

# *José Saramago.* *The seed and the fruits*

PERMANENT EXHIBITION



*Our great task is to succeed in  
becoming more human*



Fundação José Saramago  
[www.josesaramago.org](http://www.josesaramago.org)



# Biography

Having written more than 40 titles, José Saramago was born in 1922 in a small village called Azinhaga. For his educational purposes the Palácio das Galveias, a public library in Lisbon, was a main upbringing source, and there he read everything he could night after night, till the closing time. «And it was there, all alone, with no help or advises, guided only by curiosity and the will of learning, that I developed and refined my taste for reading.» He published his first novel in 1947. His choice for the title was *A Viúva*, but for editorial reasons it was changed to *Terra do Pecado*. Six years later, in 1953, he finished *Claraboia (Skylight)*, published only after his death. In the late 50's he became responsible for the production department in Estúdios Cor, a publishing house, along with the translation work he performed since 1955 and later with the one of literary critic. He returns to the writing in 1966 with a poetry book, *Os Poemas Possíveis*. In 1971 he becomes a columnist in the daily evening newspaper *Diário de Lisboa* and in april 1975 he assumes the role of assistant director in the daily morning newspaper *Diário de Notícias*. In the beginning of 1976 he lives for quite a while in the small village of Lavre (Alentejo) in order to get enough documentation about the landless peasants. As a result, he writes the novel *Levantado do Chão (Raised from the Ground)*, changing the traditional punctuation into the one that will characterize the way of writing his novelistic fiction. Until 2010, the year of his death in june 18, in Lanzarote island, José Saramago literally built a unique work in the portuguese and universal literature, from *Memorial do Convento (Baltasar and Blimunda)* to *Caim (Cain)*, along with titles as *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis (The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis)*, *O Evangelho segundo Jesus Cristo (The Gospel according to Jesus Christ)*, *Ensaio sobre a Cegueira (Blindness)*, *Todos os Nomes (All the Names)* or *A Viagem do Elefante (The Elephant's Journey)*, translated all over the world. In 2007 was born this Foundation, carrying his name, whose main pledges are spreading literature, to defend human rights and environment issues, having as a guiding compass the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights. Since 2012 the Foundation's headoffice is housed in Casa dos Bicos, in Lisbon. José Saramago was awarded with the Camões Prize in 1995 and with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998.



# Bibliography

## **Novel**

Terra do Pecado (1947)  
Manual de Pintura e Caligrafia (1977)  
Levantado do Chão (1980)  
Memorial do Convento (1982)  
O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis (1984)  
A Jangada de Pedra (1986)  
História do Cerco de Lisboa (1989)  
O Evangelho Segundo Jesus Cristo (1991)  
Ensaio sobre a Cegueira (1995)  
Todos os Nomes (1997)  
A Caverna (2000)  
O Homem Duplicado (2002)  
Ensaio sobre a Lucidez (2004)  
As Intermitências da Morte (2006)  
A Viagem do Elefante (2008)  
Caim (2009)  
Claraboia (Finished in 1953, published in 2011)  
Alabardas, alabardas, Espingardas, espingardas (Unfinished novel, written in 2010 and published in 2014)

## **Poetry**

Os Poemas Possíveis (1966)  
Provavelmente Alegria (1970)  
O Ano de 1993 (1975)

## **Drama**

A Noite (1979)  
Que farei com este Livro? (1980)  
A Segunda Vida de Francisco de Assis (1987)  
In Nomine Dei (1993)  
Don Giovanni ou O Dissoluto Absolvido (2005)

## **Travel literature**

Viagem a Portugal (1981)

## **Short stories**

Objecto Quase (1978)  
O Conto da Ilha Desconhecida (1998)

## **Memoirs**

As Pequenas Memórias (2006)

## **Chronicles**

Deste Mundo e do Outro (1971)  
A Bagagem do Viajante (1973)  
As Opiniões que o DL teve (1974)  
Os Apontamentos (1976)  
Poética dos Cinco Sentidos – O Ouvido (1979)  
Moby Dick em Lisboa (1996)  
Folhas Políticas (1976 – 1998) (1999)  
José Saramago nas Suas Palavras (2010)

## **Journals**

Cadernos de Lanzarote I (1994)  
Cadernos de Lanzarote II (1995)  
Cadernos de Lanzarote III (1996)  
Cadernos de Lanzarote IV (1998)  
Cadernos de Lanzarote V (1998)  
O Caderno (2009)  
O Caderno 2 (2009)

## **Essay**

Discursos de Estocolmo (1999)  
Comment le personnage fut le maître et l'auteur son apprenti (1999)  
Direito e os Sinos (1999)  
Aquí soy Zapatista - Saramago en Bellas Artes (2000)  
Palabras para un mundo mejor (2004)  
Questo mondo non va bene che ne venga un altro (2005)  
El nombre y la cosa (2006)  
Andrea Mantegna - Uma ética, uma estética (2006)  
Democracia e Universidade (2010)  
A estátua e a pedra (1999)

## **Children and young adults**

A Maior Flor do Mundo (2001)  
O Silêncio da Água (2011)  
O Lagarto (2016)

(The titles were kept in portuguese language. The year refers to the portuguese edition)



José Saramago's literary work is both highly demanding of the reader and very personal and it always asks thought-provoking questions. He was a late starter as a novelist, but his long literary apprenticeship as writer and reader equipped him, from the 1980<sup>s</sup> onwards, to produce the kind of fresh, original novels that brought him the Nobel Prize in 1998 (the first time it had been awarded to a Lusophone writer). Dense and ironic, intelligent and sceptical, tender and sarcastic, devastatingly critical, all his novels are concerned with demystifying the conventional view of history and with speaking out against the errors of modern life, always taking as their starting point the essential human qualities - solidarity, compassion and respect for others and their opinions. His strong author-narrator is a constant feature of his work, true to his belief that novel and novelist are one, and he thus created a literature that combines strongly-held political views with bold, visionary, erudite metaphors. He was a brilliant story-teller, but also had the kind of restless mind that was somehow able to remain in touch with the turbulent heart of the contemporary world, laying bare its faults and questioning its values.

Saramago, who never made any secret of his communist beliefs, became an international figure as a writer and as a champion of freedom, human rights and social inclusion, driven always by the desire to build a fairer, more humane society. His political engagement led to him taking on the role of dissatisfied intellectual, one closely involved in the burning issues of the day, which he often





approached from unconventional angles that went counter to the majority view. He called for an individual and collective ethic that would give priority to the dignity of the individual rather than to interests based solely on hierarchy, power or economics. Saramago was a passionate advocate of civic responsibility, keen to place the citizen on the same level as the writer. As he put it: "I may be a Marxist and a card-carrying Communist, but I take great pains not to turn my novels into political pamphlets. I have certain ideas and preoccupations and make no distinction between myself as writer and myself as a citizen. I think it's time that we writers went out into the world again and occupied the place we once held and which is now filled by the radio, the press and by television. We must encourage humanitarianism and spread the knowledge that thousands and thousands of people are still living in abject poverty." (1994)

During his long life he was, then, a polemicist, a self-confessed pessimist and a brilliant, vociferous activist, as well as the creator of a large body of literary work which embraced the novel, theatre, poetry, journalism and autobiography. This exhibition, *José Saramago. The Seed and the Fruits*, reveals how that prince of literature, Saramago, had his roots in the literary labourer whose careful,

methodical work – during the hard, dark years of the forties, fifties and sixties in Portugal – laid the foundations for his future brilliance. This collection of manuscripts, documents, first editions and hundreds of translations into more than forty languages takes the visitor on a journey through Saramago's literary production and its ideological and social context.

Some displays have an audiovisual element intended to open still more doors into the dense, rich Saramago's world. The layout of the exhibition allows for a variety of ways into the author's life and work, and visitors may choose their own route, depending on which aspect most interests them in his literary and intellectual universe, a universe that is as broad and seductive as it is multifaceted.

### **Fernando Gómez Aguilera**



# The Casa dos Bicos

## and the José Saramago Foundation

The José Saramago Foundation is a private cultural institution declared of public utility based in the Casa dos Bicos, in Lisbon, with a delegation in Azinhaga, birthplace of writer José Saramago. Constituted by the writer himself in June 2007, aims to defense and dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the promotion of culture in Portugal and around the world and the defense of the environment.

The Casa dos Bicos, head office since June 2012, offers a permanent exhibition on the life and work of José Saramago, entitled *The seed and the fruits*, and other cultural activities such as book presentations, representations of plays and conferences.

- 1.<sup>st</sup> Floor - Permanent exhibition *José Saramago. The seed and the fruits*
- 2.<sup>nd</sup> Floor - José Saramago Foundation office's
- 3.<sup>rd</sup> Floor - Bookstore / Shop
- 4.<sup>th</sup> Floor - Auditorium / Library

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### Opening times:

Monday to Saturday, from 10am to 6pm (last admission, 5.30pm)

**Price:** Please visit [www.josesaramago.org/onde-estamos](http://www.josesaramago.org/onde-estamos)

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[vimeo.com/fjsaramago](https://vimeo.com/fjsaramago)

## AT THE STAIRS - JOSÉ SARAMAGO

**«Não subiu para as estrelas se à terra pertencia. E aos leitores!»**

«did not ascend to the stars, for it belonged to the earth. And to the readers!»

*Baltasar & Blimunda*, Harvill Panther, 2001, pp. 343 (Trad.: Giovanni Pontiero)

**«Está escrito que onde haja um sol terá de haver uma lua, e que só a presença conjunta e harmoniosa de um e do outro tornará habitável, pelo amor, a terra.»**

«it is written that where there is a sun there will have to be a moon and that only the conjoined and harmonious presence of the one and the other will, through love, make earth habitable.»

*Stockholm Speeches* - "How characters became the masters and the author their apprentice" (Trad.: Tim Crosfield e Fernando Rodrigues), Fundação José Saramago, 2012, pp. 13

**«Olharei a tua sombra se não quiseses que te olhe a ti»**

«I'll look at your shadow if you don't wish me to look at you»

*The gospel according to Jesus Christ*, Harvill, 1993, pp. 331 (Trad.: Giovanni Pontiero)

**«Eu não invento nada. Limito-me a pôr à vista. Levanto as pedras e mostro o que está por baixo. Nós somos o outro do outro.»**

«I invent nothing at all. I just uncover it. I catch up the stones and I show what is underneath them. We are the other of the other.»

(Trad.: Rita Pais — Fundação José Saramago)

**«Dentro de nós há uma coisa que não tem nome, essa coisa é o que somos.»**

«Inside us there is something that has no name, that something is what we are.»

*Blindness*, Harvill, 1997, pp. 261 (Trad.: Giovanni Pontiero)

**«Humildade orgulhosa, e obstinada, esta de querer saber para que irão servir os livros que andamos a escrever.»**

«What a proud and stubborn humility, the one of wanting to know if there will be a future usefulness for the books we are writing right now.»

(Trad.: Rita Pais — Fundação José Saramago)

**«Com a mesma veemência e a mesma força com que reivindicarmos os nossos direitos, reivindicuemos o dever dos nossos deveres.»**

«With the same emphasis and the same strength we vindicate our rights, let us vindicate the duty of our duties.»

(Trad.: Rita Pais — Fundação José Saramago)

**«Além da conversa das mulheres, são os sonhos que seguram o mundo na sua órbita.»**

«Besides the conversation of women, it is dreams that keep the world in orbit.»

*Baltasar & Blimunda*, Harvill Panther, 2001, pp. 107 (Trad.: Giovanni Pontiero)

**«Teve bons mestres nas longas horas nocturnas que passou em bibliotecas públicas, lendo ao acaso, com o mesmo assombro criador do navegante que vai inventando cada lugar que descobre.»**

«He had good teachers during the long late night hours he attended the public libraries, reading in a random way, with the same imaginative astonishment of the navigator that goes on fancying each place he discovers.»

(Trad.: Rita Pais — Fundação José Saramago)

**«90 Anos: Quem podia lá faltar, neste dia levantado e principal.»**

«90 years: how could he not be here, on this unique and new-risen day.»

*Raised from the ground*, Harvill Secker, 2012, pp. 387 (Trad.: Margaret Jull Costa)

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 1



## JOSÉ SARAMAGO. The Seed and the Fruits

*If humankind is incapable of organising the world economy in such a way that we can satisfy the needs of a humanity that is dying of hunger and so many other things, can we be said to be truly human? We who fill our mouths with the word “humanity” have not, I believe, yet reached the stage of being fully human. Perhaps one day we will, but we still have quite a way to go. We can see what’s going on in the world and it’s terrifying. We live alongside all that negativity as if it didn’t matter; horror, violence, death, especially the death of others, are all made to seem utterly banal. [...] And this state of affairs will continue until people’s consciences are properly aroused. Much of that process of “banalisation” is intended to keep us all in a state of total apathy and will-lessness, in order to diminish our capacity to intervene as citizens.*

Canarias7, Las Palmas, February 20, 1994  
[Interview by Esperanza Pamplona]

José Saramago’s literary work is both highly demanding of the reader and very personal and it always asks thought-provoking questions. He was a late starter as a novelist, but his long literary apprenticeship as writer and reader equipped him, from the 1980s onwards, to produce the kind of fresh, original novels that brought him the Nobel Prize in 1998 (the first time it had been awarded to a Lusophone writer). Dense and ironic, intelligent and sceptical, tender and sarcastic, devastatingly critical, all his novels are concerned with demystifying the conventional view of history and with speaking out against the errors of modern life, always taking as their starting point the essential human qualities - solidarity, compassion and respect for others and their opinions. His strong author-narrator is a constant feature of his work, true to his belief that novel and novelist are one, and he thus created a literature that combines strongly-held political views with bold, visionary, erudite metaphors. He was a brilliant story-teller, but also had the kind of restless mind that was somehow able to remain in touch with the turbulent heart of the contemporary world, laying bare its faults and questioning its values.

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La Provincia, Las Palmas, March 3, 1994  
[Interview by Javier Duran]

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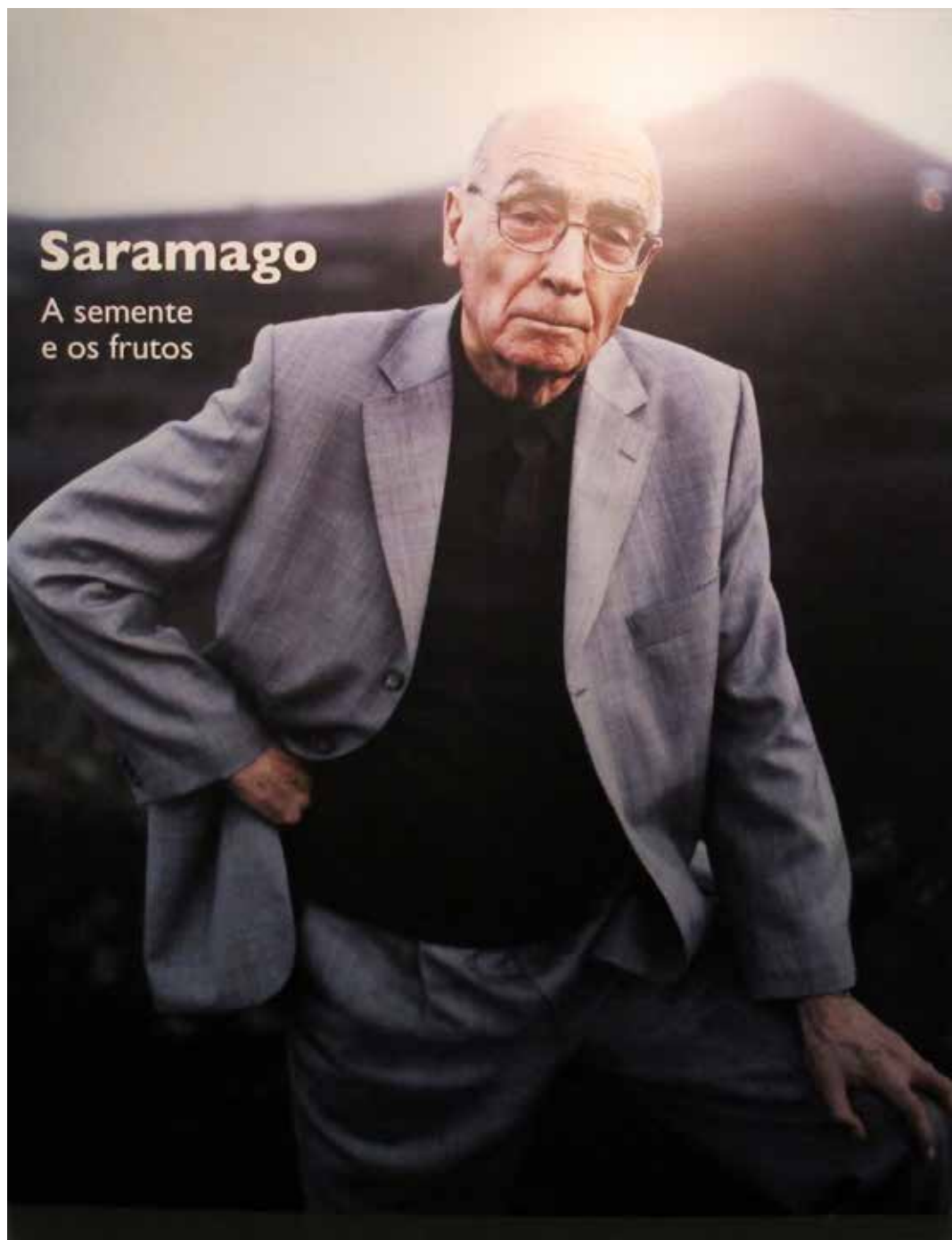
*Our main task is to make ourselves more human. In their book entitled The Holy Family, Marx and Engels say something that cries out to be put into practice: “If man is shaped by circumstances, then we must shape those circumstances humanely.”*

José Saramago, 1999

Fernando Gómez Aguilera



Fundação José Saramago | Permanent exhibition



# *The seed and the fruits*

Permanent exhibition

# Deixa-te levar pela criança que foste

*Let yourself be led by the child you were*



Responsability, effort, work: the once little boy José Saramago carried already the guiding lines that would define his life. Intelligent and self-contained, José Saramago faced hardly and carefully his pledges since very young, as we can see in his notebooks. One could say that, somehow, observing the labour of his grandfathers, peasant ones, or attending the public school in Lisbon, or even in his daily visits to the library, he was planting the early seeds that later on would frutify and become his way of life. Since this early attemptives in writing the first characters he learned, as one can see in this notebook grades, until this whole amount of books surrounding us here, although representing only a part of his translated works, José Saramago's life is a fulfilled example of the value that effort means. «Writing is like building a chair, that has to fit steady on the floor, and, if possible, be also beautiful.» He gathered, because he wanted so, his intelectual and literary labour to the craftsman's one, or the worker or the peasant that proudly admire the growing of their crop, awared that in life, as citizens, we all must be equally judged and that our our creative work, sensibility and effort will be evaluated by others. May be the lucid and active way of living his own era will be a reason for considering José Saramago a world reference, a writer with such a huge number of readers, who keeps growing day after day as a respected and loved human being. These are the fruits of those seeds.

photo / **José Saramago**  
Around 10 years old

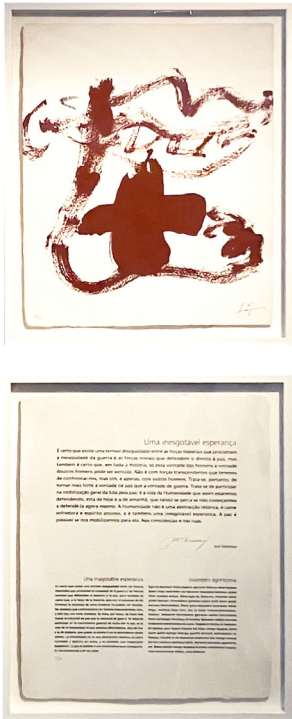
**Student ID card from Escola Industrial Afonso Domingues (middle school)**  
1939-1940

**Student ID card from Escola Industrial Afonso Domingues (middle school)**  
1936-1937

**School notebook**  
1933

Contains academic observations about the student, daily registered by his school principal Mr. Vairinho — mentioned in Small Memories —, and by his father.

***A Toutinegra do Moinho*, de Émile de Richebourg, the firsty book he read, given by his mother**



## Antoni TÀPIES e José SARAMAGO

Joint work entitled Por la irreversibilidad, 2004  
(Screen prints/handmade paper II/XV)  
52,5 x 44,5 cm c/u  
Private collection: Pilar del Río

Elkarri, a social movement created in 1992 to defend and mobilize a peaceful and dialogued solution model for the basque conflict, brought together this initiative. The aim of this limited edition screen prints was a fundraising to promote projects that instigate dialogue and peace in Euskal Herria. An edition of a poster with the two works was created in order to spread this message of irreversibility in Euskadi.



# Formação

Formative years



During his formative period the work as a translator was essential:  
he translated from the french language universal authors as shown



## «Morte de Homem»

Typewritten short story with handwritten corrections, in *Diário de Lisboa*  
December 28, 1950  
8 pp.

## «O Sr. Cristo»

Typewritten short story with handwritten corrections  
c. 1949-1950  
4 pp.

## «O Sr. Cristo»

Short story  
in Seara Nova, n.1158-1159 (p. 89)  
March 18-25, 1950

photo / **José Saramago**

July 2, 1951

photo / **With his friend Carlos Amaral**

Ericeira, c. 1952

digital frame / **23 scanned pages of the manuscript and  
typewritten text from the novel *O Mel e o Fel***

c. 1951-1953

## *Terra do Pecado*

[First edition] / 340 pp.  
Editorial Minerva, Lisbon, 1947

His first novel to be published

## Notebook with manuscripted annotations for the novel *Skylight* and some highlights for another novel, *O Sistema*

c. 1952  
55 pp.

He wrote about "*The System*": «An idea containing a title is everything. I mean:  
there is an idea and there is a title. Everything else is missing. What I want to underline is the condemnation of the social and economic system we live in, with all the ethical, psychological implications, etc., it entails. How to do it: to displace a peasant from his birth environment to the city.

## «A Morte de Julião»

A short story  
in Ver e Crer, n. 39  
July, 1948  
2 pp.

## *Clarabóia*

*Skylight*

Novel's manuscript, 202 pp.  
January 5, 1953

[First edition] / 184 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2011

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harvill Secker, UK, 2015

In 1953, Saramago submitted the novel to his publishers. For thirty-six years he had no feedback of it at all. He referred to it as "the book lost and found in time". *Skylight* is one of his earliest novels. The manuscript was lost in the publishers' offices for decades and when the writer recovered it declared that the book would never, under any circumstances, be published while he was alive. Lisbon, late-1940's, the inhabitants of an old apartment block. There's the old shoemaker and his wife who take in a solitary young lodger; the woman who sells herself for money, clothes and jewellery; the cultivated family come down in the world, who live only for each other and for music; and the beautiful typist whose boss can't keep his eyes off her. Poisonous relationships, happy marriages, jealousy, gossip and love – *Skylight* brings together all the joys and grief of ordinary people.

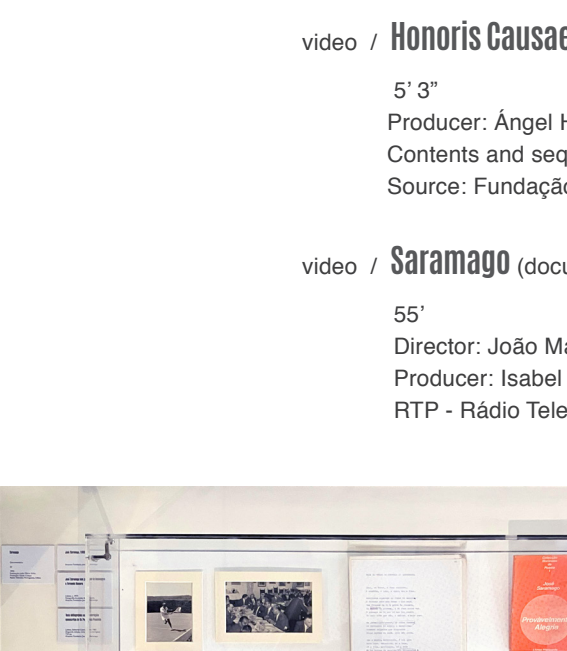
## *La Religieuse*

Denis Diderot  
Paris, René Hilsun, Génie de la France, s/d  
200 pp.

In the typewritten document of *Skylight* (p. 47) he makes a handwritten correction referring to this novel.

## ID card from Caixa de Previdência dos Empregados de Escritório do Distrito de Lisboa

Lisbon, c. 1947



## ID card from Caixa Económica Operária

c. 1953

## *Os Emparedados*

Unfinished typewritten novel with handwritten corrections  
32 pp.

photo / **With his daughter, Violante**

Azinhaga, August, 1953

## *Os Emparedados*

First manuscript of the novel.

c. 1951  
61 pp.

## *Rua*

Initial manuscripted pages for the unfinished novel  
c. 1950-1953  
4 pp.

## Typewritten annotations for the novel *Rua*

c. 1950-1953  
1 p.



## video / **Viagens**

4' 22"  
Director: Miguel Gonçalves Mendes  
Producer: Jumpcut, 2007

## video / **Honoris Causae**

5' 3"  
Producer: Ángel Hernández Marín, News Producciones, S.L.  
Contents and sequence: Fernando Gómez Aguilera  
Source: Fundação José Saramago

## video / **Saramago** (documentary)

55'  
Director: João Mário Grilo  
Producer: Isabel Colaço, 1994  
RTP - Rádio Televisão Portuguesa

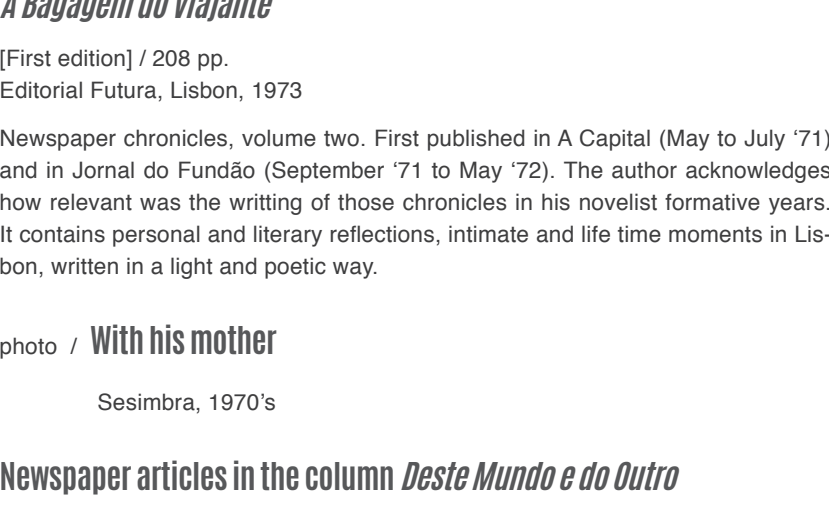


photo / **José Saramago, 1966**

photo / **In a tribute dinner to Fernando Namora**

Lisbon, c. 1973  
© Andrade da Rocha

## Typewritten text with handwritten corrections for the poetry book *Os Poemas Possíveis*

Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 1982  
[Second edition revised and corrected]  
155 pp.

## Unpublished poems

Two typewritten poems (signed).  
«A minha pescaria» (While fishing), c. 1944-1948 and  
«Depois de casado» (After married), February, 1945

## *Os Poemas Possíveis*

[First edition] / 196 pp.  
Portugália Editora, Lisbon, 1966

Initially under the title A Conta do Tempo (Along with time), becomes his first poetry book to be published and he returns to the writing activity, interrupted since 1953. During these years he publishes once in a while a chronicle or a short story.

audio / **Luís Pastor**

*Nesta Esquina do Tempo*  
(singing poems by José Saramago)  
Sony BMG, 2006

## *Provavelmente Alegria*

His second poetry book  
Livros Horizonte, Lisbon, 1970  
100 pp.

## *O Ano de 1993*

[First edition] / 72 pp.  
Editorial Futura, Lisbon, 1975

His third poetry book to be published

## ID card from the Associação Portuguesa de Escritores (n. 96)

Lisbon, April 18, 1974

## *O Ano de 1993*

Original manuscript  
1974  
40 pp.



## *A Bagagem do Viajante*

[First edition] / 208 pp.  
Editorial Futura, Lisbon, 1973

Newspaper chronicles, volume two. First published in A Capital (May to July '71) and in Jornal do Fundão (September '71 to May '72). The author acknowledges how relevant was the writing of those chronicles in his novelist formative years. It contains personal and literary reflections, intimate and life time moments in Lisbon, written in a light and poetic way.

photo / **With his mother**

Sesimbra, 1970's

## Newspaper articles in the column *Deste Mundo e do Outro*

61 original articles published in *A Capital* between 1968 and 1969, later compiled in a book (1971) with the same title.

photo / **Book Fair, Lisbon**

c. 1973  
© Mundial Foli-fotografia)

## Personal agenda, 1975

## *As Opiniões Que o DL Teve*

[First edition] / 224 pp.  
Seara Nova e Editorial Futura, Lisbon, 1974

Political chronicles. Compilation of unsigned articles published in Diário de Lisboa, while editor between 1972 and 1973, gathering all editorials under his responsibility.

## *Os apontamentos*

[First edition] / 248 pp.  
Seara Nova, Lisbon, 1976

Political chronicles. Compilation of political articles published in the column with the same name in Diário de Notícias during 1975, where he worked as assistant director.

## *Deste Mundo e do Outro*

[First edition] / 224 pp.  
Editorial Arcádia, Lisbon, 1971

61 original articles published in A Capital between 1968 and 1969, for the columns "Rua acima, rua abaixo" [Up street, down street] and "Deste Mundo e do Outro" [From this world and the other one]

## Two censored articles

"Esta palavra esperança" [This word hope] completely censored and "As palavras" [The words] partially censored

May 17, 1968

## Original typewritten foreword for the first edition of *As Opiniões que o DL Teve*, with handwritten corrections

1973  
6 pp.

## Assistant Director ID card from *Diário de Notícias*

May 28, 1975

photo / **Lunch with the journalists of *Diário de Notícias***

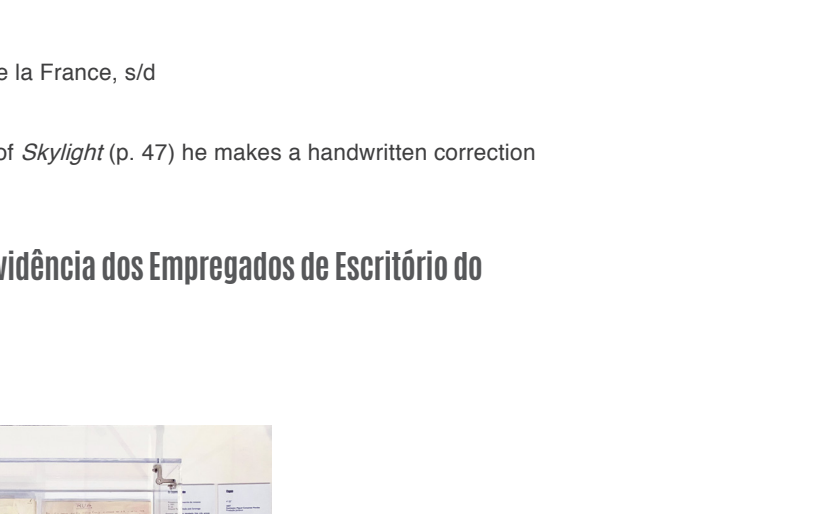


photo / **José Saramago**

1960's

## «A crónica como aprendizagem: uma experiência pessoal»

c. 1990  
4 pp.

Typewritten text from a conference, concerning items about the nature and styles of journalistic chronicles.

photo / **José Saramago**

1960's



# Autobiografia

## Autobiography



## Autobiography, typewritten text

September 14, 1967

2 pp.

I was born in a family of landless peasants, in Azinhaga, a small village in the province of Ribatejo, on the right bank of the Almonda River, around a hundred kilometres north-east of Lisbon. My parents were José de Sousa and Maria da Piedade. José de Sousa would have been my own name had not the Registrar, on his own initiative added the nickname by which my father's family was known in the village: Saramago. I should add that saramago is a wild herbaceous plant, whose leaves in those times served at need as nourishment for the poor. Not until the age of seven, when I had to present an identification document at primary school, was it realised that my full name was José de Sousa Saramago...

This was not, however, the only identity problem to which I was fated at birth. Though I had come into the world on 16 November 1922, my official documents show that I was born two days later, on the 18th. It was thanks to this petty fraud that my family escaped from paying the fine for not having registered my birth at the proper legal time.

Maybe because he had served in World War I, in France as an artillery soldier, and had known other surroundings from those of the village, my father decided in 1924 to leave farm work and move with his family to Lisbon, where he started as a policeman, for which job were required no more "literary qualifications" (a common expression then...) than reading, writing and arithmetic.

A few months after settling in the capital my brother Francisco two years older, died. Though our living conditions had improved a little after moving, we were never going to be well off.

I was already 13 or 14 when we moved, at last, to our own – but very tiny – house: till then we had lived in parts of houses, with other families. During all this time, and until I came of age I spent many, and very often quite long, periods in the village with my mother's parents Jerónimo Meirinho and Josefa Caixinha.

I was a good pupil at primary school: in the second class I was writing with no spelling mistakes and the third and fourth classes were done in a single year. Then I was moved up to the grammar school where I stayed two years, with excellent marks in the first year, not so good in the second, but was well liked by classmates and teachers, even being elected (I was then 12...) treasurer of the Students' Union... Meanwhile my parents reached the conclusion that, in the absence of resources, they could not go on keeping me in the grammar school. The only alternative was to go to a technical school. And so it was: for five years I learned to be a mechanic. But surprisingly the syllabus at that time, though obviously technically oriented, included, besides French, a literature subject. As I had no books at home (my own books, bought by myself, however with money borrowed from a friend, I would only have when I was 19) the Portuguese language textbooks, with their "anthological" character, were what opened to me the doors of literary fruition: even today I can recite poetry learnt in that distant era. After finishing the course, I worked for two years as a mechanic at a car repair shop. By that time I had already started to frequent, in its evening opening hours, a public library in Lisbon. And it was there, with no help or guidance except curiosity and the will to learn, that my taste for reading developed and was refined.

When I got married in 1944, I had already changed jobs. I was now working in the Social Welfare Service as an administrative civil servant. My wife, Ilda Reis, then a typist with the Railway Company, was to become, many years later, one of the most important Portuguese engravers. She died in 1998. In 1947, the year of the birth of my only child, Violante, I published my first book, a novel I myself entitled The Widow, but which for editorial reasons appeared as The Land of Sin. I wrote another novel, The Skylight, still unpublished, and started another one, but did not get past the first few pages: its title was to be Honey and Gall, or maybe Louis, son of Tadeus... The matter was settled when I abandoned the project: it was becoming quite clear to me that I had nothing worthwhile to say. For 19 years, till 1966, when I got to publish Possible Poems, I was absent from the Portuguese literary scene, where few people can have noticed my absence.

For political reasons I became unemployed in 1949, but thanks to the goodwill of a former teacher at the technical school, I managed to find work at the metal company where he was a manager.

At the end of the 1950s I started working at a publishing company, Estúdios Cor, as production manager, so returning, but not as an author, to the world of letters I had left some years before. This new activity allowed me acquaintance and friendship with some of the most important Portuguese writers of the time. In 1955, to improve the family budget, but also because I enjoyed it, I started to spend part of my free time in translation, an activity that would continue till 1981: Colette, Pär Lagerkvist, Jean Cassou, Maupassant, André Bonnard, Tolstoi, Baudelaire, Étienne Balibar, Nikos Poulantzas, Henri Focillon, Jacques Roumain, Hegel, Raymond Bayer were some of the authors I translated. Between May 1967 and November 1968, I had another parallel occupation as a literary critic. Meanwhile, in 1966, I had published Possible Poems, a poetry book that marked my return to literature. After that, in 1970, another book of poems, Probably Joy and shortly after, in 1971 and 1973 respectively, under the titles From this World and the Other and The Traveller's Baggage, two collections of newspaper articles which the critics consider essential to the full understanding of my later work. After my divorce in 1970, I initiated a relationship, which would last till 1986, with the Portuguese writer Isabel da Nóbrega.

After leaving the publisher at the end of 1971, I worked for the following two years at the evening newspaper Diário de Lisboa, as manager of a cultural supplement and as an editor.

Published in 1974 with the title The Opinions of the DL Had, those texts represent a very precise "reading" of the last time of the dictatorship, which was to be toppled that April. In April 1975, I became deputy director of the morning paper Diário de Notícias, a post I filled till that November and from which I was sacked in the aftermath of the changes provoked by the politico-military coup of the 25th November which blocked the revolutionary process. Two books mark this era: The Year of 1993, a long poem composed in 1975, which some critics consider a herald of the works that two years later would start to appear with Manual of Painting and Calligraphy, a novel, and, under the title of Notes, the political articles I had published in the newspaper of which I had been a director.

Unemployed again and bearing in mind the political situation was undergoing, without the faintest possibility of finding a job, I decided to devote myself to literature: it was about time to find out what I was worth as a writer. At the beginning of 1976, I settled for some weeks in Lavre, a country village in Alentejo Province. It was that period of study, observation and note-taking that led, in 1980, to the novel Risen from the Ground, where the way of narrating which characterises my novels was born. Meanwhile, in 1978 I had published a collection of short stories, Quasi Object; in 1979 the play The Night, and after that, a few months before Risen from the Ground, a new play, What shall I do with this Book? With the exception of another play, entitled The Second Life of Francis of Assisi, published in 1987, the 1980s were entirely dedicated to the Novel: Baltazar and Blimunda, 1982, The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis, 1984, The Stone Raft, 1986, The History of the Siege of Lisbon, 1989. In 1986, I met the Spanish journalist Pilar del Río. We got married in 1988.

In consequence of the Portuguese government censorship of The Gospel According to Jesus Christ (1991), vetoing its presentation for the European Literary Prize under the pretext that the book was offensive to Catholics, my wife and I transferred our residence to the island of Lanzarote in the Canaries. At the beginning of that year I published the play In Nomine Dei, which had been written in Lisbon, from which the libretto for the opera Divara would be taken, with music by the Italian composer Azio Corghi and staged for the first time in Münster, Germany in 1993. This was not the first cooperation with Corghi: his also is the music to the opera Blimunda, from my novel Baltazar and Blimunda, staged in Milan, Italy in 1990. In 1993, I started writing a diary, Cadernos de Lanzarote (Lanzarote Diaries), with five volumes so far. In 1995, I published the novel Blindness and in 1997 All the Names. In 1995, I was awarded the Camões Prize and in 1998 the Nobel Prize for Literature.

## José Saramago, 1998

De Les Prix Nobel. The Nobel Prizes 1998. Editor Tore Frängs-

myr [Nobel Foundation], Estocolmo, 1999.

This autobiography, written at the time of receiving the prize, was later published in the collection Les Prix Nobel/Nobel Lectures. In some places, the information has been updated with additions by the laureate himself.

Copyrights © The Nobel Foundation 1998

After being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, José Saramago published the following novels: The Cave (2000), The Double (2003), Seeing (2004), Death at Intervals (2005), The Elephant's Journey (2008), Cain (2009) and Skylight (posthumous, 2011). In addition to these works, in 1999, published a volume of political articles and essays collected under the title Folhas Políticas, 1976-1998. In 2001, published the short story The Biggest Flower in the World and in 2005 the play Don Giovanni ou O Dissoluto Absolvido. A year later, in 2006, published Small Memories, and in 2009 and 2010, respectively, The Notebook and Notebook 2. During the last ten years of his life, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by about twenty universities, while his free and critical voice, committed to reality, would consolidated itself as one of the great intellectual references of our time. He died in Lanzarote on June 18, 2010. His ashes rest in Lisbon, under an olive tree planted in front of Casa dos Bicos, headquarters of his Foundation, established in August 2007.



# Manual de Pintura e Caligrafia 1976

The Manual of Painting and Calligraphy, 1976



## «José Saramago: poder, enfim escrever claramente»

in o diário, Lisbon  
February 17, 1979  
1 p.

Interview for o diário, section «Escritores respondem ao diário»

## Interview «José Saramago: Andamos à procura de uma outra forma de ser escritor»

in *Diário Popular*,  
April 6, 1978  
1 p.

## «Sena», original article published in Diário de Lisboa and included in *Folhas Políticas 1976-1998*

June 12, 1978



## *Manual de Pintura e Caligrafia*

*Manual of Painting and Calligraphy*

[First edition] / 352 pp.  
Moraes editores, Lisbon, 1976  
  
Translated by Giovanni Pontiero  
Harcourt, USA, 2012  
Carcanet, UK, 1992

A story of self-discovery set against the background of the last years of Salazar’s dictatorship, told by H, a second-rate artist commissioned by a wealthy client to paint a family portrait. As he works, he reflects on his struggle to survive in a bourgeois world obsessed with status and affluence. His portrait focuses animosity, his sitters are left uncomfortably exposed. The novel explores wider issues: the functions of art and literature; the critic’s role; and, in H’s tour of Italian galleries, a meditation on the influences shaping western culture. Back in Portugal, H is embroiled in political fear and mistrust when a friend is arrested by the secret police. He falls in love, too, and by the end of the story defines his objectives and achieves an inner freedom. This coincides with the Portuguese Revolution of 1974 and Salazar’s overthrow.

## Original typewritten text with handwritten notes for the novel *Manual of Painting and Calligraphy*

1976  
203 pp.

## photo / With Vergílio Ferreira (on the left) and the children books’ writer Alice Gomes

Lisbon, 1970’s

© Valverde

## *objecto quase*

*The Lives of Things*

[First edition] / 144 pp.  
Moraes editores, Lisbon, 1978

Translated by Giovanni Pontiero  
Verso, UK, 2013

A surreal short story collection, combining bitter satire, outrageous parody and uncanny hallucinations, this collection of earliest stories from the beginning of his writing career attests to the imaginative power and incomparable skill in elaborating the most extravagant fantasies. Each tale is a wicked, surreal take on life under dictatorship: in ‘Embargo’ a man drives around a city that is slowly running out of petrol; ‘The Chair’ recounts what happens when dictator Salazar falls off his chair and dies; in the Kafkaesque ‘Things’ the life of a civil servant is threatened as objects start to go missing.

## photo / With the prime minister general Vasco Gonçalves

Lisbon, 1975

## Preliminary writings for *The lives of things*

1976

Notebook with handwritten work for the short stories

## photo / With the writer José Gomes Ferreira (on the right) and the editor Rogério de Moura (on the left)

Lisbon, 1970’s

© João Maia

## Two original typewritten texts with handwritten notes for the short story “Cadeira” included in the *The lives of things*

1977  
37 pp.



## Original article clip of «*Carta para Josefa, minha avó*»

in A Capital, Lisbon  
March 14, 1968  
(included in *Deste Mundo e do Outro*)

## photo / Josefa Caixinha, his grandmother

Azinhaga, 1969  
© Lucas

## photo / Jerônimo Melrinho, his grandfather

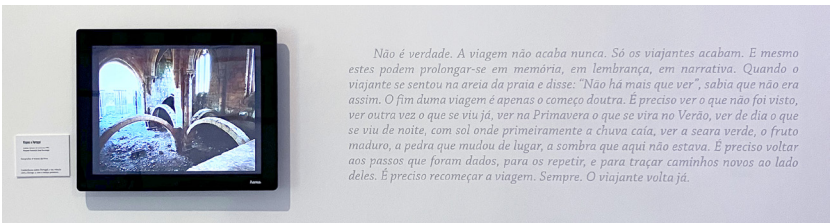
Azinhaga, 1940’s

## Original article clip of «*O meu avô, também*»

in A Capital, Lisbon  
December 19, 1968  
(included in *Deste Mundo e do Outro*)

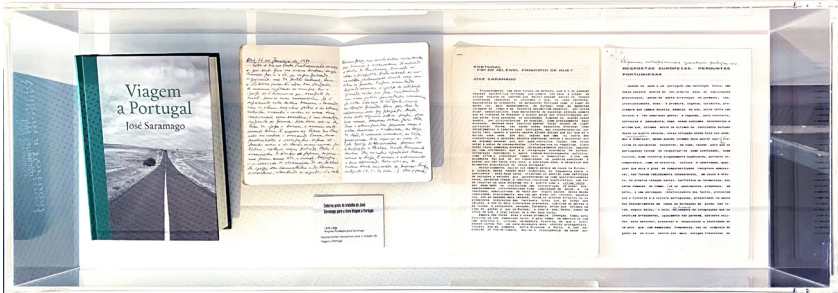
# Viagem a Portugal | 1981

Journey to Portugal, 1981



digital frame / **Photographs and texts taken by Saramago for the book *Journey to Portugal***

But that is not true. The journey is never over. Only travellers come to an end. But even then they can prolong their voyage in their memories, in recollections, in stories. When the traveller sat in the sand and declared: “There’s nothing more to see,” he knew it wasn’t true. The end of one journey is simply the start of another. You have to see what you missed the first time, see again what you already saw, see in springtime what you saw in summer, in daylight what you saw at night, see the sun shining where you saw the rain falling, see the crops growing, the fruit ripen, the stone which has moved, the shadow that was not there before. You have to go back to the footsteps already taken, to go over them again or add fresh ones alongside them. You have to start the journey anew. Always. The traveller sets out once more.



## *Viagem a Portugal* *Journey to Portugal*

[shown] / 767 pp.

Porto Editora, 2021

[1<sup>a</sup> edition] / Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon, 1981

Translated by Amanda Hopkinson

Harcourt, USA, 2001

Harvill, UK, 2002

Recording the events and observations of a journey across the length and breadth of the country he loves dearly, Saramago brings Portugal to life as only a writer of his brilliance can. Forfeiting the usual sources such as tourist guides and road maps, he scours the country with the eyes and ears of an observer fascinated by the ancient myths and history of his people. Whether it be an inaccessible medieval fortress set on a cliff, a wayside chapel thick with cobwebs, or a grand mansion in the city, the extraordinary places of this land come alive. Always meticulously attentive to those elements of ancient Portugal that persist today, he examines the country in its current period of rapid transition and growth. Journey to Portugal is an ode to a country and its rich traditions.

## **Black cover notebook with handwritten notes for *Journey to Portugal***



**Personnal agenda from 1976**

**Personnal agenda from 1977**

**Personnal agenda from 1978**

**Personnal agenda from 1979**



# Levantado do Chão

## 1980

Raised from the Ground, 1980

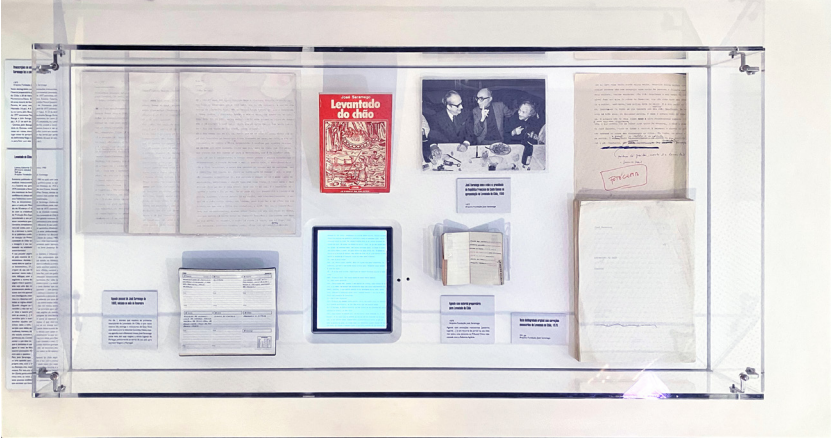


video / **Literary Prize City of Lisbon for the novel  
Raised from the Ground, ceremony award**  
Arquivo RTP, 1981

photo / **With Mariana Basuga, who hosted him during the  
research process for the book, in the launching of  
*Raised from the Ground***  
Casa do Alentejo, Lisbon, 1980

photo / **José Saramago in Alentejo**  
Évora, 1970's

**«Um livro “*Levantado do Chão*”», interview by  
Ernesto Sampaio about *Raised from the Ground***  
in Diário de Lisboa, Lisbon  
March 8, 1980



**Transcripts of José Saramago's interviews to peasants from Lavre**  
1977

***Levantado do Chão***  
***Raised from the Ground***

[First edition] / 368 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 1980  
  
Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harcourt, USA, 2013  
Carcanet, UK, 2012

Set in Alentejo, a southern province of Portugal known for its vast agricultural estates, the novel charts the lives of the Mau Tempos as national and international events rumble on in the background—the coming of the republic in Portugal, the two world wars, and an attempt on the dictator Salazar's life. Yet nothing really impinges on the grim reality of the farm laborers' lives until the first communist stirrings. Highly political yet full of Saramago's characteristic humour and humanity, As full of love as it is of pain, it is a vivid, moving tribute to the men and women among whom Saramago lived as a child. This is the book in which he found the signature style and voice that distinguishes all of his brilliant works. Fascinating insight into the early work of this literary giant.

### Personal agenda, 1980

Notes about the first copies he received of Raised from the Ground, the delivery of the theatre play Que Farei com Este Livro? to the publishing house, and reflexions while travelling throughout the country for the writing of Journey to Portugal.

digiral frame / **Scanned documents from the handwritten  
preliminary materials and typewritten  
pages for *Raised from the Ground***  
1979

Photo / **With his mother and the president of the  
Portuguese Republic, Francisco da Costa Gomes,  
during the launching of *Raised from the Ground***  
1980

**Notebook with preliminary materials for  
*Raised from the Ground***  
1979

Handwritten notes (about local words and places...)

**Typewritten text with handwritten corrections for  
*Raised from the Ground***  
1979  
351 pp.



# Memorial do Convento 1982

Baltasar and Blimunda, 1982



video / **Memorial del convento**

3' 38"  
Producer: Ángel Hernández Marín, News Produções, S.L.  
Contents and sequence: Fernando Gómez Aguilera  
Source: Fundação José Saramago

**Handwritten document describing «A Passarola» (the flying machine invented by Bartolomeu Lourenço de Gusmão)**

c. 1982  
2 pp.

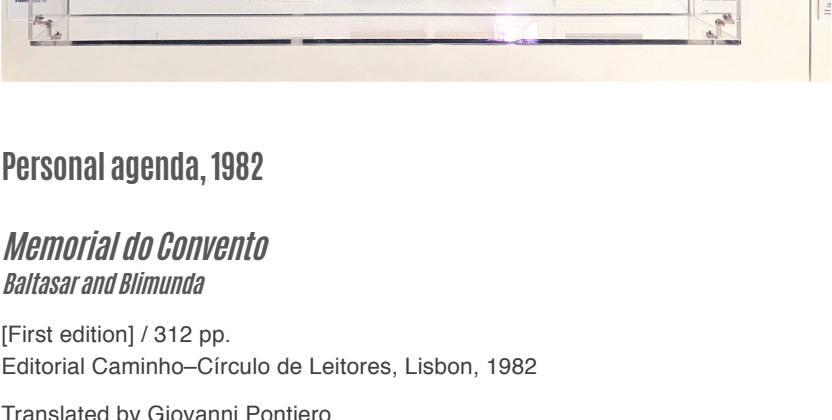
Preliminary writings for Baltasar and Blimunda

**Drawing of «A Passarola» (the flying machine invented by Bartolomeu Lourenço de Gusmão)**

Preliminary materials for Baltasar and Blimunda

photo / **José Saramago**

Ouro Preto, Brasil, 1980's  
© BM Paula



## Personal agenda, 1982

**Memorial do Convento**  
*Baltasar and Blimunda*

[First edition] / 312 pp.  
Editorial Caminho—Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon, 1982

Translated by Giovanni Pontiero  
Harcourt Brace, USA, 1985

Harvill, UK, 2001

Set in eighteenth-century Portugal (1711) at the height of the Inquisition, and anything can happen. As the Inquisition rages, an extraordinary trinity struggle to realise a creation that will fly in the face of the monstrous vanity of Church and State. So it is for Baltasar and Blimunda. He is a soldier who has lost his left hand in battle, falls in love with Blimunda, a young girl with visionary powers who can see into souls. From the day he follows her home from the auto-da-fé where her mother is tortured, the two are bound body and soul by a love of unassailable strength. A third party shares their supper that evening: Padre Bartolomeu Lourenço, whose fantasy is to invent a flying machine. As the Crown and the Church clash, they pursue his impossible, not to mention heretical, dream of flight. Their tragicomic efforts are buoyed heavenward by the divinely inspired music of Scarlatti and the charm of the love they share in a singularly loveless age. An extraordinary and rich poetic tale, an outrageous novel of romance and deceit, religion and magic, Baltasar and Blimunda is an astonishing adventure into a magnificent world, caught in a tick of time, suspended on a cloud somewhere between dreams and desire.

digital frame / **Scanned pages from two notebooks with writings for the novel Baltasar and Blimunda**

1980

**Black cover notebook with handwritten notes for the novel *Baltasar and Blimunda***

1982

**Painted tile by Rogério Ribeiro**

2005

photo / **With Azio Corghi, composer of the ópera *Blimunda***

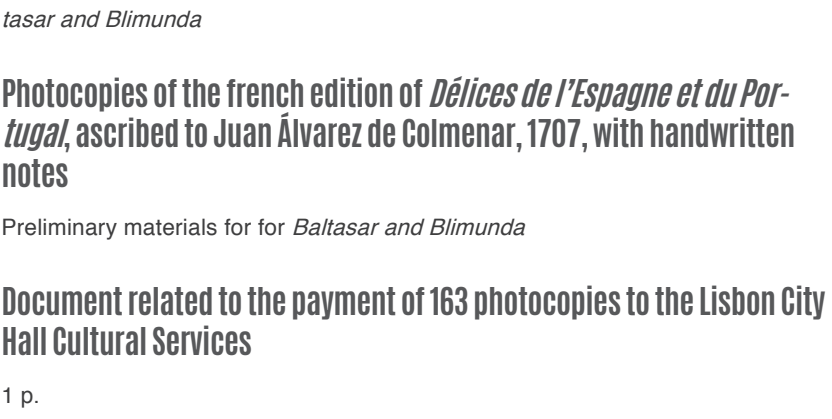
Mafra, 1991

photo / **Beijing, launching of the book *Baltasar and Blimunda***

1997

**First galleys of the novel *Baltasar and Blimunda*, with handwritten corrections**

c. 1982



## Letter to José Saramago

Porto, February 14, 1981

1 p.

Answer to a request for information from José Saramago about the events in 1731 «among the stonemasons of Mafra (the convent)». Preliminary materials for *Baltasar and Blimunda*

**Photocopies of the french edition of *Délices de l'Espagne et du Portugal*, ascribed to Juan Álvarez de Colmenar, 1707, with handwritten notes**

Preliminary materials for *Baltasar and Blimunda*

**Document related to the payment of 163 photocopies to the Lisbon City Hall Cultural Services**

1 p.

Preliminary materials for *Baltasar and Blimunda*

**Five reader user cards from the public library (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal)**

1982

Preliminary materials for Baltasar and Blimunda

**Photocopies related to the date of June 18, 1740, with handwritten notes, from the book *Ano Noticioso e Histórico, vol. I*, Luís Montez Mattos, edited by Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, 1934**

Preliminary materials for *Baltasar and Blimunda*

**Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, ID user card**

January 15, 1982

In the 1980's and early 1990's, strongly emphasises the search for historical documentation, in the writing of his novels, mainly *Baltasar and Blimunda*, *The Gospel according to Jesus Christ* or *History of the Siege of Lisbon*. He researched for epochal texts mostly at the Local Public Libraries, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal and Palácio Municipal Galveias, but never with a perspective of the historian writer.

**Memorial do Convento**  
[Special Edition I]

Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2002

445 pp.

Baltasar and Blimunda: special illustrated with paintings by José Santa-Bárbara to celebrate the 20nd anniversary of it's first edition, published in October, 1982

**Photocopy of the chapter «Lisboa em 1723», in *Sumário de Vária História, vol. III*, J. Ribeiro Guimarães, Lisbon, 1873, with handwritten notes**

Preliminary materials for Baltasar and Blimunda

***A Procissão do Corpo de Deus na 1.ª metade do Século XVIII*, [Reconstituição Miniatural Barrista, Diamantino Tojal]**

Palácio Galveias Library, October, 1948

Preliminary materials for Baltasar and Blimunda

**Illustrations (photocopy) from the book *O Trajo Popular em Portugal nos Séculos XVIII e XIX*, Alberto de Souza, Lisbon, 1924**

Preliminary materials for Baltasar and Blimunda

**Manuscripted notes for *Baltasar and Blimunda***

c. 1981



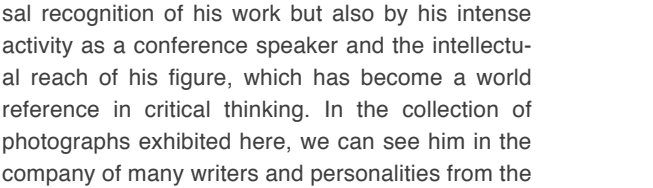
## Armanda Passos

*Baltasar e Blimunda na Passarola*

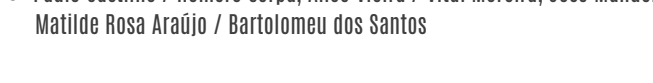
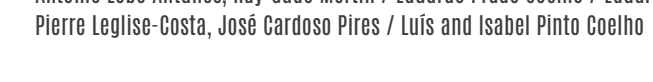
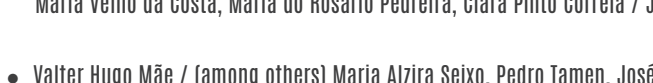
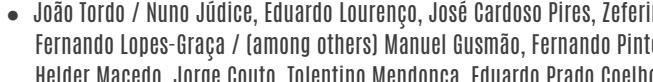
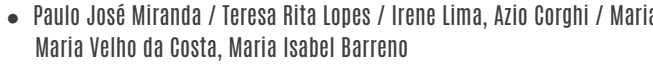
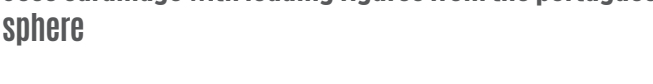
(from the book titled *Baltasar e Blimunda*)

75 x 100 cm

Private collection: Pilar del Río



## Some books in several languages concerning his work





# Voz e Consciência

## Universais

Universal voice and conscience



photo / In a demonstration of the Associação Portuguesa de Escritores in the following days of the Revolução dos Cravos, April 25th, 1974

photo / In a supporting demonstration to the Partido Comunista Português during the electoral campaign after the Revolução dos Cravos, April 25th, 1974

Lisboa, 1975

photo / Special edition of Seara Nova (n. 1543), immediatly after the Revolução dos Cravos, April 25th, 1974

May, 1974  
20 pp.

photo / During the first celebration after the Revolução dos Cravos, April 25th, 1974 of the Labour Day ( May 1st ) by Partido Comunista Português

Azinhaga, 1974  
© Lucas

photo / With Jorge Sampaio during the electoral campaign «Por Lisboa» for the municipal elections

Lisbon, 1989  
© Ana Baião

photo / In Cidadelhe, one of the historical villages in the North of Portugal

c. 1981

photo / During the preparation work for the Festa do Avante! (an annual festival organized after the Revolução dos Cravos, April 25th, 1974 by Avante!, the weekly newspaper from the Portuguese Communist Party)

Lisbon, c. 1974-1975



«Del Invisible Marcos en la selva... al corazón de Chiapas con Saramago»

Headline of a mexican newspaper  
2000

«Soy un grito de dolor e indignación»

in Semanal  
January 7, 2001

Interviewed by his wife, Pilar del Río, journalist and translator of his work into the spanish language.

«Chiapas, nome de dor e de esperança»

in Le Monde diplomatique  
(photos by Sebastião Salgado)  
March, 1999  
6 pp.

photo / José Saramago e Aminetou Haidar

A human rights activist, on hunger strike during thirty days in Lanzarote airport, in protest for having been expelled from Western Sahara Republic by the Morocco Government that did not recognized her homeland passport. Although extremely hill, he approached her to give his comfort and demonstrate support to the cause of independence of the Sahrawi people.

December, 2009

photo / With Prime Minister Maria de Lourdes Pintassilgo, during a ceremony organized by Associação 25 de abril, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Revolução dos Cravos, April 25th, 1974

Lisbon, 1984

photo / In El Zócalo square, where the march of the zapatista movement from Chiapas ended

Mexico D.F., March, 2001

photo / With the Prime Minister António Guterres

Democratic Republic of East Timor, 1990's

photo / With Oskar La Fontaine and Ignaki Bilondo, at the Ciclo Literatura y Social Compromiso

Madrid, July 20, 2000

«José Saramago. El iberismo y América Latina»

in Isla Abierta, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
October 18, 1998  
2 pp.

An article he wrote about the iberism concept and its relationship with Latin America.

photo / With Fidel Castro and Pilar del Río

Havana, Cuba, 1999

«De los pueblos ibéricos»

in El País,  
January 2, 1992  
1 p.



# Nobel da Literatura | 1998

Nobel in Literature, 1998



video / **Nobel Prize Ceremony Awards**

December 7, 1998  
© Nobel Foundation  
Post-production: César Manrique Foundation

video / **Nobel Prize Award Dinner Ceremony**

December 10, 1998  
© Nobel Foundation  
Post-production: César Manrique Foundation

video / **Speech at the Nobel Prize Ceremony Award**

December 7, 1998  
RTP – Rádio Televisão Portuguesa  
  
Highlighting the importance of the Human Rights Declaration and denouncing the lack of accomplishments



**Original Medal for the 1998 Literature Nobel Prize Award**

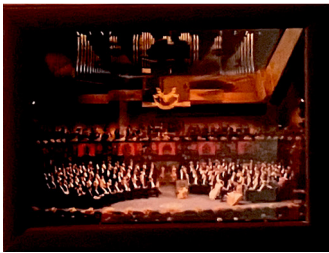
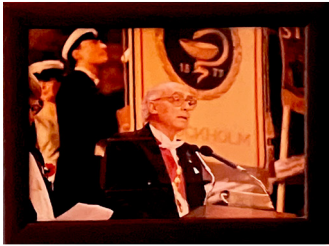


photo / **With Queen Silvia from Sweden during the Dinner Ceremony of the Nobel Prize Awards**

Stockholm, Sweden, 1998

photo / **Speech during the Nobel Prize Ceremony Award**

Stockholm, Sweden, 1998

photo / **Nobel Prize Ceremony Awards**

Stockholm, Sweden, 1998

# História do Cerco de Lisboa 1989

The History of the Siege of Lisbon, 1989



video / **Interview about the recently published novel *The History of the Siege of Lisbon***

1989

RTP - Rádio Televisão Portuguesa

**«O Íntimo e o Real: Simulações e Iluminações»**

1986

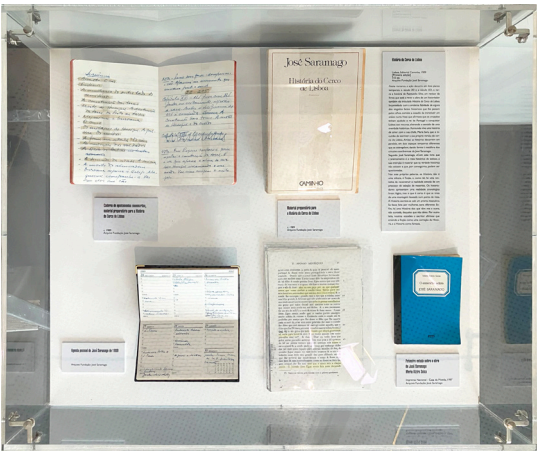
1 p.

Typewritten text with annotations and his own signature.

Photo / **José Saramago**

Frankfurt, 1980's

© Isolde Ohlbaum



**Notebook with handwritten preliminary annotations for the novel *The Históriy of the Siége of Lisbon***

c. 1989

**Personal agenda, 1989**

**Preliminary notes for the novel *The Históriy of the Siége of Lisbon***

c. 1989

***História do Cerco de Lisboa***  
***The History of the Siege of Lisbon***

[First edition] / 352 pp.

Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 1989

Translated by Giovanni Pontiero

Harcourt Brace, USA, 1997

Harvill, UK, 2000

A proofreader tinkering with a historical text opens up a world of ambiguity and invention, as he finds the relationship between fact and fiction to be far from clear. What happens when the facts of history are replaced by the mysteries of love? When Raimundo Silva, a lowly proofreader for a Lisbon publishing house, inserts a negative into a sentence of a historical text, he alters the whole course of the 1147 Siege of Lisbon. Fearing censure he is met instead with admiration: Dr Maria Sara, his voluptuous new editor, encourages him to pen his own alternative history. As his retelling draws on all his imaginative powers, Silva finds – to his nervous delight – that if the facts of the past can be rewritten as a romance then so can the details of his own dusty bachelor present.

***O essencial sobre José Saramago***

First essay about Saramago's work

by Maria Alzira Seixo

Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, Lisbon, 1987



# O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis 1984

The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis, 1984



photo / **With the president of the Portuguese Republic, Jorge Sampaio**

Lisbon, 1998

photo / **With the president of the Portuguese Republic, Mário Soares**

photo / **With the president of the Portuguese Republic, Ramalho Eanes, in the launching of *The Stone Raft***

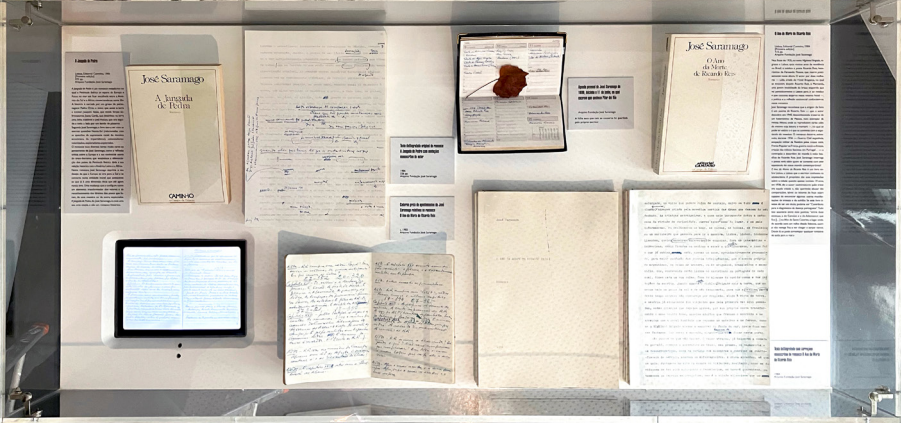
Lisbon, 1986

**<Lisboa de longe, Lisboa de perto>**

in ABC

Madrid, March 4, 1998

2 pp.



## *A Jangada de Pedra*

*The Stone Raft*

[First edition] / 332 pp.

Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 1986

Translated by Giovanni Pontiero

Harcourt Brace, USA, 1987

Harvill, UK, 1992

When the Iberian Peninsula breaks free of Europe and begins to drift across the North Atlantic, five people are drawn together on the newly formed island-first by surreal events and then by love.

One day a rift opens along the border between Spain and France, and the Iberian peninsula floats off resolutely westwards across the Atlantic, a great stone raft. The impact on the geopolitical scene is fundamental, as the North American powers look to acquire a whole new tract of land and population lost to Europe. (Only staunch Gibraltar gets left behind on its rock.) But what of the floating population? Spaniards and Portuguese, disrupted in their daily routines, quit their homes, escaping the looming perils of the coast, and go restlessly wandering the inland roads; they are only the more disoriented when the raft starts to revolve on its own axis, so that the sun rises in what used to be the west. Among the new vagrants are three men, two women and a dog, who meet by chance – or destiny – and take to the road in an old 2CV until they are obliged to settle for a wagon drawn by two ill-assorted horses. The humans pair off into couples, though even the odd-man-out will have his moments of domesticity. And as they pursue their thinker's existence they discover in themselves unsuspected riddles, and the answers to them. Told in a deceptively simple, naïf style, this tale of fixed points and shifting goals is a superb vehicle for Saramago's shrewd and witty dissection of a contemporary European society.

digital frame / **Scanned pages from the notebook for the novel *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis***

**Typewritten text *The Stone Raft*, with handwritten notes**

1986

326 pp.

**Black cover notebook with annotations for *The Year of the death of Ricardo Reis***

c. 1982

**Personal agenda from 1986, on June 11 writes a note referring that he meets Pilar del Río**

The dry leaf was kept in this page by the writer himself.

## *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis*

*The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis*

[First edition] / 416 pp.

Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 1984

Translated by Giovanni Pontiero

Harcourt Brace, USA, 1991

Harvill, UK, 1992

Europe dances while an invidious dictator establishes himself in Portugal. The city: Lisbon-gray, colorless, chimerical. Ricardo Reis, a doctor and poet, has just come home after sixteen years in Brazil and is visited by Fernando Pessoa, who died six months earlier. And then...

**Typewritten text with handwritten corrections for *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis***

1984



**<Neste livro nada é verdade e nada é mentira>**

in Jornal de Letras, Lisbon

1984

2 pp.

Interview about the recently published novel

The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis

**<O autor está triste quando escreve sobre a tristeza de há 50 anos>**

in Diário Popular, Lisbon

December 7, 1984

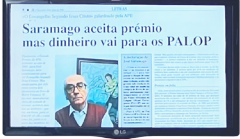
2 pp.

Interview about the recently published novel

The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis

# O Evangelho segundo Jesus Cristo 1991

The Gospel According to Jesus Christ, 1991



video / **El Evangelio según Jesucristo**

8' 3"

Producer: Ángel Hernández Marín, News Produções, S.L.

Contents and sequence: Fernando Gómez Aguilera

Source: Fundação José Saramago

video / **Interviewed by Bárbara Guimarães for «Páginas Soltas», SIC Notícias channel tv.**

Lisbon, November, 2006

© SIC Notícias

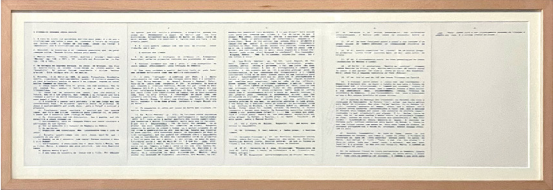


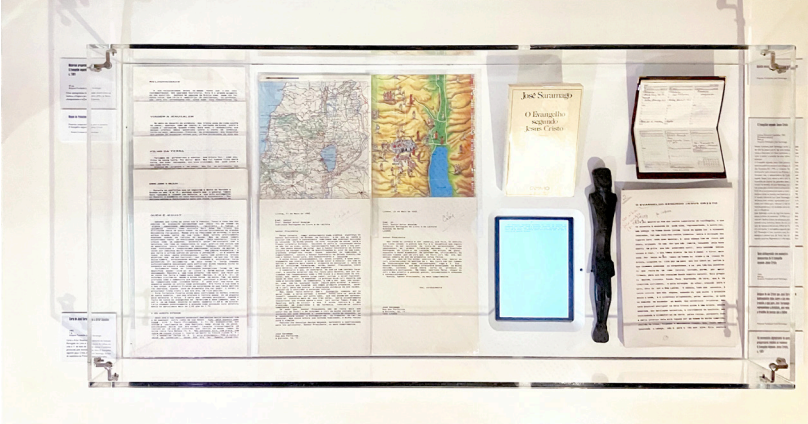
photo / **José Saramago**

Lisbon, 1980's

**Typewritten text with the schedule for the novel**  
***The Gospel According to Jesus Christ***

c. 1991

5 pp.



**Preliminary materials for the novel** ***The Gospel According to Jesus Christ***

c. 1991

47 pp.

Typewritten note cards under the titles «Sobre Judas ou Galileu», «Viagem a Jerusalém», «Filho da Terra», «Religiosidade» and «Quem é Jesus?».

## Maps of Palestine

Preliminary materials for the novel The Gospel According to Jesus Christ.

## Letter to Artur Anselmo

(President of the Instituto Português do Livro e da Leitura de Lisboa)

May 11, 1992

1 p.

About the controversial exclusion of the book

The Gospel According to Jesus Christ from the list of candidates to the European Literary Prize.

## Personal agenda, 1991

### ***O Evangelho segundo Jesus Cristo***

***The Gospel According to Jesus Christ***

[First edition] / 448 pp.

Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 1991

Translated by Giovanni Pontiero

Harcourt Brace, USA, 1994

Harvill, UK, 2008

The writer envisions the life of Jesus Christ and the story of his Passion as things of this earth: A child crying, the caress of a woman half asleep, the bleat of a goat, a prayer uttered in the grayish morning light. His idea of the Holy Family reflects the real complexities of any family, and—as only Saramago can —he imagines them with tinges of vision, dream, and omen. The result is a deft psychological portrait that moves between poetry and irony, spirituality and irreverence of a savior who is at once the Son of God and a young man. This is a skeptic's journey into the meaning of God, the foundations of the Church, and human existence itself. A retelling of the Gospel following the life of Christ from his conception to his crucifixion. A naïf Jesus is the son not of God, but of Joseph. In the desert it is not Satan, but God that Christ tussles with, an autocrat with whom he has an unbalanced and unsettled relationship. A provocative and tender novel that has sparked a wide and intense critical discussion and wonder about the meaning of Christianity and the Church as an institution.

**Typewritten text with handwritten notes for the novel** ***The Gospel According to Jesus Christ***

1991

444 pp.

**Wooden statuette representing a Christ that usually layed near him while working at his desk, not as a religious symbol but as a homage to the work of the man that carved it.**

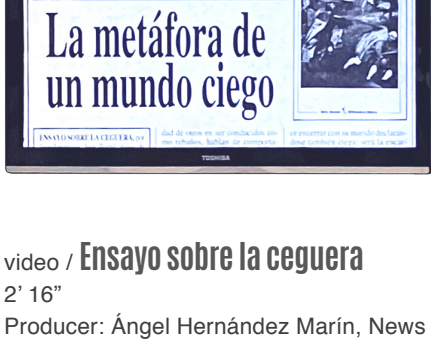
digital frame / **46 scanned documents of preliminary materials for the novel** ***The Death According to Jesus Christ***

c. 1991



# Ensaio sobre a Cegueira 1995

Blindness, 1995



video / **Ensayo sobre la ceguera**  
2' 16"  
Producer: Ángel Hernández Marín, News  
Produções, S.L.  
Contents e sequence: Fernando Gómez Aguilera  
Source: Fundação José Saramago



## *A Caverna* *The Cave*

[First edition] / 352 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2000

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harcourt Brace, USA, 2003  
Harvill, UK, 2003

Cipriano Algor, an old potter, lives with his daughter Marta and her husband Marçal in a small village on the outskirts of The Center, an imposing complex of shops, apartments, and offices to which Cipriano delivers his pots and jugs every month. On one such trip, he is told not to make any more deliveries. Unwilling to give up his craft, together with his daughter, they craft a new line of small ceramic figurines and, to their bafflement, the Centre orders vast quantities. Cipriano and Marta set to work, but once the figures are complete, the Centre recants: there is no market for them, and the order is cancelled.

Resigned to idleness the three have to move from the village into The Center, a soulless megaplex. When mysterious sounds of digging emerge from beneath their apartment, Cipriano and Marçal investigate, and what they find transforms the family's life. Filled with the depth, humor, and the extraordinary philosophical richness that marks each of Saramago's novels, *The Cave* is a harrowing, joyful masterpiece, a family fable and an uplifting love story.

## *O Homem Duplicado* *The Double*

[First edition] / 320 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2002

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harcourt Brace, USA, 2004  
Harvill, UK, 2004

Tertuliano Máximo Afonso is a divorced, depressed history teacher. To lift his spirits, a colleague suggests he rents a certain video. Not a great fan of cinema, he watches the film unmoved, but wakes later that night unaccountably troubled by something he has subconsciously viewed. He gets up to watch the film again and discovers, to his horror, an actor who could be his twin, identical in every way except for the moustache he himself has not worn for five years. He sleeps badly. Against his better judgment, Tertuliano decides to pursue his double. As he roots out the man's identity, what begins as a whimsical story becomes a “wonderfully twisted meditation on identity and individuality”. Telling no-one of his discovery and wrought with anxiety, embarks on a quest to find the actor. By a process of elimination, and watching countless films, he manages to identify the “double” and secretly plots to make contact. But how will the struggling actor feel when confronted out of the blue by a man claiming to be identical to him in every way? A man proclaiming himself to be the original and the actor a duplicate? With this novel Saramago explores the nature of individuality and examines the fear and insecurity that arise when our singularity comes under threat, when even a wife cannot tell the original from the impostor.

## *Ensaio sobre a Cegueira* *Blindness*

[First edition] / 312 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 1995

Translated by Giovanni Pontiero  
Harcourt Brace, USA, 1998  
Harvill, UK, 2013

A driver waiting at the traffic lights goes blind. An ophthalmologist tries to diagnose his distinctive blindness, but is affected before he can read the textbooks. The whole city is hit by an epidemic of “white blindness” which spares no one. Trying to stem the epidemic, the authorities confine all people blind to an empty mental hospital where the wards are terrorised by blind thugs and the criminal element holds everyone captive, stealing food rations and raping women. There is one eyewitness to this nightmare who guides seven strangers-among them a boy with no mother, a girl with dark glasses, a dog of tears-through the barren streets, and the procession becomes as uncanny as the surroundings are harrowing. When fire destroys the asylum, the inmates burst forth and the last links with a supposedly civilised society are snapped. A magnificent parable of loss and disorientation and a vivid evocation of the horrors of the twentieth century, *A powerful portrayal of man's worst appetites and weaknesses-and man's ultimately exhilarating spirit.* The stunningly powerful novel of man's will to survive against all odds,

## *Todos os Nomes* *All Names*

[First edition] / 280 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 1997

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harcourt Brace, USA, 2000  
Harvill, UK, 1999

Senhor José is a low-grade clerk in the city's Central Registry, where the living and the dead share the same shelf space. A middle-aged bachelor, he has no interest in anything beyond the certificates of birth, marriage, divorce, and death that are his daily routine. But one day, when he comes across the records of an anonymous young woman, something happens to him. Obsessed, Senhor José sets off to follow the thread that may lead him to the woman-but as he gets closer, he discovers more about her, and about himself, than he would ever have wished. The loneliness of people's lives, the effects of chance, the discovery of love-all coalesce.

Audio / **Reading fragments from *Death at Intervals* followed by quotations in an interview about the novel**

## **Typewritten text of the novel *Blindness*, with handwritten corrections**

1995  
279 pp.

Photo / **In the first working room of his home in Tías**

Lanzarote, c. 1995

## **Typewritten text of the novel *The Cave*, with handwritten corrections by the author and the publishing house editor**

2000  
315 pp.

Photo / **With his dogs, Pepe and Camões**

Lanzarote, c. 2000

## **Galleys with handwritten corrections for the novel *Death at Intervals***

June 28, 2005  
116 pp.

## *Ensaio sobre a Lucidez* *Seeing*

[First edition] / 332 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2004

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harcourt Brace, USA, 2006  
Harvill, UK, 2006

Despite the heavy rain, the presiding officer at Polling Station 14 finds it odd that by midday on National Election day, only a handful of voters have turned out. The politicians are growing jittery. What's going on? Should they reschedule the elections for another day? Around three o'clock, the rain finally stops. Promptly at four, voters rush to the polling stations, as if they had been ordered to appear. Puzzlement swiftly escalates to shock when the final count of the ballots reveals more than seventy per cent of the votes are blank – not spoiled, simply blank. National law decrees the election should be repeated eight days later. The result is worse; eighty-three per cent of the votes are blank. The incumbent government receives eight per cent and the opposition even less. The authorities, seized with panic, decamp from the capital and a state of emergency is declared. The president proposes that a wall be built around the city to contain the revolution. But are the authorities acting too precipitously? Or even blindly? The word evokes terrible memories of the plague of *Blindness* that had hit the city four years before, and of the one woman who kept her sight. Could she be behind the blank ballots? Is she the organizer of a conspiracy against the state? A police superintendent is put on the case. What begins as a satire on governments and the sometimes dubious efficacy of the democratic system turns into something far more sinister. Who are the insurgents? Why the desire to destabilise the country? The authorities leap from one possibility to the next, but achieve nothing. The lack of hostility exacerbates things, since how can justice be meted out when not a single law has been broken? To all intents and purposes the administration is blind. In this novel, Saramago has deftly created the politician's ultimate nightmare: disillusionment not with one party, but with all, thereby rendering the entire democratic system useless. *Seeing* explores how simply this could be achieved and how devastating the results might be.

## *As Intermittências da Morte*

[First edition] / 216 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2005

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
*Death with Interruptions*/ Harcourt, USA, 2008  
*Death at Intervals* / Harvill, UK, 2003

On the first day of the new year, no one dies. This understandably causes great consternation amongst religious leaders – if there's no death, there can be no resurrection and therefore no reason for religion – and what will be the effect on pensions, the social services, hospitals? Among the general public, on the other hand, there is initially celebration—flags are hung out on balconies, people dance in the streets. They have achieved the great goal of humanity: eternal life. Then reality hits home—families are left to care for the permanently dying, life-insurance policies become meaningless, and funeral parlors are reduced to arranging burials for pet dogs, cats, hamsters, and parrots. Death sits in her chilly apartment, where she lives alone with scythe and filing cabinets, and contemplates her experiment: What if no one ever died again? What if she, death with a small d, became human and were to fall in love? But will death's disappearance benefit the human race, or will this sudden abeyance backfire? How long can families cope with malingering elderly relatives who scratch at death's door while the portal remains firmly shut? Then, seven months later, death returns, heralded by purple envelopes informing the recipients that their time is up. Death herself is now writing personal notes giving one week's notice. However, when an envelope is unexpectedly returned to her, death begins to experience strange, almost human emotions.



# Últimos livros

## 1997-2009

Latest books 1997-2009



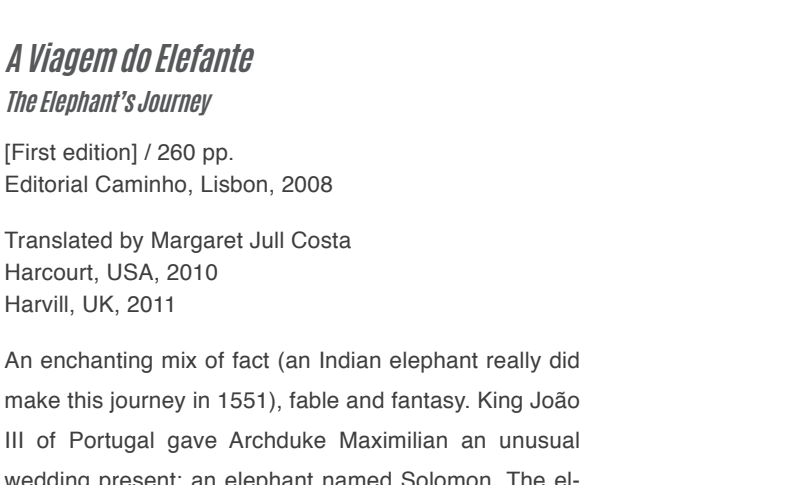
photo / **José Saramago**  
Lisbon, 2006  
© Kim Manresa



photo / **José Saramago at Palácio Galveias**  
Lisbon, 2007  
© Agência EFE



photo / **José Saramago**  
Lisbon, 2006  
© Kim Manresa



### *A Viagem do Elefante*

*The Elephant's Journey*

[First edition] / 260 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2008

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harcourt, USA, 2010  
Harvill, UK, 2011

An enchanting mix of fact (an Indian elephant really did make this journey in 1551), fable and fantasy. King João III of Portugal gave Archduke Maximilian an unusual wedding present: an elephant named Solomon. The elephant's journey from Lisbon to Vienna was witnessed and remarked upon by scholars, historians, and ordinary people. Out of this material, Saramago has spun a novel already heralded as "a triumph of language, imagination, and humor". Solomon and his keeper, Subhro, begin in dismal conditions, forgotten in a corner of the palace grounds. For two years they have been in Lisbon, brought from the Portuguese colonies in India. Now King Dom João III wishes to make him a wedding gift for the Hapsburg archduke, Maximilian. An elephant would be an appropriate wedding gift, since it avoids the Portuguese king offending his Lutheran cousin with an overtly Catholic present. But it means the poor pachyderm must travel from Lisbon to Vienna on foot – the only option when transporting a large animal such a long way. Everyone rushes to get them ready: Subhro is given two new suits of clothes and Solomon a long overdue scrub. Accompanied by the Archduke, his new wife, and the royal guard, our unlikely heroes traverse a continent riven by the Reformation and civil wars and begin a journey that will take the stalwart Solomon across the dusty plains of Castile, over the sea to Genoa and up through the storied cities of northern Italy: Piacenza, Mantua, Verona, Venice, and Trento, where the Council of Trent is in session. Like Hannibal's elephants before him, he must cross the snowy Alps and the terrifying Isarco and Brenner Passes; they sail across the Mediterranean Sea and up the Inn River (elephants, it turns out, are natural sailors). At last they make their grand entry into the imperial city. Accompanying him is his quiet keeper, Subhro, who watches while – at every place they stop – people try to turn Solomon into something he is not. From worker of holy miracles to umbrella stand, the unassuming elephant suffers the many attempts of humans to impose meaning on what they don't understand. The Elephant's Journey is a delightful, witty tale of friendship and adventure, filled with wonderful landscapes and local colour, peppered with witty reflection on human failings and achievements, it is, in the end, about the journey of life itself. With a masterfully light hand Saramago writes a series of contained miracles of absurdity, quiet laughter rising out of a profound, resigned, affectionate wisdom.

### Preliminary notes for the novel *The Elephant's Journey*

2007

2 pp.

digital frame / *The Elephant's Journey*, a street play carried out by Trigo Limpo / Teatro ACERT, shown in Portugal and Spain in 2013.

### *As Pequenas Memórias*

*Small Memories*

[First edition] / 238 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2006

Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harcourt, USA, 2011  
Harvill, UK, 2009

José Saramago was eighteen months old when he moved from the village of Azinhaga with his father and mother to live in Lisbon. But he would return to the village throughout his childhood and adolescence to stay with his maternal grandparents, illiterate peasants in the eyes of the outside world, but a fount of knowledge, affection, and authority to young José. Shifting back and forth between childhood and his teenage years, between Azinhaga and Lisbon, this is a mosaic of memories, a simply told, affecting look back into the author's boyhood: the tragic death of his older brother at the age of four; his mother pawning the family's blankets every spring and buying them back in time for winter; his beloved grandparents bringing the weaker piglets into their bed on cold nights; and Saramago's early encounters with literature, from teaching himself to read by deciphering articles in the daily newspaper, to poring over an entertaining dialogue in a Portuguese-French conversation guide, not realizing that he was in fact reading a play by Molière. Written with Saramago's characteristic wit and honesty, *Small Memories* traces the formation of an artist fascinated by words and stories from an early age and who emerged, against all odds, as one of the world's most respected writers.

### *O Caderno*

*The Notebook*

[First edition] / 238 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2009

Translated by Amanda Hopkinson and Daniel Hahn  
Verso, USA, UK, 2011

A compilation of the daily chronicles from September 15th, 2008 till the mid 2009 published in his blog titled Saramago's Notebook and available in the web through Fundação José Saramago. The writer approaches several items of current interest from his critical and accurate point of view, observing the everyday reality surrounding him.

### *O Caderno 2*

*(Included in The Notebook)*

[First edition] / 244 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2010

Compiled chronicles from his blog from March to November 2009.

### *Caim*

*Cain*

[First edition] / 184 pp.  
Editorial Caminho, Lisbon, 2009

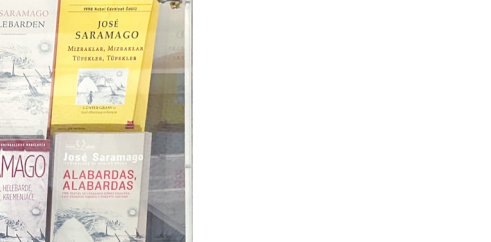
Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
Harcourt, USA, 2012  
Harvill Secker, UK, 2011

In this novel, Saramago daringly re-imagines the characters and narratives of the Old Testament. Two decades after he shocked the religious world with his novel *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*, he has done it again with *Cain*. It tackles many of the moral and logical non sequiturs created by a wilful, authoritarian God, and forms part of Saramago's long argument with religion. The stories in this book are witty and provocative. His tale runs from the Garden of Eden, to the moment when Noah's Ark lands on the dry peak of Ararat. Cain, the despised, the murderer, is Saramago's protagonist, who, condemned to wander forever after he kills his brother Abel, makes his way through the world in the company of a personable donkey and is whisked around in time and space. He is a witness to and participant in the stories of Isaac and Abraham, the destruction of the Tower of Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah, Joshua at the battle of Jericho, Job's ordeal, Moses and the golden calf, the trials of Job and finally Noah's Ark and the Flood. The rapacious Queen Liliith takes him as her lover. An old man with two sheep on a rope crosses his path. After Adam and Eve have been cast out of Eden, Eve decides to go back and ask the angel guarding the gate if he can give her some of the fruit that is going to waste inside. The angel agrees, and although Eve swears to Adam that she offered the angel nothing in return, their first child is suspiciously blond and fair-skinned. Cain, in his wandering, overhears a strange conversation between a man named Abraham and his son Isaac – and manages to prevent the father from murdering the son. The angel appointed by God to prevent the murder arrives late due to a wing malfunction. Cain brushes off his apology. 'What would have happened if I hadn't been here?' Cain asks, 'and what kind of god would ask a father to sacrifice his own son?' And over and over again, Cain encounters a God whose actions seem callous, cruel, and unjust. He confronts Him, he argues with Him. "And one thing we know for certain," Saramago writes, "is that they continued to argue and are arguing still." A startling, beautifully written, and powerful narrative of work and poverty, class and desire, knowledge and timelessness—one in which God, too, as he faces Cain in the wake of Noah's Ark, emerges as far more human than expected, in all ways a fitting end to Saramago's extraordinary career.



### «Provavelmente já chegou o dia em que não terei nada mais a dizer»

in Público, Lisbon  
November 12, 2005  
4 pp.  
Interview about the recently published novel *Death at Intervals*



### «Não usamos racionalmente a razão que temos»

in A Capital, Lisbon  
November 4, 1995  
2 pp.  
Interview about the recently published novel *Blindness*



### Typewritten text and notes for the novel

*Alabardas, alabardas, Espingardas, espingardas*

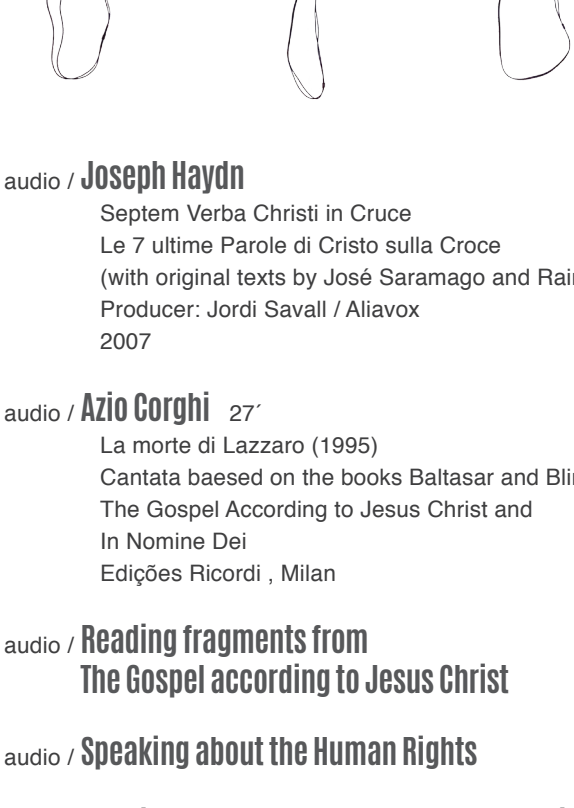
### Copies of first editions in several languages of

*Alabardas, alabardas, Espingardas, espingardas*

[First edition]  
Porto Editora, Lisbon, 2013

### Invitation for the launching of the unfinished novel

*Alabardas, alabardas, Espingardas, espingardas*



audio / **Joseph Haydn**  
Septem Verba Christi in Cruce  
Le 7 ultime Parole di Cristo sulla Croce  
(with original texts by José Saramago and Raimon Panikkar)  
Producer: Jordi Savall / Aliavox  
2007

audio / **Azio Corghi** 27'  
La morte di Lazzaro (1995)  
Cantata based on the books *Baltasar* and *Blimunda*,  
The Gospel According to Jesus Christ and  
In Nomine Dei  
Edições Ricordi / Milan

audio / **Reading fragments from**  
**The Gospel according to Jesus Christ**

audio / **Speaking about the Human Rights**

audio / **Reading fragments from** *Baltasar and Blimunda*



### Rogério Ribeiro

*Blimunda*, 2005  
(character from the book *Baltasar e Blimunda*)  
80 x 100 cm  
Private collection: Pilar del Río

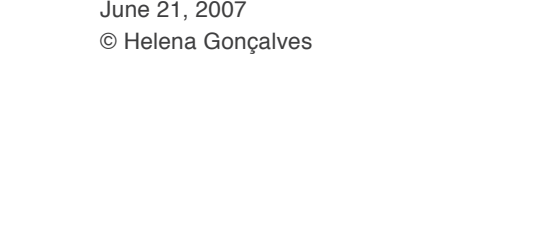


Photo / **José Saramago**  
June 21, 2007  
© Helena Gonçalves



# Escritório

## Studio



### Replica of his first working room

This scenary reproduces José Saramago’s office through original objects: his working table; the Hermès typewriter, bought in second hand and used until the writing of *The History of the Siege of Lisbon*, in 1989; his glasses; his stenographic pens; some small ethnographic statuettes from his collection; several stones he brought from symbolic places such as East Timor and Chiapas; his pipe, from when he was a smoker; his first personal library; three volumes from Montaigne, in french language, he cared particularly; titles for regular research (history, geography, literature...) and an engraving by Júlio Pomar. On the table, near the typewriter and the glasses, one can see the dictionary of portuguese language usually consulted by José Saramago and included in this exhibition as a specific request from the writer, under the motto «A small country, a great language».

José Saramago morreu a 18 de junho de 2010 em sua casa, na ilha de Lanzarote. Quando o avião que o levaria de volta a Lisboa estava prestes a decolar, aqueles que foram os seus vizinhos saíram à rua para ler em voz alta fragmentos dos livros que escreveu na ilha isolada, com o som das palavras que havia criado. Ele desceu alone de Lanzarote.

Apesar de Lisboa, outros pessoas, também suas leitores, esperavam-no levantando livros. Com livros nas mãos, mostrando-lhes, difundiram diante do cadáver na Câmara Municipal de Lisboa e, batendo livros, os leitores disseram adeus no cemitério. “Os livros levam dentro uma pessoa, o autor”, havia escrito tempo atrás e talvez por isso fossem tão apreciados.

José Saramago está enterrado diante da Casa dos Bicos, sede da Fundação que leva o seu nome. As suas cinzas repousam sob o tronco de uma oliveira centenária trazida de sua aldeia natal, Azinhaga, junto ao livro que recolhe os artigos que os seus contemporâneos de letras escreveram nos dias da sua morte: *Palavras para Saramago*. As cinzas e o livro que as acompanhavam estão cobertos por terra de Lanzarote.

O epitáfio de José Saramago é a última frase de *Memorial do Convento*: “Mas não subiu para as estrelas se a terra pertencia”. E aos leitores.

José Saramago died on June 18, 2010, at his home on the island of Lanzarote. When the plane that would bring him back to Lisbon was about to take off, those who were their neighbors went to the streets to read aloud fragments of the books he wrote on the island: so, with the sound of the words he had created, he left Lanzarote.

Upon arriving in Lisbon, other people, also their readers, waited for him raising books in their hands, showing them. The same gesture of hoisting books took place in the City Hall of Lisbon, in front of the coffin, and at the cemetery. “The books carry within a person, the author”, wrote Saramago long ago and maybe that’s why they were so cherished.

José Saramago is buried in front of Casa dos Bicos, home of the Foundation that bears his name. His ashes lie beneath a centuries-old olive tree brought from his native village, Azinhaga, with the book that collects the articles that their peers wrote around the days of his death: *Words to Saramago*. The ashes and the accompanying book are covered by land from Lanzarote.

The epitaph of José Saramago is the last sentence of *Memorial do Convento*: “But did not ascend to the stars, for it belonged to the earth.” And to readers.

José Saramago morreu el 18 de junho de 2010 en su casa, en la isla de Lanzarote. Cuando el avión que debería traerlo a Lisboa estaba a punto de despegar aquellos que habían sido sus vecinos salieron a la calle para leer en voz alta fragmentos de los libros que escribió en la isla. Así, con el sonido de las palabras que había creado, fue despedido de Lanzarote.

Al llegar a Lisboa otras personas, también sus lectores, le esperaban levantando libros. Con libros en las manos, mostrándolos, difundían ante el féretro en el Ayuntamiento de Lisboa y batallando libros los lectores le dijeron adeus en el cementerio. “Los libros llevan dentro una persona, el autor”, había dicho tiempo atrás y tal vez por eso eran tan apreciados.

José Saramago está enterrado frente a la Casa dos Bicos, sede de la Fundación que lleva su nombre. Sus cenizas reposan bajo el tronco de una olivera centenaria traída de su aldea natal, Azinhaga, junto al libro que recoge los artículos que sus contemporáneos de letras escribieron los días de su muerte: *Palabras para Saramago*. Las cenizas y el libro que las acompañan están cubiertas por tierra de Lanzarote.

El epitafio de José Saramago es la última frase de *Memorial del Convento*: “No subió a las estrellas porque pertenecía a la tierra.” Y a los lectores.



José Saramago died on June 18, 2010, at his home on the island of Lanzarote. When the (air)plane that would bring him back to Lisbon was about to take off, those who were their neighbors went to the streets to read aloud fragments of the books he wrote on the island: so, with the sound of the words he had created, he left Lanzarote.

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The epitaph of José Saramago is the last sentence of Baltasar and Blimunda, “But did not ascend to the stars, for it belonged to the earth.” And to readers.

### Credits

Exhibition project

*Fernando Gómez Aguilera / Fundación César Manrique*

Videoscreening

*Charles Sandison*

Audiovisuals and multimedia

*Carlos Martínez Franco*

Videos coordinator

*Ángel Hernández*

Build-up and assembling

*Eurostand*

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Fundação José Saramago

Parceiros Institucionais



Parceiros Tecnológicos



Agência



LEVEL 3

LEVEL 3

| here you can watch

video / **Words for a city [Lisboa]**

José Saramago

6' 00"

Director: Miguel Gonçalves Mendes

video / **A Casa [Lanzarote]**

10' 00"

José Saramago's House and Library in the Island of Lanzarote

video / **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

3' 00"

Readings of articles by visitors to the FJS

video / **A Letter to Josefa, my grandmother**

José Saramago

5' 00"

by André Raposo & Maria Alice Amaro Góis, 2014

## Words for a city

José Saramago

There was a time when Lisbon didn't go by the name Lisboa. They called it Olisipo when the Romans arrived there, Olissibona when it was taken by the Moors, who immediately began saying Aschbouna, perhaps because they couldn't pronounce that barbaric (Latin) word. But in 1147, when the Moors were defeated after a three-month siege, the name of the city wasn't changed right away; if the man who would become our first king had written to his family to announce the news, he would most likely have headed his letter Aschbouna, October 24, or Olissibona, but never Lisboa. When did Lisboa start being Lisbon in law and in effect? At least a few years would have to pass before the birth of the new name, as they would for the Galician conquerors to begin to become Portuguese.... One might think these historical minutiae uninteresting, but they interest me a great deal; not just knowing but actually seeing – in the precise meaning of the word – how Lisbon has been changing since those days. If cinema had existed at the time, if the old chroniclers had been cameramen, if the thousand and one changes through which Lisbon has passed over the centuries had been recorded, we would have been able to see Lisbon growing and moving like a living thing across eight centuries, like those flowers that we see on television opening up in just a few seconds, from a still, closed bud to a final splendor of shapes and colors. I think I'd love that Lisbon above all else. In physical terms we inhabit space, but in emotional terms we are inhabited, by memory. A memory composed of a space and a time, a memory inside which we live, like an island between two oceans – one the past, the other the future. We can navigate the ocean of the recent past thanks to personal memory, which retains the recollection of the routes it has traveled, but to navigate the distant past we have to use memories that time has accumulated, memories of a space that is continually changing, as fleeting as time itself. This film of Lisbon, compressing time and expanding space, would be the perfect memory of the city. What we know of places is how we coincide with them over a certain period of time in the spaces they occupy. The place was there, the person appeared, then the person left, the place continued, the place having made the person, the person having transformed the place. When I had to recreate the space and time of the Lisbon where Ricardo Reis lived his final year, I knew in advance that our two concepts of time and place would not coincide—that of the shy adolescent I used to be, enclosed within his own social class, and that of the lucid and brilliant poet who frequented the highest planes of the spirit. My Lisbon was always that of the poor neighborhoods, and when, many years later, circumstances brought me to live in other environments, the memory I always preferred to retain was that of the Lisbon of my early years, the Lisbon of people who possess little and feel much, still rural in their customs and in their understanding of the world. Perhaps it isn't possible to speak of a city without citing a few notable dates in its history. Here, speaking of Lisbon, I have mentioned only one, that of its Portuguese beginnings, the day it was first called Lisboa; the sin of glorifying its name is not such a dreadful one. What would be a grace matter would be to succumb to that kind of patriotic exaltation that, in the absence of any real enemies over whom to assert one's assumed power, resorts to the facile stimuli of rhetorical evocation. Exalted rhetoric, which is not necessarily a bad thing, does however bring with it a sense of self-satisfaction that leads to confusing words with deeds. On that October day, Portugal – still barely begun – took a great step forward, a step so decisive that Lisbon was not lost again. But we will not allow ourselves the Napoleonic vanity of exclaiming: "Eight hundred years look down on us from the height of that castle," and pat ourselves on the back for having survived so long... Rather we recall that blood was shed, first on one side and then the other, and that all sides make up the blood that flows in our own veins. We, the inheritors of this city, are the descendents of Christians and Moors, of blacks and Jews, or Indians and Orientals, in short, of all races and creeds considered good, along with those that have been called bad. We shall leave to the ironic peace of their tombs those disturbed minds that not so long ago invented a Day of the Race for the Portuguese, and instead reclaim the magnificent mixing, not only of bloods but above all of cultures, that gave Portugal its foundation and has made it last to this day. In recent years Lisbon has been transformed, has managed to reawaken in the conscience of its citizens that strength that hauled it out of the mire into which it had fallen. In the name of modernization, concrete walls have been erected over ancient stones, the outlines of hills disrupted, panoramas altered, sightlines modified. But the spirit of Lisbon survives, and it is the spirit that makes a city eternal. Entranced by that crazy love and divine enthusiasm that inhabit poets, Camões once wrote that Lisboa was "...a princess among other cities." We will forgive his exaggeration. It is enough that Lisbon is simply what it should be—cultured, modern, clean, organized – without losing any of its soul. And if all these virtues end up making her a queen, well, so be it. In our republic, queens like this will always be welcome.

**The Notebook**, Verso Books, 2010, Tradução de Amanda Hopkinson e Daniel Hahn, pp 3 – 6



Fundação José Saramago  
www.josesaramago.org



## A LETTER TO JOSEFA, MY GRANDMOTHER

You are ninety years old. Old and in pain. In your youth, you tell me, you were the most beautiful girl in the village – and I can believe that. You never learned to read. Your fingers are thick and gnarled and your feet have the texture of cork. On your head you carried tons of firewood and stubble stolen from the fields as fodder, and whole lakes of water. You saw the sun rise every day. The bread you kneaded over the years would be enough to furnish a universal banquet. You raised both people and animals, you even used to take the piglets to bed with you so that they wouldn't freeze to death. You told me stories about ghosts and werewolves, old family disputes, a murder. You were the mainstay of the household, the fire in the hearth – seven times you fell pregnant and seven times you gave birth.

You know nothing of the world. You understand nothing of politics, economics, literature, philosophy or religion. You inherited hundreds of practical words, an elementary vocabulary. And that was quite enough for you to live by and to go on living. You are as fascinated by major disasters and royal weddings, as you are by petty local scandals and the theft of your neighbour's rabbits. You harbour grudges against people, for reasons you can no longer recall, and for certain others profess an equally baseless devotion. You live. The word "Vietnam" is merely a barbarous sound of no importance to your league-and-a-half of world. You know about hunger: you've seen a black plague flag raised on the church tower. (Did you tell me that, or did I just dream it?) You carried with you your small cocoon of interests. And yet your eyes are still bright and you're still happy. Your laughter is like a firework exploding. I've never heard anyone laugh the way you do.

I'm sitting here before you and I don't understand. I'm your own flesh and blood and I don't understand. You came into the world, but made no effort to understand it. Now you're nearing the end of your life and, for you, the world is still what it was when you were born: a question mark, an unfathomable mystery, something that forms no part of your inheritance, which consists of a few hundred words, a piece of land you could walk round in five minutes, a house with an unboarded roof and a mud floor. I squeeze your calloused hand, stroke your lined face and your white hair, grown thin from the weight of all those burdens carried on your head – and still I don't understand. You were beautiful, you say, and I can see that you're intelligent. Who stole the world from you? And why? But perhaps I could understand and explain the how, why and when of it were you able to choose from my innumerable words the words you could comprehend. There's no point now. The world will continue without you – and without me. And we won't have told each other what really matters.

Or will we? I will have failed to give you the world you deserved because my words are not yours. Worse, I'm left feeling guilty about something you never accused me of. But Grandma, how can you sit outside your front door, looking up at the vast, starry sky, the sky of which you know nothing and across which you will never travel, at the silent fields and the dark trees, and say, with the serenity and tranquillity of your ninety years and with the fire of your still burning youth: «The world is so beautiful, it makes me sad to think I have to die!»

That is what I can't understand – but that's my fault not yours.

Trad.: Margaret Jull Costa