanton e Brigitt Flohr demonstram em *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (1997) e “Representations of the Self and the Other in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature” (1999) isto não é sempre fácil, exigindo preparação por parte de todos os envolvidos, dado que um é raramente neutro quando encontra outros até então desconhecidos. Apesar de tudo, tal como Martin Page, demonstra em *The First Global Village* (2002), o preconceito natural pode ser superado, e isso é benéfico para todas as partes. Neste ensaio, vamos olhar de perto para construção e representação de Page do *outro* Português encontrado através do contato do autor com os Portugueses e da investigação sobre a sua história. Também questionamos se a controvérsia associada com *The First Global Village* não é devida ao facto de que o livro quebra as regras do género literário desconcertando os leitores; implicando que o preconceito inato é associado a todos os outros desconhecidos, quer estes sejam indivíduos ou objectos literários.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** o eu, o outro, Portugal, a escrita de viagem.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Martin Page's *The First Global Village: How Portugal Changed the World* (2002), charting Portugal's development from pre-history up to present times, has been a popular read since publication. At the time of writing the English version was in its 12<sup>th</sup> edition and the Portuguese translation had sold more than 25,000 copies. The book's unusual title attracts the attention of inbound foreign tourists, curious to know more about Portugal's history and culture. However, *The First Global Village* has been subject to quite a degree of controversy.

One of the common criticisms it has received is that it paints a picture that is too idyllic of Portugal and its people. Some reviewers consider that this might generate false expectations and lead foreign tourists to feel defrauded when faced with the reality. Another comment is that the book does not fit into any clear genre. Though it charts Portugal's development over the ages, historians have difficulty treating it as a history book, because of its tone and lack of bibliographic reference. Also at times, as Page moves through Portugal's history, he refers to his own experience and travelling in the country, so the book exhibits traces of a comprehensive travel guide. When Page makes sweeping statements about the accomplishments of Portuguese figures, the book can appear to be a fictional text.

Yet, the reader should not be surprised at these charges because the author expressed quite clearly that this work would not fit into any set genre, writing "I am a reporter, not an academic, and *The First Global Village* is neither a text-book nor a dissertation, but a personal narrative, about how the Portugal of today came into being. It is the result, above all, of eight years spent living, working and travelling among the Portuguese" (Page, 2006: 259). Thus, the reader must not expect a neutral history book, but a narrative influenced by the author's intimate and extended contact with the country and its people, especially as he openly refers to *The First Global Village* as a personal narrative and to his past as a reporter. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the journalistic style, which marked the majority of Page's work, would also appear in this work. Since the author clearly states that he gained the insight for this work travelling among the Portuguese; elements of a travelogue can also be expected.

In this paper, we will investigate how characteristics of the literary styles mentioned above: journalistic, travel and historical writing can be found in *The First Global Village*. As travelling and the ability to see the other are central to the book, we will also discuss Casey Blanton's and Brigitt Flohr's proposals on how the traveler naturally encounters and sees the unknown *other* encountered when travelling outside familiar cultural environments, to see if these can illustrate how Page's personal encounters with Portuguese people throughout his life,

influenced the way he actually perceived and constructed the Portuguese *other* and transferred this construct into his writing.

When discussing how Portugal, a little country set on the Western Atlantic cusp, actually influenced world history and lay the foundations for the modern concept of the world as a global village, Page presents a very positive point of view of Portugal's influence across the ages. His engaging and dynamic journalistic style makes *The First Global Village* an entertaining read. Written and published initially in English, it was soon translated into Portuguese. Examining reviews of *The First Global Village*, it is easy to see that, in general, critiques are positive, often citing the passion the author demonstrates for Portugal. In fact, reviewers consider as one of the book's most positive features. For the sake of space, we refer to just a few examples that are representative of the whole. For instance Ricardo Vasconcelos on the *Amazon* review site made the following comment, "You will read it in no time, learn greatly and have an excellent experience" (n/d, Vasconcelos). Manuel Rosa on the *GoodReads* site comments "An astonishing reading. [...] The author is not an historian but this doesn't mean that his extensive experience as a journalist cannot produce a great work at all levels. It fills me with pride to be what I am [a Portuguese citizen]. It is an external view of an incredible story that should be read by all. [...] I already bought 3 copies to offer to" unmotivated Portuguese [friends]" and it acts as a kind of medicine" (n/d, Rosa).

The 'journalistic' style of the writing was one of the features that led to mixed reviews. The following reviews taken from the *Amazon* site indicate that while readers may have enjoyed the journalist style, this also took from the credibility of the work. Ilga Nieuwland stated: "Stylistically it [*The First Global Village*] is among the best I've ever read, and you'll finish it within days if not hours - it really is that well-written. Having said that, however, Page does take large strides when discussing the history of Portugal, and one shouldn't expect anything too deep or profound. The basic approach is journalistic, so the description of movements and tendencies is sacrificed at the expense of events" (n/d, Nieuwland). Ricardo Vasconcelos, whose review was also quoted above, was not so critical, but still, one is left to consider if a history book that is 'fun' can really be taken seriously, "[...] it is certainly the author's style and his obvious passion for the topic and for Portugal that make this history book so fun" (n/d, Vasconcelos).

However, the publication has not been without controversy, and not all reviews were positive as can be seen from Miguel Teles review on the *GoodReads* site. Teles considered certain passages of the book as exaggerated and almost tourist propaganda: "[...] if in some chapters of our history that role [of leader] is unquestionable, understanding that the steps of the Portuguese were of remarkable importance for the [...] world's evolution (the Discoveries Era clearly standing out). [However] it seems to me that in some chapters, this influence is forced, highlighting the importance of the country in achievements where it was not so

relevant. In this way we are presented with a romantic and exaggerated version of the facts” (n/d, Teles).

Teles’ comments can be understood, and at times Page does appear to paint a picture of Portugal, that the Portuguese themselves may have difficulty believing or accepting. For instance the following passage: “The role of the Portuguese has not been as conquerors, let alone the conquered, but as a pivot, a conduit, by means of which ideas, knowledge and technologies have moved through Europe, and the world” (Page, 2006:30) appears to tend towards touristic promotion. However, perhaps this tendency to embellish and make the subject ‘fun’ might be understood as a desire to see the Portuguese *other* in a favourable light (for reasons that will be discussed below) as well as a legacy carried over from Page’s past as a reporter.

Journalistic writing is known to tend towards strong and commanding statements. In *Style in Journalism* (2011), Narasimha Rao suggests that journalistic writing is characterized by a prose in which the information is organized according to the order: relevance, tone and intended audience, placing particular emphasise on the five “W’s”; What, Who, When, Why and often the How at the opening of the article (Narasimha Rao, 2011: 56). Jim Streisel proposes that good journalistic writing should contain compelling declarations, often following an “*inverted pyramid*” structure, with fundamental and forceful affirmations at the beginning of the text (Streisel, 2007: 73). This might explain Page’s tendency to use strong statements to illustrate the points he wishes to emphasise. However, his text demonstrates that his writing style strives to be intelligible, engaging and succinct. Even when he makes assertive statements, he supports these with developed arguments.

Historians have problems accepting *The First Global Village* as a credible history book mainly because of Page’s assertive statements and his lack of bibliographic references in the text. However, the bibliographical note shows that Page actually referred to a vast and diverse compilation of sources. For instance, when writing about the initial civilizations and Roman era in the Iberian Peninsula, he used authentic historical sources, the works of Livy, Pliny the Elder and Plutarch, and also referred to biblical texts, as well as myths and legends including Greek mythology. For the Islamic period and Christian Reconquest, he used the writings of Reinhart Dozy and others who pioneered research into the Islamic period. The Inquisition era events reported by Page were based on his readings of modern studies of records kept by the Inquisition itself and Sephardic Jewish sources. As for the Pombalina era, Page presents two contradictory and controversial versions regarding the Marquis of Pombal’s policies. His proposals on the Enlightenment Age are supported by Alexandre Herculano’s history of Portugal.

His reading of the more recent periods of Portugal's history was based on his research of recognized authors including Oliveira Marques and José Hermano Saraiva. But he did not limit himself to these recognized sources. When writing about the events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Page consulted other secular sources including newspapers, magazines, weeklies, flyers. Reporting on very recent events such as the April 25 Revolution, Portugal's entry to the European Union and the Euro, Page supplemented his academic research with interviews he carried out personally (Page, 2006: 259-261). However, Page did not pepper his written text with bibliographic references supporting specific points. Rather, he presented the theme as the journalist he was, elevating dynamism over bibliographic references; requiring the reader to verify the veracity of the facts presented. This question is frequently mentioned by readers.

Page's passion can also be seen in the internal division of the texts. He wrote extensively about periods, personalities and events he considered interesting and relevant, while ignoring or reducing to mere footnotes, others he found less relevant. Chapter One entitled dramatically "From Jonah to Julius Caesar" covers over seven hundred years of history in a scant eight pages (Page, 2006: 31-38). The Muslim domination and the initial stages of the Christian Reconquest are looked at in considerable detail and Page adds interesting perspectives on the role of the military and religious orders, as well as European history. However, the readers is then swept up to the dynastic crisis of 1383 in a fleeting page with only fleeting references made to characters central to Portugal's development such as King Dennis or King Ferdinand (55-87). On the other hand, a very interesting chapter is dedicated to Pêro da Covilhã, a relatively unknown but fascinating character revealing the author's interest in this personage (117 – 124).

One is left to consider that Page might have dedicated time and space to Covilhã, because "the master spy", as Page dubbed Covilhã, appealed to Page's investigative skills seeking to uncover that which others had not seen. Also Covilhã's character supports the picture Page wishes to paint of the Portuguese. This presentation transmits the author's thrill to the reader, conveying historic information in a spellbinding way.

However, while events are presented plausibly, it becomes obvious to the reader that this presentation is also merged with a certain romanticism which may take from the historic credibility of the text. Therefore, we return to Page's statement to understand his perspective of what the book is. Page wrote, "I am a reporter, not an academic, and *The First Global Village* is neither a text-book nor a dissertation, but a personal narrative, about how the Portugal of today came into being. It is the result, above all, of eight years spent living, working and travelling among the Portuguese" (Page, 2006: 259). The task of reading and enjoying the book becomes easier, when we accept it on the terms that it is presented, and prepare ourselves to read a history of Portugal written from the personal perspective of a traveller who had spent a long time moving among the people he writes about and trying to

understand their world. In *"The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia"* (1979), Paul Theroux proposed that, "the difference between travel writing and fiction is the difference between recording what the eye sees and discovering what the imagination knows" (Theroux, 1979: 379). *The First Global Village* is not fiction, because although, there are times, when Page appears to telling joyful fiction, when historic references are consulted one sees that the expeditions Page relates are possible, especially if his journalistic flare is considered. Therefore, *The First Global Village* is a personal reading of a country and its people based on intimate knowledge and a desire to see the Portuguese other in a favourable light, for reasons that will be expanded upon below.

## 2. SEEING THE UNKNOWN OTHER AS A TRAVELLER

As Page writes about his own travelling among the Portuguese and how this influenced him, it is valid to propose that *The First Global Village* contains elements of travel writing, especially as recognized travel writers such as Jonathan Raban define the genre as a "notoriously raffish open house where different genres are likely to end up in the same bed" (Raban, 1998: 253-4). Raban considers the genre can include private diaries, essays, short stories and prose poems and the first three can certainly be seen in *The First Global Village*.

Travel writing is one of the oldest literary forms and can be traced back to ancient Greece, the voyage of Ulysses, and authors like Herodotos, Strabo and Pausanias (Blanton, 1997: 3). In *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (1997), Casey Blanton described travelogues as: "narratives [that] render in words the strange, the exotic, the dangerous, and the inexplicable; they convey information about geography as well as human nature. This complex family, includes memoirs, journals, and ships' logs, as well as narratives of adventure, exploration, journey, and escape" (Blanton, 1997:2). Many of these elements can be seen in *The First Global Village*, however Page does not record a physical journey but rather re-counts the past of a nation that he has deliberate chosen to see in a favourable light.

According to Blanton, the popularity of travel writing stems from man's natural curiosity of the other, the strange, the unknown and travel literature is of interest because it not only describes the itinerary of a trip, it also shares aspects of other culture and the authors' experiences and with readers. In fact, Blanton proposes that travel writing gives indications of how travelers' themselves deal with the unknown *other*, they encounter on their trips (2-4). Picking up on Blanton's arguments in "Representations of the self and the Other in Eighteenth-Century travel Literature" (1999), Birgitt Flohr analyzes the travel writing of two very well known literary figures of the time: Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* and *Memoirs of the Author of the Rights of Women* (1796)

and Samuel Johnson's *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), to try to explain how the traveler naturally *sees* the hitherto unknown other.

In her essay, analyzing the way Wollstonecraft and Johnson share details about the living conditions local populations, (their means of subsistence, food, clothing, education, treatment of servants, government, economic system, laws, geography and climate with the main purpose of introducing readers to the *others* encountered abroad), Flohr demonstrates much about the authors' personal attitudes, social consciousness, and deep rooted opinions. Samuel Johnson's descriptions of his reactions to local populations during his trip to Scotland and the Hebrides in 1773 demonstrate a certain *established* superiority. For instances, he declares the Scots living in the Highlands as primitive, wild and savage people, just because they live in the mountains. He considers these mountain homes make it difficult for the people to communicate and deal commercially, therefore the people must be backward and primitive. Also, he denigrates their communal property laws because these do not make sense to him, despite the fact that they are appropriate for the local conditions.

Wollstonecraft demonstrates a similar negative opinion of Scandinavians, classifying them as rude, brutish, uneducated, sluggish and disorganized, without a sense for beauty or style, merely because they do things differently to that which she is used to (Flohr, 1999: 3-7). Flohr sums up Wollstonecraft's and Johnson's attitudes as "The identity of the self as knowing is opposed to the identity of the other as ignorant" (6). Flohr suggests that the relationship with the unknown *other* is challenging when "The other threatens the self and its identity, its self-consciousness to be 'on the right track'" (1). When the traveler feels the necessity to verify that he/she is on "the right track", this implies an inherent drive to classify the *other*, and to find them wanting.

Flohr uses her observations of Wollstonecraft and Johnson's writings to establish three possible ways that travelers can contact with the hitherto unknown other when travelling. In the first, she considers the self is overwhelmed by the other and transformed utterly in its identity. Thus occurs when the travelling self enters in contact with the other with a pre-concept that his/her own culture is inferior and this leads the traveler to assume the identity or parts of the identity encountered when travelling. This is not very common. In the second, Flohr proposes that the self confirms its identity in opposition to the other. This is the most frequent situation, and this was the attitude observed most often by Flohr in Wollstonecraft and Johnson's writings. This attitude leads the travelling self to establish a superiority to protect itself from the other. When the self cannot deal with or understand the visited others realities or preferences, it is easier to try to diminish the other's potential value. Finally, Flohr presents a third and perhaps more appropriate way of contacting with the other. In this case,



the self is neither in opposition to the other, nor swallowed by it, and hence a less threatening interchange can take place (Flohr, 1999: 1-2).

Despite their reputations as enlightened humanists, Flohr demonstrates that most of Johnson's and Wollstonecraft's encounters with others on their travels mainly fell into the second category. In fact, Flohr refers to only one occasion when Johnson visits a foreign community and expects to see this in a favorable light. At Johnson's time, British high society was afflicted by the negative effects of rich living, often manifested in maladies like gout etc. Therefore, Johnson was eager to visit the Isle of Sky, where he knew people lived simply. He expected to find a society that was healthier and lived longer than his own because of their frugal living conditions. However, when Johnson really saw the circumstances of the local community, he realized that simple living was not a synonym of longevity, when this simply living was carried out under the islanders' circumstances, "During his stay on the island of Sky, Johnson undertakes to study the manners of the islanders. (JWI, 92-119) Again, he contrasts generally held opinions with his observations, for example on the longevity, which seems to be commonly attributed to lack of luxury, but which he does not find particularly often in this poor countryside. He hence concludes that "very different modes of life in very different climates" (JWI, 93) render such reasoning invalid" (Flohr, 1999: 3-4). This was however, the only incident that Flohr recounts where Johnson truly saw the others he visited. One is left to conclude that to understand what he actually saw without the blinkers of a preordained social perspective; Johnson had to place himself and his social circumstances in a neutral, perhaps even slightly inferior position. This permitted him to consider that the other could be different, but this different need not automatically be inferior.

These observations lead us to conclude that when the self makes contacts with the other, it is difficult for the traveler to truly see the other. The traveler has an apparently natural tendency to think that his/her culture is superior and it is difficult for the travelling self to assume that the other's culture is as important as her/his own.

One must not judge Johnson and Wollstonecraft too harshly. It must be remembered that they were recognized members of English society, the cultural influence of which was of the highest regard at the time. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) Mary Louise Pratt also offers another possible reason for their desire to judge and quantify everything they observed (if not saw) on their travels. Pratt describes the eighteenth century, as a time where the surge of scientific exploration led to the emergence of analytical methods, in particular the Linnean classification system being developed at the time, which aspired to quantify and explain natural history (Pratt, 1992: 217). According to Edward W. Said in *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1995), this striving towards



classification, set off a movement that aimed at categorizing all species known or unknown and travelers “felt authorized to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index and record everything in sight, including other cultures that were considered less civilized” (Said, 1995: 86).

This leaves us to question why Martin Page chose to see Portugal and the Portuguese so positively. We will look at Martin Page’s life and work questioning how these may have influenced his writing in *The First Global Village*. Page was born in London in 1938. He took a Masters degree in Anthropology at Cambridge University and started to work at the Manchester Guardian as a trainee journalist. Later he joined the Foreign Desk of the Daily Express in London. He was quickly appointed to the Paris and Rome offices before being made Bureau Chief of the Moscow office during the height of the Cold War, when he was only 24 years old. Over the next years, as an enthusiastic and intrepid traveler, he would go on to cover foreign wars, including Vietnam and Algeria (Steward, 2003: n/p). He also covered conflicts in Africa, as a war correspondent and it was in this capacity that he first knowingly came in contact with Portuguese people (Page, 2006: 17-18).

However, in his late 20s after covering seven armed conflicts overseas, he had to relinquish the career he loved. The genetically degenerative condition of the retina, retinitis pigmentosa, he had been diagnosed with while still a schoolboy had reached proportions that would not permit him to carry on working as a conflict reporter. He carried on working as a journalist, freelancing for virtually every major British newspaper before creating *Business Traveller*, a travel magazine designed to offer relevant advice to business travellers, which again exhibited his interest in travelling. In 1988 he was declared officially blind in the U.S.A, (though he still had limited vision) and around this time Page came to live in Portugal with his wife and 2 children. Despite his physical impairments, Page “never lost that journalistic impulse to get copy out of any situations in which he found himself” (Stewart, 2003: n/p), which is probably one of the reasons why he started writing *The First Global Village*.

Page begins *The First Global Village* with a Personal Note relating his first conscious encounter with Portuguese people. He wrote that while he was reporting on a civil war in Congo, he was injured after a car crash and then captured by members of an African militia group, who placed him under guard in a road connecting Ndola to Elizabethville, while they decided what to do with him. His left shoulder was fractured and 4 ribs were broken. Many drivers (more than 50) passed without helping him, until a Peugeot van stopped and its two male occupants, despite putting themselves in personal danger, rescued Page with bravery and panache. As they made their getaway, Page learned that they were Portuguese tobacco smugglers. Despite this ambiguous profession and the fact that the three had no personal connection prior to this incident, these Portuguese smugglers took Page to a clinic so that he could receive appropriate medical treatment and then brought him to a hotel. They introduced

him to the manager, whom they instructed to take care of Page. They then bought him a glass of brandy, checked if he had enough money, offered him a carton of 500 Rothmans (an important bartering tool) and left him. Page writes, “It was the first time I had met Portuguese knowingly – and my first encounter, not only with their extraordinary availability to help a stranger in trouble, but with their blend of bravado, honor, ingenuity and poise.” (Page, 2006: 18).

Bearing Flohr’s arguments in mind, after this encounter, it is not surprising that Page was willing and able to see the Portuguese other in a favorable light. He recounts other casual encounters with Portuguese strangers that reinforce this image. Later, in the 1980s Page was faced with a dilemma. Because of his visual handicap and the fact that he had lived most of his life abroad, he came to find his “native London had become a dangerous and even a hostile territory (23). He decided to seek someplace warmer, where he would feel safer to live and his thoughts turned to Portugal. His friends advised him against this, offering suggestions of more suitable locations in France and Italy. They considering Portugal to be poor, illiterate and corrupt, to mention but a few of the many adjectives presented.

Page however, visited Portugal before making his decision and despite the fact that he actually saw the poverty and other things his friends had claimed, he was still captivated by the country and decided to go to live there with his wife and two young sons. He found in Portugal a kindred spirit because he felt the country’s blight was similar to his own, “By the time democracy prevailed, in the late 1970s, Portugal had been brought back to the plight where it had started the twentieth century: bankrupt and in chaos. Our [Page and his wife Catherine] feeling was that the Portuguese had not deserved their fate. They had no more brought it on themselves than I had inflicted my blindness on myself. We had both been out of luck, casualties of misfortune” (25).

Thus, in *The First Global Village*, there is a great empathy between the writer and the subject and if Page does write rather lyrically at times, the circumstances can be understood. Within this context, Page’s statement at the end of the Personal Note is more easily understood: “The role of the Portuguese was as a pivot, a conduit, by means of which ideas, knowledge and technologies have moved through Europe and the World” (30). As is his praise of the Portuguese courage, when he describes the “Portuguese community of Princeton fishing villages as “sailors of great courage and skills” (20), or his description of the particularity and difficulty of the Portuguese language, he writes of its complexity, “Portuguese is by far, the most difficult language of the Latin tongues to master, the less perceptible for those who what to hear idle conversation and the third most spoken European language, after English and Spanish” (Page18).

Also, it must be noted that Page had to see the Portuguese with inner eyes, as his progressing blindness meant physically he saw less as less as he continued to live in Portugal. However, it is important to note that he does use extensive bibliographic research to support his proposals. Even when he does not quote from these extensively within the text, when his statements are researched, historic support can be found for them. Also Page was assisted in this work by a number of leading academics including Professor Pedro da Cunha from the Catholic University, Lisbon and Professor Fernando d'Orey of the New University Lisbon, who reviewed his written text (9).

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Reading Page's text in light of Blanton's and Flohr's writings confirms their suggestions, that the traveler is never neutral when meeting a hitherto unknown other. Because of his ongoing, positive experiences of the Portuguese, Page develops a way of seeing them, where he is neither in opposition to nor swallowed by them. Thus he sees the Portuguese other without a desire to criticize. However, while this may appear an automatic reaction, it is not. It requires preparation, a deep-rooted willingness to see the other positively. This grounding on the part of the traveler or business partner may produce a predisposition as seemingly natural and automatic as the one demonstrated by Page. This predisposition does not require blindness to negative aspects of the culture seen; Pages Personal Note demonstrates that he observed negative aspects in Portuguese life. One is left to question if his physical blindness did not help him perceive features in the Portuguese that they themselves do not encounter!

Whatever the case, Page was touched by Portugal's atmosphere and appeared to be inspired by its history. Thus, he wrote a dynamic historical account with journalistic flare, where he chose deliberately to portray the Portuguese other in a very favorable light. His account of Portugal and its people also reminds us that travellers and those who encounter others are never naturally neutral when engaging with unknown others. We believe that Page's writing exemplifies that those who initiate encounters with hitherto unknown others, benefit greatly if they are prepared to encounter the other on a neutral or positively inclined playing field. However, that this is not always a simple exercise. It requires deliberate preparation in order to produce an apparently natural predisposition to see hitherto unknown others in a favourable light.

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