

SALAZARISM AND IDEALIZED TRADITION: IMAGES IN PORTUGAL, REFLEXES IN BRAZIL

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RESUMO: Pretende-se discutir a forma como se estabelece o processo de reconstrução idealizada da tradição portuguesa pelo regime salazarista, bem como o deslocamento desse imaginário para outros territórios, em específico o Brasil, mas não apenas, por intermédio da emigração. Essa reflexão parte da preocupação em destacar aspectos presentes no discurso salazarista que foram utilizados como instrumentos de conformação ideológica da sociedade portuguesa e que, de certa forma, ainda se manifestaram nessa sociedade mesmo após a Revolução dos Cravos. Assim, é possível notar que a invenção e sobrevalorização da tradição pelo regime do Estado Novo, na forma como foi discutida por Eduardo Lourenço, aliou-se ao corporativismo, à uniformização do modelo de família e ao reforço do imaginário colonialista/imperialista para moldar um corpo social que reiterasse as ações do regime, obliterando suas marcas de violência. O jornal *Portugal Democrático*, bem como a poesia de Jorge de Sena e Adolfo Casais Monteiro, se estabelecem com pontos de referência no estudo das manifestações contrárias ao Estado Novo em espaços de emigração e exílio.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Jorge de Sena; Adolfo Casais Monteiro; *Portugal Democrático*; Salazarismo; Resistência

ABSTRACT: This paper will discuss how the process of idealized reconstruction of the Portuguese tradition by the authoritarian government that ruled Portugal, having António de Oliveira Salazar as prime minister, is produced. We will also discuss the process of moving this imaginary from Portugal to Brazil and other places through immigration, amongst other things. We will focus on some recurrent aspects of the salazarist discourse that were used as tools for ideological indoctrination of Portuguese society and that in a certain way are still presente in this society, even after the Carnation Revolution. It is possible to perceive that the invention and overvaluation of tradition by the so called New State, as has been pointed out by Eduardo Lourenço, was linked to corporativism, to the uniformization of family models and to the dissemination of the colonialist/imperialist imaginary as means to improve the reiteration of the the regime's actions through the indoctrination of the population and the obliteration of the violent character of such actions. The Portuguese newspaper *Portugal Democrático* and Jorge de Sena and Adolfo Casais Monteiro's poetry became reference points for the study of demonstrations of resistance against the New State in places of exile/immigration.

KEYWORDS: Jorge de Sena; Adolfo Casais Monteiro; *Portugal Democrático*; Salazarism; resistance

*For Gilda Santos, through whom I first visited Jorge de Sena and
for whom I still visit him.*

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In a text published in the 2015 book *Patrimônios de influência portuguesa: modos de olhar* [“Heritage of Portuguese Influence: ways of looking”], Roberto Vecchi, discussing the concepts of identity, inheritance and belonging, speaks of the importance of thinking up a new term for this collective, the community, remembering, with Roberto Esposito, that

[...] identity may (or may not) be the (essentialist, ideological, rhetorical) outcome of community work, through which it is perforce conformed and configured, itself being aligned in a sequence of techniques of negative self-protection. This is what much of the tragic history of the twentieth century attests to, which could be rethought through the conflicting production of the identitarian works of communities of values and narratives, such as nationalism. (Vecchi, 2015, p. 67)

Offered in the form of a disguised epigraph, Vecchi’s words indicate to us that the idea of *community* – or should we say *Portuguese community*, to contextualize more specifically what I have to say here – can also be understood as a construct which fulfils certain intentions that are always ideologically marked and which gradually takes shape in line with multiple sociocultural interests, as well as interests of a political and pseudo-identitarian nature. While community may today be understood as something that is constructed through the pursuit of common objectives and thus negotiated around the possible differences amongst its members, it is not uncommon for this concept to be used from an essentialist perspective, with one group stamping on it whatever distinguishes it from others, incorporating similarities, shunning those who are different, and thereby constructing an idea of identity that is particularly static and, in extreme cases, perverse. Even if we seek out new forms of agency for the concept itself and its practice, we cannot ignore the fact that for many groups, a community tends to encapsulate subjects, establishing ties, obligations and belongings. As such, it brings together a set of people through indebtedness or, to cite Guilherme Radomsky, also discussing Esposito, people who are connected “not by a ‘more’ but by a ‘less’ which places them in debt” (Radomsky, 2017, p. 461). The different fascist movements that marked the twentieth century are fitting proof of this... and Salazarism is no exception, as are certain groups currently gaining strength in contemporary Brazilian society. While in certain cases this process is based on oldfangled myths of ancestral purity, in others a multitude of factors are combined to corroborate the ideology, which range, in Brazil, from party political allegiances to purchasing power and even to the particular part of a city where an individual lives. If we are to believe the discourse which pervades the press and the pseudo-political verbiage of the country’s middle class, then a true member of the “Brazilian national community” today is a “good” man, which means a “family man”, a working man who earns enough to fulfil the requirements of the consumer society, who does not live in a *favela* or sleep rough, who supports the Brazilian football team, suffering whenever it is defeated; essentially, a man who occupies a specific place in society constructed by the media and other agents of order, who require him to be constantly vigilant of these multiple requirements.

This apparent digression I have taken so early on actually illuminates what I believe to be a feasible route for demonstrating just how much certain basic authoritarian aspects of what Umberto Eco called Ur-Fascism (Eco, 2002) have been perpetuated in different spaces and times in the history of humankind, coming together symptomatically to compose a spectrum against which perhaps an eternal battle will have to be waged. If thinking about the different ways community can be conceived and interrogating the most perverse uses of the concept have become an analytical lynchpin, it is important for us to bring to light the strategies that have been developed during some of the totalitarian regimes we have undergone, as well as the host

of strategies employed to disseminate their ideological constructs and their ramifications entwined in the Portuguese and Brazilian panorama in the twentieth century. Cutting through much of this period, so much so that it interacted with two major periods of exceptionalism in Brazilian life – the Estado Novo regime of Getúlio Vargas and the civil-military dictatorship established in 1964 – Salazarism paid especial attention to the migration of Portuguese people abroad, especially to Brazil, taking an ambiguous stance in which it both attempted to establish a certain level of control, repressing illegal emigration and defining the profile of those who were allowed to emigrate officially, while at the same time encouraging or even imposing the requirement to have money sent back to Portugal, extracting from those who emigrated a commitment to support the family members they had left behind. In “O problema da emigração e do exílio em Portugal: imagens e análises (1910-1974)” [The problem of emigration and exile in Portugal: images and analyses (1910-1974)], Heloísa Paulo explains that

[...] the Estado Novo procured legal means to formalize the emigrant’s obligation towards their family members left behind in Portugal, linking them to their family through legal obligations. To do so, as of the mid 1940s, the documents issued by the Emigration Board (Junta de Emigração) included the requirement that emigrants registered a document with a notary public by which they took responsibility for maintaining their family, with their express agreement. In the template provided by the Board, terms of responsibility were established and agreed to, including the delivery of a monthly sum of money to the family by the person in question, who should also present proof of assets and moral good-standing, confirmed by the Municipal chamber of their hometown. (Paulo, 2017, p. 153-154)

While the Salazar government, in its emigration control practices, established this equivocal set of conditions, which at one and the same time prevented and encouraged the exit of Portuguese citizens from the country, when it came to the ideological profile these émigrés were supposed to have, there was no ambiguity whatsoever and, going beyond the actions of the First Republic (1910-1926) in this respect, very clear parameters were set: emigration targeted a specific feature of the Portuguese man, making the emigrant a kind of contemporary epic hero who would carry forth the great feats of the Portuguese people, a citizen who would represent the country abroad and should be a staunch defender of the regime, acting as its furthest-flung envoy. For this reason did it attempt to prevent the exit of illiterate people or youth who had not completed their high school education, so they should not tarnish the country’s – and the government’s – image abroad. Another notable point is the concerted effort made by the Portuguese diplomatic corps in Brazil to win over the émigrés there, which can be seen, for instance, in the fact that one of the key figures in the Salazar government, Pedro Teotónio Pereira, served as ambassador to Rio de Janeiro for two years shortly after the end of World War II, or even, again mirroring what Heloísa Paulo speaks of, in the widespread granting of honours to supporters of the regime and the “promotion of the Federation of Portuguese Associations of Brazil, created in 1931, to the status of official ‘spokesman’ of the colony” (Paulo, 2017, p. 154). Alongside these more concrete actions, a whole spectrum of excessively nationalistic affirmations of tradition, a symptomatic feature of Salazarism – and again, of Ur-Fascism – was a notable feature of commemorative dates and festivities, as well as in the collective imagination constituted in Brazil as an offshoot of the image propagated in Portugal: the same acclaim for the rural simplicity of the Portuguese man, the same idealistic exaltation of the great navigations, the extolment of folk manifestations, which came to be

presented as essential or organic, as it were, to the Portuguese identity. Belonging to the “Portuguese community” meant upholding these values, which were constantly reiterated in publications aligned with the government in Lisbon, like the newspapers *Voz de Portugal* and *Pátria Portuguesa* (whose name was changed to *O Diário Português* in 1932).

However, while the Salazar government strove to build up the image of what the Portuguese emigrant was – a good emigrant who should be cherished in his homeland and accepted as a “member of the (aforementioned) Portuguese community” – it also attempted to set the boundaries of this community, presenting as “non-citizens” all those who, intentionally deviating from this imagined figure, took a critical stance against the country and the government. The person in exile and the political émigré were part of this group of what we might call non-citizens, displaced beyond the community fold, seen as individuals who were effectively against their own nation, and against whom society should therefore be *immunized*². On the one hand, they were portrayed collectively as communists, irrespective of their political orientation, because fascism cannot and will not countenance half-measures (it only sees itself and others, those who belong and those who do not belong to this community); on the other, they were depicted as perversions of basic human values and often associated with theft, ignominy, or even plain stupidity. The aim of all this was to control the way these individuals were received by society so that their ideas could not challenge the perception of the model society built up by Salazarian propaganda. For the regime, to deny Salazar was to deny God, Fatherland and Family; all (as we have seen) basic, incontestable principles on which the regime and its corporatism were predicated.

Despite this effort on the part of the state, it was incapable of preventing the flourishing in Brazil of resistance to the Estado Novo in Portugal, which became very clear, for instance, in the newspaper *Portugal Democrático*, set up in São Paulo in 1956, which gradually attracted the collaboration of leading cultural and literary figures from Portugal, such as Jorge de Sena and Adolfo Casais Monteiro. If we look closely at the first issue of the newspaper, published on 7 July 1956, we are immediately struck by its editorial line, which set about unravelling the webs of fictionalization surrounding Portuguese life, not just revealing the existence of an opposition to the regime, but also spreading news about the violence orchestrated by the repressive arms of the government. From its front page, emblazoned with the headline that “this issue has not been seen by the censorship commission in Portugal”, to the inside pages, containing news on “50 persecuted youths”, sections like “Salazar and Portuguese culture” and “Struggles of the Portuguese People”, or even the poem “*Adeus à Hora da Largada*” [Adieu to the Starting Whistle], by the Angolan independence leader Agostinho Neto, the newspaper made it its mission to lay bare the oppressive, anti-democratic nature of the regime. This is evident from the first paragraph of the section on the “Struggles of the Portuguese People”:

In these columns, we will spread the word about our people’s struggles for better living conditions. Fierce censorship prevents these struggles from being known either abroad or even inside our country. This means that some people, even those who are well intentioned, see the Salazar regime as a “paternal” system of government, which at the most has curbed certain freedoms in exchange for an overall improvement in standards of living. This idea, we should stress at the outset, is

² The reference to the concept of *immunization*, related to that of *biopolitics*, is deliberate here; however, rather than using it in the sense given by Esposito (2011), I consider the idea Agamben (2004) gives on the subject and recall, together with Guilherme Radomsky, that for Agamben, the nodal point of biopolitics is “seeing how much the sovereign includes life by excluding it” and that “sovereignty presupposes a part of life that is sacrificed by another who dominates them with violence” (RADOMSKY, 2017, p. 464).

completely false: the Portuguese people have never had it so bad. Which is why they fight as best they can for better wages. This battle is waged under particularly harsh conditions, and only an unshakable will allied to pressing need can lead the women and the men of Portugal forward. (PORTUGAL DEMOCRÁTICO, 1956, p. 3)

The line taken by the newspaper is clear; after all, its board members were linked to the Portuguese Communist Party; yet this does not prevent its apparent strategy to demonstrate not just the most direct efforts made by the government to control the image of the regime, but also the need to break away from the essentialist, excluding nature upon which the portrayal of the Portuguese identity in Salazarian discourse and the self-image of the émigré community in Brazil were based. There is no room here to reproduce the whole text published in this section, but essentially it develops as an account of rural workers' struggle for better wages and how the land barons reacted to this, calling on police intervention and violence as instruments of coercion. As such, it is fair to say that the newspaper lays bare the schisms that existed in this radically hierarchized societal organization, directly challenging the image of the placid Portuguese "people" depicted in most of Salazar's speeches.

This strongly ideological discursive structure adopted by the regime was further confronted in its most subliminal strata by the poetry of Jorge de Sena. Sena, who died 40 years ago in June 2018 and would have turned 100 in 2019, took a course that successively shook some of the cornerstones of Salazarian ideology, especially the ones linked to the mythical idealization of tradition. From the painstaking work of releasing Camões and his poems from the weighty burden placed on them by the Estado Novo regime as emissary of an erstwhile, yet eternal grandeur – a burden, it should be noted, which had already, albeit to a lesser extent, been attributed to him both by the monarchy in the nineteenth century and by the liberal republic – to the questioning of the Portuguese language as a tool of identity unification, Sena starkly exposed the contradictions inherent to his relationship with the country he was forced to abandon. And more than that: he challenged concepts present in Salazar's speeches and other authoritarian speeches in a less obvious way.

In "*Os nocturnos merecem respeito ou a salvação do Brasil em 1º de abril*" [Nocturnes deserve respect or the salvation of Brazil on April 1st], we read:

Como podem chamar noite
a isto?
Há uma dignidade e uma nobreza
das trevas
Isto
é outra coisa: a luz do dia
lá fora (onde?),
os sons e os cantos de alegria
lá fora (onde?)
o amor
lá fora
(onde?)
e a vergonha
lá fora
(aqui).
Como podem chamar noite
a isto?

How can they call night
 this?
 There is dignity and nobility
 in darkness
 This
 is something else: in the light of day
 out there (where?),
 the sounds and songs of joy
 out there (where?)
 love
 out there
 (where?)
 and shame
 out there
 (here).
 How can they call night
 this?
 (Sena, 1989, p. 66)

Dated 7 April 1964 – just days after the military coup in Brazil – and bearing in its title a clear allusion to the date on which the coup actually took place, the poem invites us to a series of reflections that depict, through negation, the privation of liberty the coup d'état would engender. Complaining of how inadequate a metaphor the word *night* was to refer to what was happening, the poet sketches out a dividing line along which to highlight aspects contrary to the burgeoning oppression: out there, the light of day, songs of joy, love. In here, shame. Constituting itself essentially as a process that denies freedom and limits the subject, “this” cannot be night because it does not share the dignity and nobility of darkness.

A number of other poems could similarly be brought to attention here, where the morbid sterility of the religious morality enacted by the government is set against the sensuousness and ardency of the bodies of lovers, or where the heroic image of the construction of the empire is drained of any glory: “empires expend their people until they are / a race bowed down, mean and treacherous”, says the poem in the second text of the set of “*Borras do império*” [Smears of the Empire] (Sena, 1989, p. 173), finishing with: “since nothing glorious is built humanely / without 10% of heroes and 90% of killers”. Yet in the whole body of his work, arguably what confronts and resists most strongly the perverse idea of community perpetuated by the Salazarian ideology and the way it was promoted in the heart of the distant colonies of Portuguese emigrants is the constant, repeated affirmation of the inexorable status of being in exile – an affirmation whose recurrence is synthesized supremely in “Glosa de Guido Cavalcante” [Explanation by Guido Cavalcante]:

Porque não espero de jamais voltar
 À terra em que nasci; porque não espero
 Ainda que volte, de encontrá-la pronta
 A conhecer-me como agora sei

Que eu a conheço; porque não espero
 Sofrer saudades, ou perder a conta
 Dos dias que vivi sem a lembrar;
 Porque não espero nada, e morrerei

Por exílio sempre, mas fiel ao mundo,
Já que de outro nenhum morro exilado;
Porque não espero, do meu poço fundo,

Olhar o céu e ver mais que azulado
Esse ar que ainda respiro, esse ar imundo
Por quantos que me ignoram respirado;

Porque não espero, espero contentado.
(Sena, 1989, p. 51)

For I do not expect ever to return
To the land where I was born; for I do not expect
Even if I return, to find it fain
To know me as now I realise

That I know it; for I do not expect
To suffer the loss, or of the days
I lived without recalling it to lose count;
For I do not expect anything, and I will die

Of exile forever, but to the world loyal,
Since to none other in exile do I die;
For I do not expect, from my pit abyssal,

To see more than blue as I behold the sky
This air I still breathe, this air so foul
Breathed by so many who would me deny;

For I do not expect, I wait benign.

Sena's poem, which obviously goes beyond its political sense, seeking out broader horizons, is nonetheless constituted as a poetic work of strength in the struggle against fascism, seeking out linguistic elements that reveal the ideological inconsistencies of the regime, the fault lines along which its deepest inclinations flow: hatred of freedom, of difference, of pleasure. That is why his poetical act is a testament to his time, the struggle for an autonomous space of freedom and meaning for existence, contradicting the official line about what it is to be Portuguese, to affirm itself on a different note. As the second verse of "*Aviso de porta de livraria*" [Sign on a bookshop door] puts it:

E quem de amor não sabe fuja dele:
qualquer amor desde o da carne àquele
que só de si se move, não movido
de prémio vil, mas alto e quase eterno.
De amor e de poesia e de ter pátria
aqui se trata: que a ralé não passe
este limiar sagrado e não se atreva
a encher de ratos este espaço livre

onde se morre em dignidade humana
a dor de haver nascido em Portugal
sem mais remédio que trazê-lo n'alma.
(Sena, 1989, p. 117)

And he who knows not love flees it:
whatever the love, from love of flesh to
love only moved by self, not moved
by small concerns, but lofty and almost eternal.
Of love and poetry and homeland
here we speak: may the masses not cross
this sacred threshold and not dare
to fill with rats this space of freedom
where the pain of being born in Portugal fair
dies in human dignity
with no more remedy than in the soul it to bear.

In this poem dated 1972, love, homeland and poetry are intertwined to protect the space of writing from indignity and those rats who, “vestals of purity”, to cite now the first verse of the poem, with their third hand “cover the mouth / of those who walk on two feet fearless of words”. It is a poem in which the pain of having been born in Portugal is given the chance to die in “human dignity”, constituting itself as home and land, as space for affirming other forms of being Portuguese, which, breaching the rules and standards imposed ideologically by the government, are constructed from the critical awareness of the present and the past. Myths unpicked, heroes made human, shame forgotten, Sena’s writing veers towards transgression – “The evil of asking has no reply / and only incites the howls of sepulchres”, he says in the fifth “Epigram” (Sena, 1989, p. 121) – revealing the existence of an inquiring gaze that does not yield either to the reductive images of the homeland or to the repression of dissension or even the imposition of a centralizing paradigm. Thus it is invested as a clear confrontation against the acts of immunization introduced by the regime, if we think of immunization as “knowing how to deal with conflicts, not negating them” (Radomsk, 2017, p. 464). Which is why it would be fair to say that this is poetry that seeks out new meanings for the idea of community (Portuguese, but not only), empowering the human, investing in life to counterbalance the politics of death pursued by the Estado Novo.

Alongside Sena is his friend Adolfo Casais Monteiro, also exiled in Brazil, which he reaches in 1954, never to return to Portugal. A prolific writer of poetry and criticism, he also published two books in Portugal in which he developed a pained, anguished reflection about war and oppression. *Canto da Nossa Agonia* [Song of our Agony] (1942) and *Europa* [Europe] (1946) are works where the overtone of protest diluted in other works becomes more evident, endorsing, for example, the words cited previously in the poem “*Pregão da Revolta*” [Notice of the Uprising], included in *Poemas do Tempo Incerto* [Poems from an Uncertain Time] (1934), transcribed below:

Escravos!
chegou o tempo de acabar
as canções de declínio!
Que se apaguem
os ecos das sujeições e dos receios
pois já os braços se erguem
sem medo das queimaduras!

Dor, aniquilamento, vozes de desânimo,
tudo isso,
mas nunca orar de mãos postas
ante as imagens grosseiras
da nossa própria cobardia!
(Casais Monteiro, 1993, p. 70)

Slaves!
time has come to end
the songs of decline!
May the echoes of
subjection and fear be quenched
for arms are now raised
without fear of burning!
Pain, annihilation, voices of despair,
all this,
but never to pray, hands clasped
before the vulgar images
of our own cowardice!

The prizing of freedom and free thinking permeates his poetry and is formulated here in a way that seems to illuminate what we read later in the works on war. His words cry out for the echoes of subjugation and fear to be expunged, for the altar of cowardice to be shunned, putting an end to a slavery which, albeit not official, is imposed on all those who are under the yoke of dictatorship. And they reverberate again in the verses of “A manhã tem aves e mulheres lindas” [Morning has birds and pretty women], where he writes:

[...]
Mas não sai dos meus ouvidos o último estertor dos nossos mortos,
A voz dos que morreram por nós em todas as latitudes,
Crucificados para a nossa salvação,
dos que morreram para redimir as nossas cobardias quotidianas,
para vingar nossas derrotas quotidianas,
para nos salvar da nossa miséria quotidiana...
[...]
(Casais Monteiro, 1993, p. 116)

But the last gasp of our dead still rings in my ears,
The voice of those who died for us in every latitude
Crucified for our salvation,
of those who died to redeem our daily cowardice,
to revenge our daily defeats,
to save us from our daily misery...

Even when speaking of war, we can read in what he writes a harsh condemnation of the oppression and death of those against it, going beyond a direct relationship with what is apparently his subject matter to turn his criticism against all forms of violence. His gaze draws similarities and parallels between war and the oppression experienced in Portugal and, like

Sena, dismantles the idealization of the fatherland – the land – present in Salazarian discourse. In the poem “*Em Vão a Terra Abre*” [In Vain does the Land Open Up] we read:

[...]
Ó terra, amarga terra que não vingas os crimes feitos em teu nome,
que não sabes escolher entre o sangue dos heróis
e a lama das veias dos mercenários,
terra que não ouviste ainda o canto da libertação,
terra confundida com todas as mentiras ditas em teu nome,
quando deixarás de viver da morte dos escravos?
[...]
(Casais Monteiro, 1993, p. 116)

Oh land, bitter land that avenges not the crimes done in your name,
that knows not how to choose between the blood of heroes
and the mud in the veins of mercenaries,
land that has not yet heard the song of freedom,
land confounded with all the lies spoken in your name,
when will you stop living off the death of slaves?

Reflecting upon the sea of blood, the poet amplifies the meanings of what he says to emphasize freedom as a fundamental and intrinsically human value. This broadening of the sense is given more substance in the long poem *Europa* [Europe] – broadcast by the BBC in Portuguese on 23 May 1945 – in which he states:

[...]
Não – nem cárceres, nem deportações, nem represálias, nem torturas
Acabarão jamais com a insubmissão do homem livre,
Do homem livre nas cadeias, cantando nas torturas,
Porque vê diante de si os irmãos que estão lutando,
Que hão-de cair, para outros se erguerem,
Clamando em vozes sempre novas
QUE O HOMEM NÃO SE HÁ-DE SUBMETER À VIOLÊNCIA
[...]
(Casais Monteiro, 1993, p. 132; upper case in original)

No – neither bars, nor deportations, nor reprisals, nor torture
Will ever end the resistance of the free man,
Of the free man in cells, singing through torture,
For he sees before him his brothers who are fighting,
Who will fall, for others to rise up,
Crying out in ever heightened voices
THAT MAN WILL NOT SUCCUMB TO VIOLENCE

Later, in the same poem/book, the poet again writes in upper case: “AS ONLY THE FREE MAN IS WORTHY OF BEING A MAN” (p. 133). Above and beyond the metaphysical meaning that can also be read into this verse, this song which associates freedom to insubmission to violence could also be seen as revealing a challenge to a discourse that imposes

a single model of sociopolitical alignment with the true font of inhumanity. Only freedom brings man dignity, and, alongside Sena, this other poet in exile faces the imposition of a way of being Portuguese, letting those who live in his time bear witness to those who had part of their life curtailed, “taken with their hands tied”, betrayed, “robbed / of [their] authentic identity” (Casais Monteiro, 1993, p. 123).

By adopting a line that clearly confronts the oppression of bodies and submission of words, the two poets seem to anticipate much of what, years later, Umberto Eco came to say about eternal fascism. They envisaged the need and importance of man to keep his eyes open, even before the night of the world, and his ears alert to pick up, in the echoes of verse, words capable of rekindling the light.

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Produzido no âmbito do projeto CAPES/PRINT/UFF *Production and Circulation of Discourses and Narratives*.

Submetido em 02/07/2019

Aceito em 11/08/2019