

Four Travel Notes Forerunner to Natália Correia's *Descobri que era europeia*

Translated and annotated by Katharine F. Baker

Abstract

On June 6, 1950, budding Portuguese author Natália Correia embarked on her first trip to the United States, in the company of her American husband William Creighton Hyler. Armed with press credentials, Correia gained access to an impressive array of powerful and influential American figures. The newspaper *Diário de Lisboa* published four articles she had contracted with them to write during the trip about her initial impressions of Boston, coastal Maine, New York City, and Washington, D.C. They would comprise a forerunner to Correia's 1951 book about her journey, *Descobri que era europeia: impressões duma viagem à América*, which Katharine F. Baker and Emanuel Melo have translated into English as *In America, I discovered I was European*.

Keywords

Boston; *Descobri que era europeia*; *Diário de Lisboa*; William Creighton Hyler; *In America, I Discovered I Was European*; New York City; Thomaston, Maine; Washington, D.C.

Resumo

Em 6 de Junho de 1950, a principiante autora portuguesa Natália Correia embarcou na sua primeira viagem aos Estados Unidos na companhia do seu marido americano William Creighton Hyler. Munida de credenciais de imprensa, Correia obteve acesso a uma impressionante variedade de figuras americanas poderosas e influentes. O jornal *Diário de Lisboa* publicou quatro artigos que ela tinha contratado para escrever durante a viagem sobre as suas impressões iniciais de Boston, da costa do Maine, da cidade de Nova Iorque, e de Washington, D.C. Esses artigos constituiriam um precursor para o livro de Correia de 1951 sobre a sua viagem, *Descobri que era europeia: impressões duma viagem à América*, que Katharine F. Baker e Emanuel Melo traduziram para inglês como *In America, I discovered I was European*.

Palavras-chave

Boston; *Descobri que era europeia*; *Diário de Lisboa*; William Creighton Hyler; *In America, I Discovered I Was European*; New York City; Thomaston, Maine; Washington, D.C.

Foreword

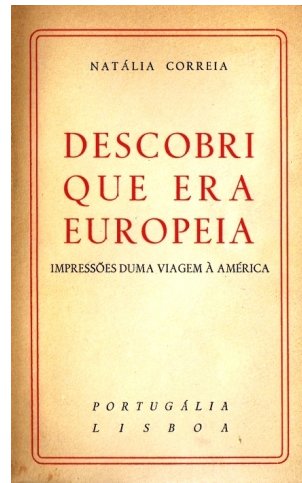


Figure 1. Book cover of *Descobri que era europeia: impressões duma viagem à América*. Portugal, 1951.

Natália Correia was born on September 13, 1923, in the village of Fajã de Baixo near Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, in Portugal's Azores islands. When she was eleven her father left for Brazil—while she, her mother, and older sister moved to Lisbon. In 1942, after briefly attending university, Correia wed Álvaro dos Santos Dias Ferreira, a court clerk of Azorean ancestry (Carreiro, 2023). She began pursuing a literary career in poetry, fiction, plays, criticism, journalism, and broadcasting. Their marriage ended in divorce two years later.

In June 1950, the twenty-six-year-old budding author embarked on her first visit to the United States, in the company of her second husband, William Creighton Hyler, an American meteorologist for Trans World Airlines based in Lisbon, whom Correia had married the previous June. While in the U.S. she took in attractions in Boston, coastal Maine, New Bedford, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

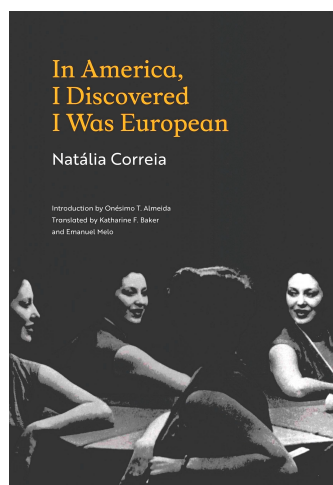


Figure 2. Book cover of *In America, I Discovered I Was European*. Tagus Press, 2025.

Besides sightseeing, Correia had access to “a truly remarkable list of contacts. [...] A decidedly amazing cast of characters, considering that Natália was a young writer from a minor country with only three published books under her belt. [Armed with journalistic credentials], she gained admission to press conferences at the State Department and the White House” (Almeida, 2025, p. xv). In

addition, she observed sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and the U.S. Senate.

The Portuguese newspaper *Diário de Lisboa* published four articles Correia had contracted to write about her initial impressions of America (Correia, 1950a-d). The pieces also comprised a forerunner to her 1951 book, *Descobri que era europeia: impressões duma viagem à América*, which Katharine F. Baker and Emanuel Melo have translated into English as *In America, I discovered I was European* (Correia, 2025).¹

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¹ Translator's note: Hereafter, citations in this paper to the translation *In America, I discovered I was European* list only the page number(s), unless indicated otherwise.

I. Boston



Figure 3. Photograph of Correia and husband taken at the *Boston Globe* offices on 8 June 1950, published in the 9 June issue of the newspaper. Permission to reproduce courtesy of *The Boston Globe*.

On the afternoon of June 6, 1950, six United States-bound passengers boarded flight 987-06 at Lisbon airport. Natália Correia was one of two travelers scheduled to disembark in Boston. The other was an American, William Creighton Hyler.

In *Descobri que era europeia: impressões duma viagem à América*, Correia described others on the plane (even a well-behaved dog) in lacerating detail, yet never mentioned her fellow Boston-bound passenger—her husband. The manifest listed the same home address for them in Hollis, Queens, and that Hyler had checked three bags and she none. It further noted they were flying on “non-revenue” status (i.e., free or at a discount), likely a perk of his employment by TWA. The flight landed at Boston’s Logan Airport on the afternoon of June 7. “At Customs, difficulties arose due to some photographs I was carrying as a favor for one friend to deliver to another in New York,” but Correia charmed her way out of the bind (p. 16).

The next morning the couple sat for a formal portrait in the *Boston Globe*’s photographic studio, following an interview Correia conducted with the newspaper’s managing editor, Laurence Winship; the Hylers’ picture ran in the next day’s edition. Winship told Correia about Maine Senator Margaret

Chase Smith's "Declaration of Conscience" speech a week earlier in the United States Senate, denouncing Joseph McCarthy's red-baiting.

After lunch at Faneuil Hall's historic Durgin-Park restaurant, Correia headed to Cambridge, where she received a personal tour of three Harvard libraries, then interviewed renowned historian Dr. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., at his office.

While in Boston, she walked the Freedom Trail of sites pivotal to the American Revolution, dined out, and attended a lavish revue at Lou Walters' legendary Latin Quarter nightclub.

"Impressions of Boston—The city called the Athens of America"
Translated from *Diário de Lisboa*, 16 June 1950, p. 6

Those who enter America through its main portal (New York) uniformly recount, upon their return to Europe, stories that leave us wanting never to go there.

No way. I was revulsed by skyscrapers, Wall Street, Broadway, endless tired motifs from cheesy cinematography, yes indeed. I decided on Boston.

Boston is an ugly, dark, dirty city. Ornamentation is unimportant to Americans. Their architecture is barbarically plain. They dress their streets as they do themselves: loose, ugly, ill-fitting suits inside which their muscles are not subject to the corset of aesthetics.

Boston's monuments, witnesses to the birth of the American nation, rise downtown in disconcerting promiscuity with sleek temples of finance. Accustomed to the mute majesty that dignifies our monumental stones, we are shocked by the naïveté of those wooden or brick structures, as impermanent as pioneer tents.

In America, there are no silent lines dividing the past from the present.

The human river that flows through the streets keeps the history of these stones alive.

Boston is America's cultural center. The first schools were established here, and the university values that still dominate American culture spread from here.

In keeping with this lineage of values, Boston remains faithful to traditions that bequeathed to it the role of "stronghold of American aristocracy."

All of New England is imbued with a certain aristocratic spirit, with the exception of the cities of southern Massachusetts, neighbors to New York's wealth-oriented illegitimacy. But these so-called blue-bloods, who have warranted the derision of the supposedly self-made plutocrats, are an ingenuous aristocracy full of compromises that would make the decrepit but obstinate European nobility smile with complacent irony.

Another unique feature of this city is that it constitutes the U.S.'s artistic jury. When an impresario makes a find, before its première he takes the show to Boston. The tryout is at the Shubert Theatre, where the preview is submitted for the applause of America's most demanding people. If their verdict is favorable, success is assured.

It is not without good reason that Boston is called the "Athens of America."

"The prestige of the press in America is more legend than fact. There is no particular sphere in which its influence is felt." These are the words of Laurence L. Winship, Managing Editor of the *Boston Globe*, New England's most influential newspaper, which confers on him prestige of the first order in the American press.

Cultural topics find no place in American newspaper columns either, much less in general public interest.

From a political standpoint Mr. Winship displays the same skepticism, and stresses the fact that during election campaign seasons that delivered consecutive victories to Franklin Roosevelt, the press

was arrayed against him in force, with the exception of two insignificant newspapers.² Yet despite this, Roosevelt won.

In America, the popular vote follows purely economic concerns, linked to pay raises, entitlements, and other social benefits. On the other hand, voters are proud of their independence and vanity. When they encounter their senator on the street, they look down on him as if to say, "You answer to me."

Mr. Winship sees the U.S.'s outreach to Europe more from the strictly technical aspect of ease of communications than through spiritual or ideological communion. This is generally the American viewpoint.

Referring to the European countries providing the largest contingent of immigrants to the U.S., he highlighted the bitter irony of these poor men, beset by economic difficulties, who make Americans realize that in the shadow of the famous centers of European civilization there exist other peoples, other customs, other languages.

Mr. L.L. Winship was right. That same day, an important industrialist who had traveled in Europe asked me what language was spoken in Portugal.

I was tempted to reply that we were all mute. But I was afraid he might believe me.

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² Translator's note: This is an exaggeration, as the influential *New York Times* endorsed Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, 1936, and 1944. Although "[i]n most elections since 1940, the candidate with the strongest newspaper support has won, [...] there are notable exceptions. FDR won over less than a quarter of papers in his last two bids for reelection [1940 and 1944], while Harry Truman only mustered support from 15% of papers in 1948" (Trex, 2008).

II. Maine



Figure 4. Reflections of the Georges River in Thomaston, Maine. Image by Margaret McCrea, reproduced courtesy of the photographer.

William Hyler presumably accompanied his wife to his childhood hometown of Thomaston, on the Maine coast. While Correia avoided addressing this destination choice in her article, purging him from the book's Maine chapter posed a challenge. She finessed it by relegating Hyler to the friend zone, then minimizing her host (most likely a close friend of his family) as someone merely "referred to her by a mutual friend knowing of my desire to get a more intimate view of a small American town" (p. 48).

Correia enjoyed roaming Thomaston's leafy, airy residential neighborhoods, so unlike Lisbon's, and visiting the small downtown businesses; she marveled at the diversity of products sold in drugstores. The prospect of teenagers of both sexes socializing unchaperoned at lunch counters and in movie houses came as a culture shock. She noted the austerity of a Protestant house of worship "whose only indulgence [was] a faded stained glass window," so unlike Portugal's more ornate Catholic churches.

She first exhibited contempt for middle class American values here, recounting a lengthy dispute with her host. Throughout the trip, her self-confessed "marked egocentrism from the first to the last page" (p. xxiv) prompted her to goad Americans into arguing with her—then in the book taking umbrage at polite people who chose not to rise to her bait, denouncing this as a national defect.

At lunch up the coast in Lincolnville, Correia deemed Maine's lobster less flavorful than Portugal's.

She met painter Francis Hamabe in Rockland at the Farnsworth Art Museum, where she also was impressed by its art education program for children. She exulted that nearby “at an open-air theater built of gray stone embellished with moss [...] Shakespeare lives again in local amateurism wrapped in the Atlantic breeze” (p. 54).

Just before leaving, Correia dined out with a local curmudgeon (an old pal of Hyler’s?) who during World War II was stationed at the U.S. Army Airfield in Belém, Brazil; Correia judged that he spoke Portuguese “passably well.” In a rant worthy of “Kids” in *Bye Bye Birdie*,³ he deplored the disintegration of American family structure, castigating those who pursue individual outside interests with unrelated peers instead of centering on home life. While Correia wrote of being “confused by the incoherence of Americans” like him (p. 56), she mentioned some of his ideas in *Diário de Lisboa*. On the other hand, the irony of eating at a drugstore lunch counter rather than in his home seemed to elude them both.

“Travel Notes—A Puritan Town”

Translated from *Diário de Lisboa*, 25 June 1950, p. 6

The small puritan town of Thomaston was once prosperous and famous. Its modest shipyards, where fishing and pleasure boats are built today, were until World War I the most important in the United States. Here, destined to transport passengers between England and the United States, the celebrated clipper ships were born—and at the end of the 18th century and start of the 19th, they became renowned for their speed. These traces of grandeur are now conspicuous in the shameful ruins of houses once endowed by such fortunes.

Thomaston is nestled in a park-like setting lined with slender poplars whose greenery accents the small white houses. The buildings are constructed of wood. But what are surprising are the ornamental effects that manage to imbue dignity and a certain grandeur to what, in European eyes, has the ingenious appearance of a shed.

The inhabitants belong to the cult of gardening. To this end they support a horticulture club from which the most original inspirations come. And thus, in front of each house there is a relaxing lawn where an old lady invariably rocks her rocking chair in the sea breeze that blows there, washed by the Atlantic.

Descendants of the oldest families are proud of their lineage. And they never tire of discussing their chronological position in Thomaston’s annals. Apart from this, there is concern for democratic orthodoxy. They go so far as not to hire a maid even if they can afford to, out of exquisite loyalty to the traditional anti-slavery attitude that has always pulsed in the Yankee soul. (It is necessary to note that a domestic worker earns the same as an intellectual, and only most recently have primary school teachers improved their economic conditions, due to a general strike).

Thomaston has fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, but along Main Street one encounters all sorts of establishments. Markets, cultural, and religious institutions. Only in its secular appearance does it have the same solemnity as puritan Maine and almost all of New England that recedes only to the south, where New York’s vertigo whirls like a hurricane.

The interest this small lot of humanity professes in artistic activities is remarkably notable. The artistic efforts of this region’s people are focused on two centers. The first is an open-air theater where Shakespeare lives again, surrounded by lakes and greenery. The second is a beautiful museum whose

³ Kids! I don’t know what’s wrong with these kids today! / Kids! Who can understand anything they say? / Kids! They are disobedient, disrespectful oafs! / Noisy, crazy, sloppy, lazy, loafers! / While we’re on the subject: / Kids! You can talk and talk till your face is blue! / Kids! But they still just do what they want to do! / Why can’t they be like we were / Perfect in every way? / What’s the matter with kids today? (Strouse & Adams, 1960).

collection includes a Cézanne, as well as local artworks represented mainly by adherents to the American Romantic school. In one of its rooms a free course in the visual arts is attended by a considerable number of children and adults.

It is wonderfully surprising to see that in a remote spot on this enormous continent, aesthetic creation and spiritual restlessness are born like rays of moonlight between the cliffs of American scientific culture.

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Despite the original puritanism of this tiny society still being very evident in its rules for living, Thomaston is no exception to the phenomenon that is progressively becoming more pronounced in American society: the disintegration of the family.

Family members' interests are divided by the respective teams or clubs to which each one of them belongs. Each is in a world of isolation. Young people, besides having no family environment, are subject to three essential influences: their clubs, the movies, and the drugstore. Their home itself is a casualty. There is no cult of its walls. Since the measurement of time was introduced into industrial production, the concept has expanded to play a dispersive role in family ethics. A house is built with a lifespan of fifteen years. At the end of this mathematically calculated period, its ruins will give life to something else. And the family nucleus dissolves into this continuously flowing river. Human bonds expand into a broader concept. Society is taking the place of the family. This results in a cooperative society where individuals seek to organize themselves in order to provide for themselves in all areas of human need, continually creating economic and cultural institutions.

Thomaston, the small Puritan town, functions like a cooperative. In its inhabitants, like all Americans, there is an ingrained love for independence. And they do not ignore that the free man is not an island.

* * *

III. New York City



Figure 5. Camel cigarette billboard in Times Square, June 1948, with steam simulating smoke. Willem van de Poll. Dutch National Archives.

Although Correia described her next stop, the port and mill town of New Bedford, Massachusetts (a Portuguese-immigrant and Luso-descendant stronghold) in the book, she did not write it up for *Diário de Lisboa*. She arrived in time for an interview on WNBH radio's Sunday morning *Portuguese Hour* (pp. 174-75), a live broadcast reported by New Bedford's *Diário de Notícias* newspaper. Then she enjoyed a Portuguese lunch with homemade wine at the house of the paper's editor and his family. She chatted with various Azor-American locals who dropped by, engaging in a long heated debate with a cousin of her hosts who was metalworker and trade-unionist (pp. 61-62). Once he left, she watched television for the first time, complaining in the book about its programs and commercials.

The next day she caught a train to New York City for a week's stay. Her article in *Diário de Lisboa* was based on observations mainly from her first few days there, including a focus on differences between the city's street scenes by day and by night. She "felt [so] overtaken by a strange passion for the mechanized smoking man on the giant Camel cigarette billboard" at Times Square, every four seconds blowing a smoke ring produced by a mechanism forcing steam out a hole behind the sign, that while sitting in a nearby diner she composed a seventy line ode to him that she included in her book (pp. 89-91).

Correia devoted a good deal of this book chapter to her opinions on a variety of nightclub shows, from glitzy to country- and Bavarian-themed; cultural experiences ranging from the Museum of Modern Art's holdings (translating catalog extracts into Portuguese) and a piano recital to Russian films; famous sights from the august United Nations campus (still at Lake Success) to the tawdry Coney Island amusement park; and influential intellectual and cultural figures she met on a professional or social basis.

"When Night Falls, New York City Comes To Life"
Translated from *Diário de Lisboa*, 2 July 1950, p. 7

Ash gray, enormous, congested and grimy—this is how New York appears by the light of day.

When the sky's ceiling is low, clouds swallow the tops of skyscrapers, and it seems as though the city rises endlessly. At such times, there is room to dream.

On clear days, all that vast filth has its own exact dimensions. And the strange physiognomy of the multitude in the street in its sometimes aimless rush exhausts us, even when we stand still. Our European slowness is run over with hostility. We feel like some kind of slow train, in no hurry to reach the station.

Who said America is the land of comfort? Of mechanical comfort, if you will. But never human comfort. There are a thousand automated ways to meet the body's needs. A half dozen coins... a half dozen choices... A meal is consumed by two strangers who have taken a seat at our table. We wake up not hungry, but also with no memory of having eaten.

Nothing, nothing has the feeling of permanence. The show at Radio City Music Hall is lightning fast, like everything else. The pleats of its curtain unfold and a meteor streaks across the enormous stage. The mechanical perfection of the Rockettes, the fantasy of Ravel's *Bolero* in nervous effects of luminous plasticine... In that moment we hold our breath, as if the world were collapsing in on us, shattering into stars... But soon, upon leaving, we struggle to remember what we saw. Not a residual scintilla of emotion has remained.

Manhattan's majesty is undeniable. But it is a brass royalty dragging a mantle of bunting. And along the Bowery, the mantle disintegrates into rags that dust crushes in the gutters.

The Bowery is the sewer pipe where the city's human scum rendezvous in their final stage of social degradation. They are almost all old or prematurely aged. They are numerous. And each is a tragic island of silence living the irremediable drama of their solitude in the delirium of alcohol. Pious missionaries go there to recruit wayward souls, giving them shelter and food. But the Bowery is the end of the line. Only Hollywood can accomplish the miracle of rehabilitating such human wreckage. The misery stretches onward with the slums, as the Bowery becomes Third Avenue. If possible, misery reaches a more pungent aspect here: it is misery that did not choose its destiny. It is the area of failed emigrants, of those who could not or would not win in the relentless fight for opportunity. The mirage, the dream that brought them, fades into the meager auguries that frame the rest of their hopeless days. Finally, Black Harlem appears, tinged with its air of picturesque prosperity—coy and cheerful young Black women swaying to the rhythm of blues played by invisible orchestras.

As the afternoon draws to a close, there is a lassitude in the nervousness of the streets. The

fermentation goes underground. And it is time to ride the subway. The city factory has closed its steel gates. The proletarians—they are all proletarians—return home. Others stay on in cocktail lounges, where television sets put them in visual touch with current events.

Then a wonderful thing happens. Night falls. And New York comes to life from a dream, silent and fabulous. It is not the same city. It is the awakening of Sleeping Beauty. Dressed up like a Luna Park. The streets fill again. But now people walk slowly, exquisitely enjoying their stroll in the fairytale amusement park. The lights shine down from above like fire from afar. Street corner luncheonettes are open and captivating like flashy holiday market stalls. On a sidewalk, a preacher from some strange religious sect delivers an impassioned sermon promoting his faith. The blind, eternal motifs of wandering music give, here and there, naive concerts. The women, exquisitely groomed, wear devilish ballet masks.

No more Bowery, no more Third Avenue encounters, no more Chinatown watering holes. The moon has swept them into the shadow.

The man on the monstrous cigarette billboard has a human expression. And as he puffs on his giant cigarette, he seems to think, “Oh New York, New York, why don’t you exist only at night?”

* * *

IV. Washington, D.C.



Figure 6. Lincoln Memorial Statue. Carol M. Highsmith's America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

On June 18, Natália Correia's train from New York City rolled into D.C.'s Union Station. In 1950 Washington was still, as John F. Kennedy would later quip, "a city of Northern charm and Southern efficiency," devoted in great measure to Federal government agencies, their modestly-paid employees, and the local services and infrastructure supporting them. Blue laws mandating many Sunday retail business closures were still in effect throughout the region,⁴ although this particular Sunday might

⁴ In Maryland in 1970 this author was startled to encounter legally-mandated Sunday closures of supermarkets and most other retail establishments that in California were typically open on Sundays. Even Baltimore Colts football games could not begin until after 2 PM (McMullen, 2018)—instead of 1 PM like the rest of the NFL—on grounds of allowing time for ticket-holders to attend morning church services, eat lunch, then still reach the stadium before kickoff. Ditto for the first pitch at Sunday baseball games, once the St. Louis Browns moved to Baltimore in 1954 to become the Orioles. Unlike

have been even sleepier than usual due to the Fathers' Day holiday. After checking into downtown's Hotel Harrington, the only lodging on her itinerary for which she evidently held a reservation, Correia walked to some of D.C.'s most famous landmarks—above all the Lincoln Memorial, whose giant seated figure of the sixteenth president moved her deeply. She was also charmed by the National Mall's spacious park-like ambience, but disappointed in the shortage and low caliber of the city's nightlife options.

Correia's Washington dispatch, like her New York one, was based on experiences primarily during the early days of her visit. In the book she recounted that later in the week she toured the Library of Congress, which then held the nation's four Charters of Freedom; the Folger Shakespeare Library, with its Elizabethan-inspired stage, trove of the Bard's folios and other documents, and theatrical memorabilia; and the National Gallery of Art. Surprisingly, she skipped the Mall's iconic red sandstone Smithsonian Castle. Was her omission deliberate, due to its focus on science—a pursuit that she, a self-styled Nietzschean superwoman (Almeida, p. xvi), dismissed as unintellectual? After all, she had already blasted Americans for “discriminat[ing] against the intelligentsia [...] In America, the so-called intellectual circulates in the orbit of scientific and social culture,” rather than one of literati and artists (p. 78). One can only wonder what she would have made of future Portuguese-American science luminaries like Nobel laureate biologist Craig Mello (with an artist mother and Azor-descendant father); physicist Ernest Moniz (with Micaelense-emigrant parents), who served as U.S. Secretary of Energy; or California mathematics professor-novelist-journalist Anthony Barcellos (of pure Terceiran heritage).

On Capitol Hill, Correia sexualized “the Library of Congress [as a] macho edifice, so manly,” in contrast to “[t]he feminine and delicate lines of the Supreme Court, which we might classify as a womanly building.” She observed the Senate in session, dismayed except for an unnamed young Minnesota solon (clearly Hubert Humphrey) speaking from the floor in support of a doomed civil rights amendment. Later she interviewed Margaret Chase Smith, of “Declaration of Conscience” fame.

“Travel Notes: Views of the United States Capital”
Translated from *Diário de Lisboa*, 9 July 1950, p. 7

I arrived in Washington on a Sunday. It was 5 in the afternoon—and all cities at 5 in the afternoon on Sunday are dead in the same way. They lose their character, like the way people dress on vacation.

While I waited for the next day's sunrise to give me an authentic view of the capital, I spent my solitude in the suburban serenity of its streets. As I walked along, the Government buildings greeted me like old acquaintances from notes and postcards. But what happened to their dignity? Either it had never existed, or Sunday depersonalization had bared those poor gray stones.

The State Department looked to me like an engagement cake made of dark cardboard. On Pennsylvania Avenue, the White House displayed its bourgeois summer villa façade. In the presidential residence's garden, graceful little squirrels approached begging for peanuts through the wrought-iron bars of the fence. The Washington Monument was omnipresent in every corner of the city, with the erect gravitas of an extinguished candle. The Capitol had a character of visual pursuit, too: it was another wedding cake, but this time covered in sugar. And the Statue of Freedom atop its dome gave me the desolate impression of an inconsolable groom whom the bride wronged by standing him up. The Corcoran Gallery's dozing lions were taking an enjoyable vacation rest.

I walked across Potomac Park. Skimpily dressed boys and girls formed sculptural combinations.

Maryland, however, some D.C. blue laws had already been repealed by 1970, leaving its NFL and MLB franchises free to start games at times compatible with broadcast schedules for the rest of their respective leagues.

Then the green curtain of its trees slowly opened in a refined revelation, uncovering the columns of the Lincoln Memorial. Inside, surrounded by lights that accentuated the human hardness of his features, sat Abraham Lincoln. It seemed that at any moment he would rise to deliver one of his famous speeches. The gratitude of the American people was inscribed in bas-relief on one of the walls: “In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever.”

Among the tourists going up and down the tall staircases, Black faces stand out. They have a moved expression. They are there to lay flowers of gratitude at the feet of the great Abe.

Alongside flows the Potomac River. On the opposite bank is Virginia, the first permanent post of English colonization. In a bus station a Black man, with the superhuman expression that only a sad Black man can muster, takes a seat in the waiting room that the racial discrimination of the South has reserved for him—while in the waiting room for whites, a “wool-hat boy” waiting for his bus thinks his white skin is a God-given privilege.

It was only later when I reached my hotel that I understood why Washington was different from other American cities I had visited. It was its gardens, its parks enveloping the city in long embraces of greenery. And in some places the streets happen to be lined with magnolias.

On Mondays, Washington continued being different.

Its people were normal beings—without neurotic exteriors like those in New York, where they convey the impression of running toward a fire that does not exist.

Lunch hour is the busiest time. Government employees line up in drugstores to grab quick, cheap meals at lunch counters.

At night, lovers of worldly pleasures find little entertainment. Washington is a city of work, of public service that worldwide (even in America) is low-paid. Salaries do not cover the luxury of nonessentials.

During the week, two events occur. The first is on Thursdays: the Presidential news conference. The second, on Fridays: the Secretary of State’s.

I attended both, facilitated by the kindness of Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Press Relations Michael McDermott.

A small gaggle of reporters cluster around these two prominent government figures. Journalists ask questions of the most complex nature. On the rare occasion when a reporter’s curiosity turns to a subject of a secret nature, the response is a laconic “No comment,” accompanied by a friendly smile conveying disappointment at having to provide a negative response.

* * *

V. California

Had Correia made her hoped-for California trip during her final week in America, it is reasonable to assume *Diário de Lisboa* might have received a fifth article on that topic from her for publication. Instead, as she recalled in her book, a threatened rail strike had prompted train passengers to snap up all available tickets for flights to and from California, which would have left her at risk of being unable to travel back to New York (doubtless on stand-by, as a “non-revenue” passenger) in time for her flight back to Portugal on July 1 (p. 134).

In addition, while still in D.C. she separated from William Hyler a few days shy of their first wedding anniversary. Amid so much tumult, Correia turned to the Portuguese Consul General in Washington, whose young aide João Hall Themido “handled all the bureaucratic matters, and assisted the lady until she boarded a plane for her return flight to Lisbon [from New York]” (Almeida, p. xix).

Thus, instead of going to California, Correia spent her last week in the U.S. back in New York City. If she filed a second dispatch from there with *Diário de Lisboa*, it was never published—although not for lack of fresh content, because her book devoted another long chapter to the new places, people, observations, and opinions from her second stay there.

At the Central Park Zoo, for instance, Correia was enchanted by an orangutan making faces. She enjoyed observing humans too, except for birdwatchers, whom she scorned as “a repulsive assemblage of vampires.” She interviewed a *New York Times* book critic, lunched with longtime Socialist party head Norman Thomas, and was hosted in a literary scholar’s home. She attended Broadway’s *The Cocktail Party* by Nobel laureate T.S. Eliot, starring Alec Guinness, which would go on to win 1951’s “Best Play” Tony. She marveled at city lights from the penthouse balconies of an unnamed wealthy magnate dubbed “The Emperor of New York,” and raved about another party she called “a cosmopolitan environment [of] artists, homosexuals, high-society types, aristocrats, a princess from I-don’t-know-where, Brazilians, and a trio of Mexican singers.”



Figure 7. Tornado roller coaster on Stillwell Avenue in Coney Island, NY, 1950s. Acacia Card Company.

Despite enthusiasm she earlier expressed over Jackie Robinson breaking Major League Baseball’s color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 (p. 129)—and although all three New York teams were in town that week (Baseball Almanac, 1950), at venues accessible by public transportation—Correia did not attend a single game of America’s national pastime. Instead, on a steamy Sunday she

made a second pilgrimage to Coney Island, to cluck over its grotesqueries with her smug air.

TWA's passenger manifest 990-01 for July 1, 1950, listed Correia under her married name flying to Portugal on the same plane as William Hyler. However, while his home address was still the same New York one he had provided before, hers was now in Lisbon at Avenida António Augusto de Aguiar 2150.

* * *

Afterword

Records dated ten months after Correia's separation from Hyler memorialized his receipt of \$1,150 (worth over \$15,000 in 2025 money) from her to hasten their divorce (Magalhães, 2006). Evidence suggests the financial source may have been wealthy widower Alfredo Machado. In 1953 Correia married Machado, owner of Lisbon's Hôtel Império (later the Britânia), where she resided throughout their marriage, including two years under house arrest in the 1960s for opposing Salazar's *Estado Novo* dictatorship.

In addition to pursuing a prolific career as a writer, in 1971 Correia and three friends established Bar Botequim, a Lisbon salon dedicated to music and intellectual conversation. The next year she helped the Three Marias publish *New Portuguese Letters*, defying the dictatorship's efforts at suppression. In the wake of Portugal's April 25, 1974, Carnation Revolution, Correia was elected to Parliament in 1980. She also hosted a feminist television program.

Machado died in 1989. A year later Correia wed author Dórdio Guimarães. Following an evening at her Botequim, she died of a heart attack at home early on March 16, 1993.

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