

The Resistance of Poetry / Resistance in Poetry¹

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ABSTRACT: In the last fifty years Portuguese poetry developed different forms of resistance, reacting not only to political, social and cultural circumstances, but also to a gradual process of devaluation of its place and role in the contemporary world. This study aims at determining and describing different models of resistance in (and of) poetry, by considering some of the poetics that marked Portuguese poetry from the 1960's to our days. Authors as different as Carlos de Oliveira, Luiza Neto Jorge, Herberto Helder, António Franco Alexandre, João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, Adília Lopes, Ana Luísa Amaral, Manuel de Freitas or José Miguel Silva bear in common the fact that they invest poetry with a function of resistance. What brings these authors together? What separates them? The answer to these questions may provide an insight into the notion of *resistance in poetry* as well as its articulation with the notion of the *resistance of poetry*.

KEYWORDS: poetry, resistance, modernity, contemporaneity

RESUMO: Nos últimos cinquenta anos, a poesia portuguesa desenvolveu diferentes formas de resistência, reagindo não apenas a circunstâncias políticas, sociais e culturais muito diversificadas, mas também a um processo gradual de desvalorização do seu lugar e do seu papel no mundo contemporâneo. Este estudo pretende determinar e descrever diferentes modelos de resistência na (e da) poesia, tendo por referência algumas das poéticas que mais marcaram o panorama da poesia portuguesa, dos anos 60 até aos nossos dias. Obras de autores tão diferentes entre si como o são as de Carlos de Oliveira, Luiza Neto Jorge, Herberto Helder, António Franco Alexandre, João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, Adília Lopes, Ana Luísa Amaral, Manuel de Freitas ou José Miguel Silva têm em comum a atribuição à poesia de uma função de resistência. O que une estes autores? E o que os separa? A resposta a estas questões deverá permitir apurar uma noção de *resistência na poesia* e também a sua articulação com a noção de *resistência da poesia*.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: poesia, resistência, modernidade, contemporaneidade

O certo é que a poesia deve, entre outras coisas, contribuir para fundar uma sociedade mais justa.

[This is certain: poetry must, amongst other things, contribute to the creation of a fairer society.]

Ruy Belo, *Na Senda da Poesia*

Let us go back to 1960 and recall a very meaningful literary event: Carlos de Oliveira, by then recognized as one of the most eminent Portuguese writers as well as one of the most consistent protagonists of literary Neorealism, publishes his collection of poems *Cantata*. The book would come to be the cause of clear discomfort amongst neorealists, who had long been used to Oliveira's political commitment and the way he had denounced fascist oppression, standing up for the dispossessed of the Earth both in his poetry and in his novels. While the most conservative sectors of Portuguese literary criticism, through the voice of João Gaspar Simões, greeted the way the author was "redeeming" his work from that which "hampered" and "stained" it, Oliveira's *compagnons de route* were wondering what it was about the *Cantata* poems that seemed surprising, a deviation from the writer's usual work.

In their outstanding formal clarity, those concise and rarefied poems were unquestionably different from some of the most emblematic neorealist compositions by Carlos de Oliveira. As opposed to such poems as "Xácara das bruxas dançando" (*Mãe Pobre*, 1945) or *Descida aos Infernos* (1949), it was not easy to identify in *Cantata* the style that had been commonly found in the socially engaged poetry of Neorealism: no accessibility, no communicability, no re-elaboration of popular forms, no perlocutory dimension, no futurizing tone...² So much so that the book came to be at the center of a polemic between the neorealist writer José Fernandes Fafe and the then young poet Gastão Cruz. In a series of issues of the daily newspaper *Diário de Lisboa* the two polemicists engaged in a discussion centered on the possible scope of a definition for Neorealism at a moment when the movement was evincing unequivocal signs of dissolution. Often discussed during the exchange, Oliveira's *Cantata* appeared as a book in which the signs of the interventionist strategy developed by the neorealists in the 40s and the 50s were not easy to identify,

although the author had never questioned the function of social and political resistance, which he had always championed in both his poetry and his novels. “*Cantata* ressuma desencanto, tristeza, cansaço... Não encontramos aí a participação no combate pela dignidade e pelas ‘condições da felicidade’ humana” (*Cantata* exudes disillusion, weariness, sorrow ... You can’t find in it Oliveira’s participation in the combat for human dignity and “the conditions for happiness”), José Fernandes Fafe recognized with visible reluctance. However, he would explain:

Suponho que Carlos de Oliveira tem consciência disso. Tanto que nunca publicou “*Cantata*” separadamente. (A “*plaque*” com este título resume-se a pequena tiragem, depressa esgotada nas ofertas do escritor aos amigos). Praticamente, “*Cantata*” só foi publicada há pouco, no volume das “*Poesias*”. Talvez Carlos de Oliveira tenha querido que “*Mãe Pobre*”, “*Colheita Perdida*”, “*Terra de Harmonia*” projectem na tristeza de “*Cantata*” um pouco dos seus cantos de liberdade”. (Fafe 1963: 19)

[I suppose Carlos de Oliveira is aware of that. So much so that he never published *Cantata* separately. (The small edition – *plaque* – bearing the title had a reduced number of copies, soon sold out, especially because the author offered most of them to friends). In practice, *Cantata* was only recently published in the “*Poesias*” volume. Maybe Carlos de Oliveira wished that “*Mãe Pobre*”, “*Colheita Perdida*”, or “*Terra de Harmonia*” would project some of their songs of freedom onto the sadness of *Cantata*]

The explanation was not exactly convincing. In fact, *Cantata* did mark a real process of change in Carlos de Oliveira’s work, as his following books would amply confirm. And even that change had been announced insofar as throughout the ‘50s the author had repeatedly criticized the orthodoxy of the neorealist movement, whose critical assessment criteria were essentially ideological and pragmatic, for their underrating of form. If during the ‘40s Oliveira had taken up the forms of popular tradition, and even wrote some rather immediatist intervention poetry – as was the case of “*Mãe Pobre*”, the seven syllable-line poem (*redondilha*) set to music by Fernando Lopes Graça, of which a quatrain was soon to be suppressed by censorship—,³ by the beginning of the 60s the poet had developed a different notion of poetry. That notion was in fact much closer to Gastão Cruz’ perspective in the ambit of the aforementioned polemics when he emphasized the need to “transfigurar a

realidade” (transfigure reality), to fight against “o imobilismo, contra a tola veneração do que *está*” (immobility, against the silly veneration of what *is*), validating the role of metaphor “como elemento básico do realismo” (as a basic element of realism) in the context of poetry (cf. Cruz 1963: 24).

Carlos de Oliveira’s work would continue dialoguing with Marxist thinking, which had guided it from the beginning. In fact, in his last book, *Finisterra* (1978), the author would again address the issue that had been his very starting point: the irreducibility of law and justice, and the possession of land, which he considered the primordial mistake. Again in *Finisterra* his recurrent peasant characters, claiming for justice, are presented as a perennial threat, like ghosts that will forever haunt an unjust society. From the point of view of poetics, however, Oliveira had soon made an effort to overcome the distance at which Marxist-inspired realism had left the tradition of modern poetry through its preference for accessibility and communicative efficacy. What could be perceived in *Cantata* was exactly the culmination of that distancing process: the poems collected in the book no longer presupposed a realist reading contract, they no longer created any illusion of discursive transparency, no longer explicitly fought for justice. These were rarefied texts, made up of short, abrupt lines and vocabulary rooted in concreteness, through which the poet gave form to his openly acknowledged materialistic, dialectical thinking. Such texts made the reader engage with form, for “a carência de quase tudo” (want of almost everything), which Oliveira had observed in the Earth’s dispossessed (Oliveira 1992: 588), had become form, style – or “tattooing”, to use his own metaphor (*ibid.*) –, in much the same way in which the lack, the precariousness and the brevity that he had observed in the life of human beings who were made the victims of other human beings had been transformed into brief, rarefied, precarious discourse. *Cantata* therefore exhibited as language the world that had always been Carlos de Oliveira’s theme. Instead of merely naming that same world under a realist contract, that is, instead of naming it the form of a world that the reader could recognize as his/her usual world, the poems displayed it through the spent-up structure of the text, doing violence to language. And also perhaps doing violence to their author’s earlier body of work.

Here Carlos de Oliveira was moving away from radical, orthodox Neorealism – though he was still faithful to materialism and dialectics, which had always directed his thought and his work – to take an active part in the intensification of the dialogue with the tradition of modern poetry that would characterize Portuguese poetry in the 60s. He was moving away from the realist and anti-modernist aspects of Neorealism, but he kept moving according to his long-held “obsesses pessoais e sociais”(personal and social obsessions) (1992: 1155), which were not only the theme of his works but were also embodied (somatized, to be seen as form) in his treatment of language as a matter that can exemplify the world without resorting to explicit reference.

Looking at Portuguese poetry published during those years, one can see that Oliveira was certainly not the only one who was doing it. At that moment Portuguese poetry stands up again in defense of the position of autonomy claimed by modern poetry – and modern art in general – viewing poems as discursive creations which are acts of resistance in themselves, irrespective of the need for ideological explanations or explicit political stances. “C’est par sa seule existence que [l’art] c’est déjà de la résistance” (by its very existence [art] is already resistance), Deleuze tells Claire Parnet when asked to develop his concept of resistance (Deleuze/ Parnet 1988). This recuperates a modern concept of poetry and stresses the autonomic condition of art; in fact, Deleuze will emphasize the way literary writing necessarily generates another syntax, a language that is foreign to language, in an exercise that is, by nature, “potency of life”, “liberation of life” (cf. *ibid.*). In seeking to define the concept of “resistance” in the interview I quote from, Deleuze actually cites a thesis that had first been set forth in one of his *Essays Critical and Clinical*: “Health as literature, as writing, consists in inventing a people who are missing” (Deleuze 1998:4). “The ultimate aim of literature” would therefore be “to set free, in this delirium, this creation of a health or this invention of a people, that is, a possibility of life. To write for this people who are missing...”. However, Deleuze explains that here “for” means not so much “in the place of” but rather “for the benefit of” (*ibid.*).

Going back to *Cantata*, one could say that Carlos de Oliveira had gone from the (neo-realist) notion of writing “in the place of”, giving voice to those who do not have a voice, to the (modernist) notion of writing “for the benefit of”, *i.e.*, he had gone from emphasizing

resistance in poetry to affirming the resistance *of* poetry. A clear symptom of this inflection is the growing disappearance of the neo-realist choral “us” in his poetry. If, as Deleuze also said, quoting Primo Levi, “un des motifs de l’art et de la pensée c’est la honte d’être un homme” (one of the motifs in art and thought is the shame of being a man), that is, the need to ask “comment des hommes on pu faire ça”(how men could have done that) (Deleuze/Parnet, 1988), which is where art’s condition of resistance resides, no doubt Carlos de Oliveira kept asking exactly that same question – and therefore he continued to write for the benefit of the victims, though no longer wishing to speak in their place. The same could be said of the poetry books that Gastão Cruz, Fiamma Hasse Pais Brandão, Luiza Neto Jorge and Armando Silva Carvalho were then publishing. Or even those by Herberto Helder and Ruy Belo. Or even by Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, Jorge de Sena, Eugénio de Andrade and Mário Cesariny. Writing “for the benefit of” was to believe that poetry could in itself be an act of violence and resistance, as well as to emphasize the properly textual and material ontological condition of writing and the correlative emergence of a freer process of subjectivization, precisely insofar as it emerged from the libertarian experience of discourse generated by experimentation and agrammaticality. Even Cesariny, certainly the least textualist of all the poets mentioned, stated in a 1986 text:

A ciência perdeu, provavelmente por muitos tempos a vir, a sua pretensão a produto exacto e absoluto de aferição das coisas, do mesmo passo que a poesia (re)começa a exercer-se na individuação-despersonalização do enunciado. Importa não ler “despersonalização” como ela parece que aparece na invenção fernandiana: levando a uma ficção de outras-a-mesma-personalidade com cada uma delas afirmando personalidades; mas sim como real destruição do conceito e da prática da personalidade, e dos seus referentes, para emergência do indivíduo ausente de nome próprio, de tempo e de lugar (...). (Cesariny *in* Pascoaes 1987: 30)

[Science has lost, most probably for a long time to come, its claim to being an exact and absolute product for gauging things, whilst poetry again begins to carry itself out in the individuation/de-personalization of the *énoncé*. It is important not to read “de-personalization” as it seems to emerge in the context of Pessoa’s invention: leading to a fiction of other-the-same-personality with each one of them affirming personalities, but rather as a real destruction of the concept and the practice of personality, and its referents, aiming at an emergence of the individual without a proper name, a time and a place (...)]

If for Cesariny this process opens up the (romantic and surrealist) possibility that there may exist a “poeta que *não escreve*, ‘apenas’ vive” (poet who *does not write*, but who “only” lives) (cf. *ibid.*), most of the poetics of the 60s stress that which results from poetic production: an object – material, poematic, by nature inaccessible to the executioner’s arm. Thus, experimentation with language would make the text a sort of hedgehog, prickly and inexpugnable, as in Derrida’s description:

The poem can roll itself up in a ball, but it is still in order to turn its pointed signs towards the outside. (...) Its event always interrupts or derails absolute knowledge... This “demon of the heart” never gathers itself together, rather it loses itself and gets off the track (delirium or mania), it exposes itself to chance, it would rather let itself be torn to pieces by what bears down upon it. (Derrida 1991: 234-5)

Derrida’s image of the hedgehog-poem represents a set of characteristics that can be easily identified in the poetics of the 1960s: meta-reflexiveness, which seems to question the poem’s referential vocation but in fact reviews it under the form of a literal and metaphorical explanation, since the poem should be able to instance, as its own traces, those traces it refers, both literally and metaphorically (Goodman 1990: 86ff); the enhancement of image and metaphor as instruments for the libertarian generation of meaning and knowledge; the de-polarization of identities; and, last but not least, the autonomic condition of the aesthetic.

“Hurt by reality and searching for reality”, to borrow a phrase used by Paul Celan at that time (Cf. 1996: 34), those poets refused the ideological instrumentalization of poetry, explicitly distanced themselves in a deeply critical manner from all forms of poetic intervention, but they saw in writing the possibility of creating a *space* (a recurrent concept in Fiamma Hasse Pais Brandão, in Herberto Helder, in Carlos de Oliveira), which was undoubtedly an heir of Rimbaud’s injunction “la vraie vie est absente” (true life is absent) (Rimbaud, 1999: 424), adapted by Godard in *Pierrot le Fou* (1965) as “la vraie vie est ailleurs” (true life is somewhere else), where the word *ailleurs* dislocates rather than locates and expresses mainly refusal and expectation. Resistance would then be, to go back to Celan,

making “through the fracture, in contra-faction” (cf. 1996: 67). And here I intentionally use the verb *to make* instead of *to say*.

At about the time when *Cantata* was first brought on, Adorno published the lecture later known in English by the title of “Commitment”. The philosopher’s positions can illuminate this discussion, notably his claim that the existence of an appeal in art is not dependent upon the presence or absence of commitment at the level of thematic material (cf. Adorno 1984: 300), and especially when he shows that so-called autonomous works are not unconnected to *praxis* and that their power may lie less in the theme of anguish than in the way they generate it (Adorno mentions Beckett’s writing as an example of that). In fact, in a statement where an allusion to Rimbaud can be detected, Adorno associates works of art to the “creation of a just life” (Adorno, “Commitment”: 12), pointing out the fact that autonomy is a condition of a relationship with that same *praxis* from which, paradoxically, autonomous works of art would distance themselves: “(...) an emphasis on autonomous works is itself sociopolitical in nature”, the author writes. And he continues:

The feigning of a true politics here and now, the freezing of historical relations which nowhere seem ready to melt, oblige the mind to go where it need not degrade itself. Today, every phenomenon of culture, even if a model of integrity, is liable to be suffocated in the cultivation of kitsch. Yet paradoxically in the same epoch it is to works of art that has fallen the burden of wordlessly asserting what is barred to politics. (*ibidem*)

Claiming that the author is engaged with the thing, not with a choice, Adorno enhances the notion of resistance, articulating it with the requirement of a true life which cannot, however, be anticipated: “It is not the office of art to spotlight alternatives, but to resist by its form alone the course of the world, which permanently puts a pistol to men’s heads” (Adorno, “Commitment”: 3). Going back to Deleuze, this same process necessarily presupposes “a grammar of disequilibrium” generated in a tension with that other grammar that regulates the balances of discourse. In other words, and also in Deleuzian terms, the process implies writing as stuttering in language and not in speech. That other language (which superimposes itself on the former, although it deviates it rather than proscribing it) is called an *idiom*, a “língua dentro da própria língua” (language within language itself) by Herberto Helder (Helder 2009: 562 e 572), who, according to this same view defends error in

a number of fragments of his *Photomaton & Vox*. Again with Deleuze, a text *maudit* would then be a text that is “said” wrongly, or is “badly written”, the one that is able to make language shout, “to stutter, or to murmur or stammer”. During the 60s, the importance of silence (as for instance in Eugénio de Andrade), the erosion of the poetic line (as in Carlos de Oliveira), the irregular fragmentation of syntax (as in Gastão Cruz and Luiza Neto Jorge), the enhancement of metaphor and of poetic imagery in most of the poetry then published, the formal experimentalism practiced by the majority of poets, all those traits of writing are congruent with this (modern) idea of poetry. I choose to list poets of different generations in these examples because the generation difference was not an obstacle to contemporaneity. None of those poets questioned Rimbaud’s “la vraie vie est absente”, in an *ailleurs* that no ideology or political project would be able to circumscribe or point to without restraining its freedom and power to materialize itself. None of those poets would jeopardize the possibility that poetry might point to that place, even if only as lack or as failure. *Lugar* (place) is exactly the title of a book by Herberto Helder in 1962 which includes the lines: “Às vezes penso: o lugar é tremendo. / É sobre os mortos, além da linguagem” (Sometimes I think: the place is awe-inspiring. / It is about the death, besides language) (Helder 2009: 152).⁴ These lines become clearer in the light of the following passage of *Photomaton&Vox*:

O ponto não é estabelecer um sistema de referências, instituir leis, consumir um mecanismo. Digo que o ponto é *propiciar o aparecimento de um espaço*, e exercer então sobre ele a maior violência. Como se o metal acabasse por chegar às mãos – e batê-lo depois com toda a força e todos os martelos. Até o espaço ceder, até o metal ganhar uma forma que surpreenda as próprias mãos. (Helder 2006: 79, emphasis added)

[The point is not to set up a reference system, to establish laws, to consummate a mechanism. I say that the point is *to enable a space to emerge*, and then exert the utmost violence upon it. As if the metal ended up by reaching your hands – and strike it with all your strength and all your hammers. Until the space yields, until the metal takes a form that surprises your very hands.]

That form, always posthumous, surprising even to the hands that generate it, is obviously the poem, a compression of language that aspires to expanding the world. However, the

ontological and gnoseological euphoria patent in Helder's words reflects one of two possible paths. When Benjamin wrote that "as *flâneurs*, the intelligentsia came into the market place" (Benjamin 1997: 170), adding that although they were supposed to observe the scene from the outside, in fact what they look for is already to find a buyer, he was identifying a turning point after which poetry could not but be seen in the context of a process of commodification (of art and culture) which it will try to resist.

Post-Baudelaire modernity is born of that turning point, with all that separates it from the positive concept of poetry upheld by Romanticism (especially as seen from the perspective of a poetics of production). If one of the paths then opened leads to the circumscription of poetry to poematic matter as a space of resistance already centered on textuality and its effects, and to the projection of the autonomy of the aesthetic which will make it rather difficult for Neorealism to dialogue with the different Modernisms, another path is now starting to be opened. This second path will lead to the gradual devaluing of poetry that becomes patent from the 1970s on, to the misfortunes of "poor Mrs. Poesy", as António Franco Alexandre describes it, while he also calls poetry by the names of "arte de chiar" (the art of squeaking) (2001: 53), or "duplicata" (duplicate), "remendo" (patchwork) (1996: 201), and "garatuja" (scribbling) (1996: 275, 364). From this other perspective, poetry is not conceived as a space (text, discourse) which, albeit closed, has an unquestionably heuristic capability.

From the '70s onwards, poets like João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, or, towards the end of the 20th century, Manuel de Freitas and José Miguel Silva will disfavour metaphor, because "(...) [u]ma metáfora não leva a nenhum lado" (a metaphor leads to nowhere) (Jorge 1988: 40) or because "a sua baba quente e desajustada" (its warm, unsuitable slobber) is to be repudiated (cf. Freitas 2002: 42). In its place, these authors prefer allegory, understood in the Benjaminian sense, as a mode of expression better fitted to replace epiphany through allusion to an irredeemable lack, that is, postponing true life or just life to an *ailleurs* that cannot be located in the discursive becoming of the poem. It should also be noted that in the last decades there has been a marked increase in the use of *ekphrasis*, which enables poets to enter into dialogue with another idea of the image – that of visual arts and visual communication in general.

If modernity after Baudelaire brought with it a katabasic effect concerning the romantic notion of poetry, it must be recognized that the effect has become more intense in the poetry of the last decades. However, in spite of acknowledging that it is inevitably a part of the cultural *kitsch* Adorno mentions, poetry still creates foci of resistance which can be found, in their different registers, in authors such as Adília Lopes, Manuel de Freitas, José Miguel Silva or Rui Lage, to mention only some examples.

In their Introduction to a special issue of *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* on “The Poetics of Resistance”, Cornelia Gräbner and David M. J. Wood explain that most authors in this collection of essays do not share the view that a work of art is completely assimilated in the neoliberal context. They do not subscribe to the notion that “art is assimilated into public discourse and political language” nor do they believe that “the artist is empowered as social actor, but disempowered as artist-and-social-actor” (2010: 6). In opposition to that, they propose what they call a “porous autonomy”: “(...) this type of autonomy differs from the Adornian approach which locates the work of art in a third space where it is safeguarded from two competing ideological poles, each of which sought to assimilate it” (*ibid.*). In fact, the concept of “porous autonomy” means processes of resistance that are less centered in antagonism and more interested in exploring strategies of subversion. In the same issue of *Cosmos and History*, Arturo Casas quotes from a manifesto by the Spanish collective *La Palabra Itenerante*: “The most common method among poets in resistance is guerrilla method: rapid incursions in hostile territory to achieve objectives and then return to safe ground” (Casas 2010: 79).

In her introductory note to *A Mulher-a-Dias* (the housekeeper) (2002), Adília Lopes explains: “A mulher-a-dias sou eu, é qualquer pessoa. (...) De resto, os meus textos são políticos, de intervenção, cerzidos com a minha vida” (the housekeeper, that is me, or anyone. Besides, my texts are political, interventive, stitched with my life) (Lopes 2009: 445). Not that Adília Lopes ignores how much modern tradition has taught about the complexity of subjectivization processes, or deems it unimportant; however, by situating poetry in the space of the world we live in, her poems promote an undecidability between two rather different reading contracts: the lyrical and the autobiographical. Her use of the word “cerzidos” (stitched) in the quotation above suggests that her poems are *relatable* to a life

experience. And there resides the efficacy of Adília Lopes's poetry in denouncing the violence and cruelty that is systematically present in our contemporary world. If the autobiographical contract legitimizes the presence in the poems of the prosaic, of banal suffering devoid of much historical presence, her lyrical fiction analyses and redeems that suffering, though not aiming to erase it or to distract us readers from it. By alternately using and not using the autobiographical pact in her poetry, Adília Lopes dialogues with modern tradition while she questions the autonomic status of the poem. And thus she produces one of the most violent libels against the disciplinary normalization of behaviours in the contemporary world.

Adília Lopes is not the only author resorting to this type of reading contracts, for they are very much present in the poets who started writing between the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. The clear connection between the poem's subject and their biographical experiences, while not denying its derivation from the process of subjectivization inherent in poetry, certainly connects it to concrete life experiences. That is for example the case with the lyrical subject, spaces and protagonists in the poetry of Manuel de Freitas. Recognizable biographemes are exactly a sign of the authenticity of a strategy of resistance to that which Carlos de Oliveira once called "coisas desencadeadas" (unchained things) (1992: 581). In "Bartleby bar (Lisboa, década de 2010)", a very recent text by Miguel Martins, the following can be read: "Faço parte da direcção, bastante desapegada, de uma agremiação informal que tem por lema e objectivo a resistência a quanto se faz por tradição, hábito, obrigação, comodismo, etc., a quanto se faz sem razão ou vontade próprias" (I am a member of the – rather disaffected – board of an informal association whose motto and aim are resisting everything that is done out of tradition, habit, obligation, convenience, etc, to everything that is done without reason or not done of one's own free will) (Martins 2011: 25). This is a truly biographical statement, with its mention of a bar in Lisbon where poetry was always present, as the reader could have easily confirmed. Thus, when we read in a different text published in the same book that "Oposição, Resistência e Libertação parecem-me, pois, as três palavras fundamentais quando o que está em jogo é a felicidade e a infelicidade" (Opposition, Resistance and Liberation seem to me then to be the three fundamental words when happiness and unhappiness are at stake)(*idem*: 9), we can perhaps understand Miguel Martins' use of the autobiographical and his inclusion of this text

in a book whose register lies between the prose poem and an intimist meditation of an autobiographical character.

The contamination between lyric and autobiographical registers, which can be found in Adília Lopes, in some of Ana Luísa Amaral's books, in Manuel de Freitas and in other poets who, though belonging to different generations, are now being published, together with the contamination of prose and poetry that they, and notably Adília Lopes, so often explore, the contamination between lyricism and narrativity, very successfully achieved in José Miguel Silva, the dialogues between poetry and music, poetry and photography, cinema, drawing, painting, frequently in ekphrastic registers, in some sense respond to the devaluation of poetic image through another type of relationship with the image. As contemporary strategies of "porous resistance" in poetry, they do not seem to assert a position of autonomy in the Adornian sense.

The concept of "porous autonomy" can help us understand both how contemporary poetry works and the way it has gradually diverged from the hedgehog strategy, to go back to Derrida's image, without dispensing with a strategy of resistance. In the poetry that at present seems to be more critical of neoliberalism there can be identified an enunciative positioning that is not presented either as external to that context, in an autonomic sense, or as simply interior. For that poetry, it is no more an option between speaking *in the place of*, as in Neorealism, or *for the benefit of*, as in the 1960s. The two positions are now revised in the light of the understanding that we are all located *inside*— although certainly not in the same manner. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that, in spite of that, poetry continues to create the conditions for the emergence of freer processes of subjectivization and thus it continues to be written for the benefit of the "people who are missing". Those who are always missing.

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NOTES

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² For the sake of illustration, I quote from the poem “Névoa”, from *Cantata*: ‘A morte / em flor / dos camponeses / tão chegados à terra / que são folhas / e ervas de nada / passa no vento / e eu julgo ouvir / ao longe / nos recessos da névoa / os animais feridos / do Início.’ (The blossoming / death/ of the peasants /so close to the earth/ that they become leaves /and blades of grass of nothing / passes in the wind / and I think I can hear / from afar / in the recesses of the mist / the wounded animals / of the Beginning.) (Oliveira 2003: 164).

³ On this poem and how it circulated in such a way as to elude censorship, see Martelo 1998: 208ff.

⁴ T.N.: *além* can also be read as meaning “beyond”.