



OBSCENE VOICES IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PORTUGUESE POETRY

VOZES OBSCENAS NA POESIA PORTUGUESA DO SÉCULO XVIII

Fernando Matos Oliveira¹

ABSTRACT

This study offers a rereading of the obscene verse in Portuguese poetry in the second half of the 18th-century. The main goal is to integrate a poetics of obscenity not only in the classical heritage, as has been pointed out by literary criticism (CIDADE, 1986; PIRES, 2004; NEUMANN, 2006), or more overtly by studies of rhetoric-stylistic content (PÉCORA, 2011), but to understand this singular production, largely ignored within the academy, within the broad context of the social and cultural uses of the verse. This line of interpretation also situates obscene poetry in two converging contexts, which we consider decisive for its analysis. This writing occurs at a time when the very modern concept of lyric poetry, as expressive and subjective capital, was in formation. At the same time, the obscene is related to the protocols of truth and concealment promoted by the secular process opened by the Enlightenment, thus having a profound relationship with the transformations that occur in Portuguese society in the last decades of the 18th-century.

KEYWORDS: Obscenity; Desire; Poetry; Power; Class.

RESUMO

Este estudo apresenta uma releitura do verso obsceno em Portugal, na segunda metade do século XVIII. Pretende-se integrar a poética do obsceno não apenas na herança clássica, como vem sendo assinalado pela crítica literária (CIDADE, 1986; PIRES, 2004; NEUMANN, 2006), ou mais assumidamente por estudos de teor retórico-estilístico

¹ Docente no Departamento de História, Estudos Europeus, Arqueologia e Artes da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra – Portugal.



(PÉCORA, 2011), mas compreender esta produção singular, durante muito tempo secundarizada pela academia, no contexto amplo dos usos sociais e culturais do verso. Esta linha de interpretação situa ainda a poesia obscena em dois contextos convergentes, que entendemos decisivos para a sua análise. Por um lado, esta escrita ocorre num momento em que o próprio conceito moderno de poesia lírica, enquanto capital expressivo e subjetivo, estava em formação. Por outro lado, o obsceno relaciona-se com os protocolos de verdade e de desocultação promovidos pelo processo secular aberto pelo Iluminismo, tendo assim uma relação profunda com as transformações que ocorrem na sociedade portuguesa nas últimas décadas do séc. XVIII.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Obscenidade; Desejo; Poder; Poesia; Classe Social.

This study offers a rereading of the obscene verse in Portuguese poetry in the second half of the 18th-century. The main goal is to integrate a poetics of obscenity not only in the classical heritage, as has been pointed out by literary criticism (CIDADE, 1986; PIRES, 2004; NEUMANN, 2006), or more overtly by studies of rhetoric-stylistic content (PÉCORA, 2011), but to understand this singular production, largely ignored within the academy, within the broad context of the social and cultural uses of the verse. Let us recall in this respect an already classic statement, when Foucault reminds us that as much as speech seems to be little, the prohibitions that affect it reveal very quickly its strong connection with the realms of desire and power. He reminds us that there is nothing surprising about this, since discourse is not simply that which manifests or hides desire (cf. FOUCAULT, 1997:10). As we will be commenting, the discourse of obscene verse is also that which in itself is the object of desire. This verse is thus played out in close relation to the conditions of enunciation and writing, at a time when the very concept of poetry is still making its way towards the subjective expressivism that will later define the lyrical mode after Romanticism.

The obscene verse thus interferes in this period with a broad thematic spectrum, crossing social, political or specifically literary issues. The vigilance of writing stems from the growing diversity of the social uses of verse, to an unprecedented scale until then. We described in an earlier work this culture as metromania, simultaneously circulating in copies, manuscripts and prints (OLIVEIRA, 2008). For this reason also, poetry is strongly guarded by the apparatus of censorship, given the possibility and danger of a free proliferation of writing. The forbidden verse thus simultaneously raises a truth-seeking *logophilia* and intends to experience the authoritative limits of writing², but also a latent *logophobia*, caused by the confrontation with the guarded order and the protocols of classical decorum.

2 The relationship between modern censorship and the constitution of modern authorship as a legal entity is well known. This relationship is only possible in the context of the growing dissemination of a written culture. The author's name is enhanced by his authoritative inscription as well as by the publicity of his signature. Take the central thesis of A. Patterson's book, published in the 2nd edition after the Salman Rushdie affair: «Rushdie's article "A Pen against the Sword: in Good Faith" supports my central thesis, that it is to censorship in part that we owe our very concept of "literature", as a kind of discourse with rules of its own, a concept that has for centuries been thought to be capable of protecting writers who have tried to abide by those rules.» (PATTERSON, 1989, p. 4).

Bocage's writing reveals in this context a particularly critical character, visible in his praise for the freedom to come, in the celebration of scientific reason, in the anticlerical lyric or in the obscene writing of various compositions. For this reason, censorship is in close relation with the process of establishing limits to literature itself: the historicity of the *name* of literature, understood as a discourse to which modernity will recognize the authority to say everything, is here at a critical moment in terms of its ontological and jurisdictional grounding:

«Let's make it clear. What we call literature (not belles-lettres or poetry) implies that license is given to the writer to say everything he can, while remaining shielded, safe from all censorship, be it religious or political [...]. In the end, the critico-political function of literature, in the West, remains very ambiguous. The freedom to say everything is a very powerful political weapon, but one which might immediately let itself be neutralized as a fiction.»
(DERRIDA, 1992, p. 38)

The obscene verse is thus made by the very vigilance of writing in this period, for in its common meaning the obscene is that which hurts shame³, especially in the realms of desire and sexuality. When in 1966 Natália Correia edited the long-awaited *Antologia de Poesia Erótica e Satírica*, she organized her introduction into three parts, in a gesture of clear emancipatory intention, ordering them towards a final acceptance of Eros: “Aphrodite's Captivity”, “The Poet's Purgatory” and “The Reintegration of Eros” (cf. CORREIA, 1999). Despite the expectation and boldness set out in this volume dedicated to the period in question, this anthology did not *invent* an erotic 18th-century, but it did create an editorial object and contributed to legitimize a less ‘literate’ discourse on poetry. Given the absence of a local tradition in erotic prose, it was the verse that very early associated Bocage's name with a unique editorial history, controversial from the moment he lay dying (cf. GONÇALVES, 2003, p. 279). The popular mythification of his improvisational genius would eventually condition his literary reputation⁴, but the first edition of the *Poesias*

3 In the case of corporal and sexual shame, I return to the definition that Jean-Claude Bologne used to trace the history of this perpetual tension between instinct and reason: “Sentimento de vergonha, de incómodo que se tem ao fazer, ao enfrentar ou ao ser testemunha das coisas de natureza sexual” (BOLOGNE, 1996, p. 6). On the obscene, let us also remember the colloquium organized by S. Floch (1983). In a short text, which opens the original 1974 edition, G. Almansi summarizes the scope of his own study, which comprised authors from Dante to Henry Miller, as follows: «Questo libro vuole agganciarsi, sia pure con fragili grappini d'arrembaggio, a una storia secolare di operazioni inutili, di speculazioni fallimentari, di elaborate e raffinate esegesi che finiscono sempre nello squallore di un *cul-de-sac*. L'area entro la quale ho praticato le vane esercitazioni della critica estetica è quella dell'osceno, dell'oltraggioso, del volgare, con particolare predilezione – forse significativa – per le trascrizioni letterarie di atti sessuali» (ALMANSI, 1996, p. VII).

4 In the preface to an unpublished text of Sade, Anatole France appears to have expressed the following philological differentiation: «Il n'est pas nécessaire de traiter un texte du Marquis de Sade comme un texte de Pascal». This observation by Anatole France was the motto for an excellent essay on genetic criticism by Michel Delon, Jean-Christophe Abramovici and Éric Le Grandic, entitled «Sade au travail, dans ses manuscrits.» (in: *Écrire aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Genèses de textes littéraires et philosophiques*, Jean-Louis Lebrave et Almuth Grésillon (Dir.), Paris, CNRS Editions, 2000, p. 137-168).

Eróticas, Burlescas e Satíricas in 1854 allowed this textuality finally to be given a book form.

Since there is not much in Portuguese literature that we can undoubtedly call a pornographic tradition as in the exceptional case of France or something affiliated with Moratín's *Arte de las putas* (1977) in Spain, obscene imagery in Portugal is strongly associated with the hybrid "erotic and satirical poetry", to which we must add, however, the classical tradition and the importation of the many forbidden books ("livros licenciosos"), mostly of French-speaking origin (cf. MARTINS, 2001). In this study I will consider this archive both for Bocage's satire and erotic poetry.

In her preface to her own anthology, Natália Correia uses the concept of "the transposition of style" ("transposição de estilo") to characterize the procedures that dominated obscene writing in the 18th-century. The expression arises when she attempts to articulate the conventionality of this poetry, still clearly marked by the rhetorical-stylistic codification of classical origin, with the prevalence of satire as a "combat weapon" in the social arena (CORREIA, 1999: 26). The "transposition of style" is indeed a very pertinent process for describing the instrumentalization and polemization of the verse. The criticism of Bocage's poetry oscillates between this kind of enlightened and empowered version, proposed by Daniel Pires, among others (cf. BOCAGE, 2004-2005, VII: IX-XL), and a more rhetorical reading like that of Alcir Pécora, which tends to read the obscene verse of this period as a more stylistic rather than referential manifestation (PÉCORA, 2001, p. 203-245).

Pécora's position radicalizes the "transposition of styles" mentioned by Natália Correia, because it is a precept that can be found throughout the heroic style used in mock-epic poems and other abundant satirical poetry of this period (cf. Cidade, 1984: 311-339; Maffre, 1994). But from this stylistic universalization, the critic ruthlessly runs through Bocage's satirical and erotic poetry, diluting each verse into a code, each semantic piece into an inherited form. The risk of the subject who wrote the composition entitled *Pavorosa Ilusão da Eternidade* is referred to the 'anecdotal', although he admits there exists a "stiff empiricism of authority". But everything happens as if there was no difference between walking naked or dressed, speaking of time or sex, looking out the window like Nicolau Tolentino, or getting two women to talk about their common experience of orgasm, as in Bocage's *Cartas*.

No limite, o facto de existir uma personagem na lírica bocageana que se apresenta como «Preto na cara, enorme no mangalho» ("Ribeirada") seria mero efeito necessário à retórica sublime, um divertimento letrado no contexto de uma «libertinagem verosímil" que transforma o soneto "Liberdade, onde estás? Quem te demora" em efeito estilístico. (id: 217-225)

In the end, the fact that there is a character in the Bocage's lyric who presents himself as "Preto na cara, enorme no mangalho" (*Ribeirada*) would be a mere necessary effect of the sublime rhetoric, a literate amusement in the context of a libertinage ("libertinagem verosímil") which transforms the sonnet *Liberdade onde estás? Quem te demora?* into a simple stylistic

effect (id: 217-225)⁵.

The existence of a rather conventional game around the gallant libertine is not in question, but this does not exhaust the *Cartas de Olinda e Alzira*, let alone the totality of the author's obscene poetry. The rhetorical-formal constraints pointed out by Pécora, especially based on the fundamental language and structure of the text, are certainly something to be taken into account, as a defense to a strictly national reading or psychological stance.

These *Cartas* resume the classic scene of instruction in the arts of love: a more experienced woman teaches a younger woman, giving advice and passing on her experience. Despite variations in characters and topography, the structure of the text inherits from Ovid (*Heroides*)⁶ and Aretino (*Ragionamenti*), but it has also been influenced by French texts of the 17th and 18th centuries, especially by *L'École de filles* (1655), *Académie des dames* (1680) or even *Thérèse Philosophe* (1748), as quoted in a strangely cautious context: “Que uma Teresa, que outras tais francesas / Em impuros bordéis se ufanam”! (BOCAGE, 2004-05, VII, p. 34)⁷.

5 The interpretation of Pécora reminds us of a comment once made by Derrida about rhetoricism being taken literally. In an interview with Gary Olson for the *Journal of Advanced Composition*, Derrida recalled the importance of contexts and situations, including ‘political’ and ‘libidinal’ situations, in any verbal statement, forcing the distinction between rhetoric and rhetoricism: «Now, this doesn't mean that everything depends on verbal statements or formal technique of speech acts. There are speech acts everywhere, but the possibility of speech acts, or performative speech acts, depends on conditions and conventions which are not simply verbal. What I call “writing” or “text” is not simply verbal. That's why I'm very interested in rhetoric but very suspicious of rhetoricism [...]. I think a self conscious, trained teacher of rhetoric should teach precisely what are called “pragmatics”; that is, the effects of rhetoric don't depend only on the way you utter words, the way you use tropes, the way you compose. They depend on certain situations: political situations, economical situations, the libidinal situation, also». In the same interview, when asked about the opposition between philosophy and rhetoric, he replies: «Well, from that point of view I would be on the side of philosophy. The tension comes first from the fact that rhetoric as a separate discipline, as a technique or as an autonomous field, may become a sort of empty instrument whose usefulness or effectiveness would be independent of logic, or even reference or truth—an instrument in the hands of the sophists in the sense that Plato wanted to define them. So contrary to what some people think - for instance, Habermas - I would be on the side of philosophy, logic, truth, reference, etc.» (cf. Jacques Derrida, «Rhetoric and Composition: A Conversation», in *Journal of Advanced Composition*, Nº 10, Vol. 1, 1990, pp. 1-21 [ed. ut.: http://www.jacweb.org/Archived_volumes/Text_articles/V10_11_OlsonDerrida.htm]

6 Bocage was the author of an imitation of Ovid entitled *Arte de Amar ou Preceitos e Regras Amatórias para Agradar às Damas* (The Art of Loving or Loving Precepts and Rules to Please the Ladies), which opens with a foundational purpose: “Se, lascivos do mundo, amais sem arte, / Lede meus versos, amareis com ela” (BOCAGE, 2004-05, VII, p. 47). This text also ends with a pedagogical statement: “Eis em resumo as regras necessárias, / A fim de conseguir femínio afecto: / Delas aprendereis, destros mancebos, / A serdes, prevenindo os laços / Armados por Amor à inexperiência, / Pendurando assim troféus inúmeros / Ao carro triunfal da vossa glória” (BOCAGE, 2004-05, VII, p. 60).

7 The survey of the intertextual relations raised by the *Cartas* has been deepened recently, especially by authors such as Florence Nys (2005), Martin Neumann (2006) and most impressively by Eckhard Höfner (2006), an author who clearly associates the work with the epistolary tradition. Considering the diverse naming either as “epístola”, “cartas” or “letras” (in the original text itself), Florence Nys suggests that the nobility of the epistolary tradition in relation to the letter may have been a strategy of concealment.

In Bocage's *Letters*, the educational scene is also evident. Olinda had asked for help because of her "estranha agitação" and "viva chama", devouring her from inside (id.: 11). Alzira promises help, provided Olinda follows her experienced advice, obviously intended to deepen the art of physical love, leaving her friend, only three years younger, to rely on the "sabia mão da Natureza", both in the fulfillment of desire as in the transformations of the adolescent body:

“Porém, depois que o Sol da Primavera
Fecundos raios sobre nós dardeja,
Então de novas formas animado,
Pula nas veias afogueado sangue,
E sem perder da infância os atractivos,
Da puberdade o lustre desfrutamos.
Então sentimos comoções insólitas,
Que origem são dos males que te oprimem,
Do amor que te domina, melancólico,
Da forte agitação que em ti pressentes.
Mas tudo tem remédio, eu hei-de dar-to.
Feliz serás, se o trilho me seguires.”
(BOCAGE, 2004-05, VII: 12).

Between Epistles I and V, Alzira encourages her friend to follow Nature. In Epistles VI and VIII the situation is reversed and the pleasure also arises from the gratification drawn from the cross-reading of their erotic experience (cf. NYS, 2005). Each friend goes on with the description of their own meeting, exposing the detailed and graphic learning of the female body and the male body. Epistle VII, which ratifies Olinda's extraordinary progress, ends in a more politicized tone, by offering her friend a final account of her own initiation with Belino. The scene culminates with the learning of the body, in growing narrative which refers to the libertine topic of nakedness, the size of the male limb, the many flames ("chamas") and also to martial penetration ("grossa lança"), oscillating between pain and pleasure and, with remarkable frequency, to the female orgasm.

In this 7th Epistle, Olinda manages to reach climax ("o prazer mais saboroso") four times, until she falls half-dead, after hours of what she calls "combate aceso". Each orgasm occurs in different situations: before penetration; with penetration; at the same time ("cadência recíproca aliada"); and with the young woman in leading position (Bocage, 2004-05, VII, p. 38-42).

The verse letter bears witness to the hybrid character of Bocage's literate forms of communication, demonstrating a great capacity for thematic inclusion. The letter operates as a conversational mediation that places it beyond the manuscript and below the print, in a place that capitalizes precisely on the relative intimacy of epistolary writing and the publicity of the printed object. This duality still persists when circulation does not abandon the strict form of the manuscript.

In this context, the obscene completely demystifies itself, integrating the reversibility between the subject and the object. It is precisely after the third orgasm that shame becomes hateful (“odiosa”), thus turning invisible to Olinda’s moral system at the very moment of her educational progress:

«Mas curvando-me um pouco e com justeza,
Achei convir ao estojo o instrumento,
Cuja palpitação, sem ajustar-nos,
Em cadência recíproca aliada,
Bastava a provocar gosto indizível,
De modo que sem mais fadiga eu pude,
Na grata posição Belino imóvel,
Atingir o prazer mais saboroso,
Nadar em mil deleites engolfada.
Aqui, amada Alzira, essa virtude
Que apelidam pudor, foi-me odiosa.»
(BOCAGE, 2004-05, VII: 41).

A few verses later, after the fourth orgasm, things finally become morally clear to Olinda: «Neste instante, expirou dentro de minh’alma / Temor nefando, que imolava ao culto. / *Nova moral raiou de Olinda aos olhos;*» (BOCAGE, 2004-05, VII: 43). The old morality therefore gives way to a kind of redemptive ‘orgasmomania’. As is so often in libertine literature, this final saturation confirms that female orgasm is not a communicative problem in the late 1700s, a period before male traumatization of this topic in their perception of sexuality (STEINTRAGER, 1999). It is therefore not something that a feminist reading can be invested in. Still, their readability in these *Letters* benefits from being witnessed by the woman. The coincidence between orgasm and moral reconstruction is not fortuitous either; orgasm is at the peak of the pleasure system, an essential part of the science of pleasure, necessary for the “instruction” that concludes the last three verses, when Olinda conjures an instructive and confidential covenant: “Minha instrução confio aos teus cuidados; / D’amizade o esplendor, dá-te a mim; / Acaba de fazer-me de ti digna.” (BOCAGE, 2004-05, VII, p. 45).

Before I proceed with more evidence of the obscene in Bocage and in some of his contemporaries, it is worth adding that one of the reasons for the recent widespread critical dissent on this text relates to its libertine consistency and even to the possibility of subjecting him to an admittedly pornographic reading. Contrary to Hernâni Cidade, Florence Nys recently proposed a reading of the *Letters* not as “sensuality without pornography”, but as an actual pornographic account (NYS, 2005). Florence Nys tries to avoid the question of value and even separating meaning from form: «We do not want to catalog the *Cartas de Olinda e Alzira*, nor reduce them to a pejorative and injurious label that seems to ignore the poetic and lyrical

quality of the text. The issue of pornography will not be raised in literary terms, but rather in terms of strategies” (NYS, 2005: 66). It is a somewhat paradoxical objective, because in using the ‘énonciation pornographique’, which Goulemot explored in a libertine context, the question of reading effects necessarily implies an ordering of reference. She identifies, however, some pornographic strategies according to the model adopted, namely the presence of an erotic self that individualizes the story, the succession of erotic images and the existence of a voyeuristic structure.

Assuming that the concept of pornography can hardly be used in a transhistorical sense, applicable to all representations of sexuality, then the *Letters*, like the obscene Bocage himself, would rather be in the transition from cult eroticism to pornography⁸. On a more strictly eighteenth-century level, we can say that Bocage transitions from the “obsceno freirático” (HATHERLY, 2003), linked to Baroque sociability, to the more erotic-pornographic obscene of modernity, a manifestation of more a urban inscription, marked by a certain confrontation and increasingly by the language of money. António Lobo de Carvalho’s sonnet, which presents a friar asking for money to see prostitutes (“ir às meninas”) is symptomatic about these changes. The convent as a site is progressively no longer a free libidinal archive, and therefore the priest has to be subjected to rising prices. The style acquires a more popular stance:

«Ah que del-rei! Não há quem me socorra!
 (Certo frade arreitado à mãe dizia)
 “Valha-me a rua Suja, ou Cotovia,
 Antes que mártir do tesão eu morra!”
 Larga a mãe um tostão ao frade borra,
 Mas ele, que acha pouco, assim porfia:
 “Veja lá, mãe, se acaso gramaria
 Por tão pouco *d’argent* tão grande porra?”
 Fica a santa mulher toda aturdida,
 Não tendo nunca visto, nem tocado
 Porra tão grossa, porra tão comprida.
 Que fará, vendo o filho em tal estado?
 Apara papel, toma-lhe a medida,
 Vai levar a bitola ao seu prelado.»
 (Carvalho, 1852: 143)

8 Ian Frederick Moulton has written a compelling study on the misapplication of the concept of pornography to premodern times. Revisiting the work of Linda Williams (1989), Lynn Hunt (1989), Walter Kendrick (1987), among others, Moulton identifies pornography with the emergence of modern capitalism, urbanization, the culture of visuality and above all the emergence of a sex industry. On a literary level, this situation generates narratives with characteristics quite different from the erotic representations of the premodern period (cf. F. Moulton, *Before Pornography. Erotic Writing in Early Modern England*, Oxford: OUP, 2000, p. 3-32).

We can only speculate about the meaning of the final verse. However, it is noticeable that this type of composition departs from the “obsceno freirático” and from its stricter codification, thus less available to the contemporary language and informality. Nicolau Tolentino in the quintiles entitled *The Lovers*, still addresses the “freiráticos” as mythical suppliers of “fina ternura”:

“Porém se da plebe escura
Em pouco o triunfo prezas,
E queres fina ternura,
Extremos, delicadezas
Os freiráticos procura;
Gentes de mais alta esteira,
Ternos, finos corações,
Que em fechada papeleira
Vão guardando em batalhões
As cartas da sua freira;”
(Tolentino, 1994: 79)

Returning to the argument, a second point of contention about Bocage’s Letters appears to be the weakness of their libertine argument, marked by various contradictions. Such restrictions would weaken the emancipatory content of the Letters, in several ways: in the erotic learning; in the affirmation of the natural body; in the naturalization of desire; in questioning dogmatic tutelage; in the supremacy of reason (“O que a razão desnega, não existe”, in Bocage, 2004-2005, VII, p. 24). More than moderating this impulse, the comparative philological exercise of Höfner (2006) and above all Neumann (2006) is rigorous, moderating his libertine energy, for some important reasons: Alzira is married; the presence of a “sensitive heart” reveals a weakened sentimentality; and erotic encounters take place at home rather than in the convent.

Satirical obscenity is Bocage’s version of the sexualized ban which he most often practiced, sometimes in compositions for which doubts on his authorship still persist. Obscene writing manifests itself above all in medium-sized poems such as *A Manteigui*, *Ribeirada*, *A nocturnal company* and even a series of sonnets. This corpus crosses obscenity with politics, prejudice or morality. The description or suggestion of sexual activity is the aspect that unites them in their confrontation with shame. They are also compositions that do not manifest a visible relationship with the libertine tradition, but rather with the various sexual interdictions, in shades that oscillate between the satirical and the purely burlesque.

“A Manteigui” refers to a female figure in Damão’s society. This is one of the texts which most violently confronts the interdict by exploiting the prostitute wife in a colonial environment. Bocage removes all the effects of the above-mentioned “style transposition”, opening his “bitching” epic loudly:

“Canto a beleza, canto a putaria
 De um corpo tão gentil como profano;
 Corpo que, a ser preciso, engoliria
 Pelo vaso os martelos de Vulcano;
 Corpo vil, que trabalha mais num dia
 Do que Martinho trabalhou num ano,
 E que atura as chumbadas e pelouros
 De cafres, brancos, maratas e mouros.”
 (Bocage, 2004-05, VII: 125-126)

What follows is the Invocation, addressed to Venus, also packaged in a lascivious register⁹, before starting the description of an interracial encounter involving the heroine and a “sórdido cafre asselvajado”, which Manteigui, a nymphomaniac mind, occasionally co-opted for luxurious satisfaction. Then emerges the topic of bestialization, both of the native, converted into “elephant”, and the husband himself, who surprises them without showing any concern for the fact:

“Neste comenos o cornaz marido
 O bode racional, veado humano,
 Entrava pela câmara atrevido
 Como se entrasse num lugar profano;
 Mas vendo o preto em jogos de Cupido,
 Eis sai logo, dizendo: “Arre, magano!
 Na minha cama! Estou como uma brasa!
 Mas, bagatela, tudo fica em casa”.
 (id.: 129)

The close representations of satirical obscenity also very clearly contradict the hygienic discourse that the Enlightenments promoted. The ideal of transparency and clarity is confronted with versions of the body and the sexual act that enact true monstrosities, without rejecting prejudice. In *Ribeirada*, the protagonist, nicknamed “fodaz Ribeiro”, opens with a succession of stanzas starting with the aforementioned “Musa galicada e fedorenta”. In the fourth stanza, the dirt acquires unprecedented and indeed execrable traits. We are in the universe of abjection:

« Adorna hirsuto ríspido pentelho
 Os ardentes colhões do bom Ribeiro,
 Que são duas maçãs de escaravelho,
 Não digo na grandeza, mas no cheiro.

⁹ The same happens in the poem *Ribeirada*: «Ó Musa galicada e fedorenta! / Tu, que às fudas de Apolo estás sujeita, / Anima a minha voz, pois hoje intenta / Cantar esse mangaz, que a tudo arreita» (id.: 134).

Ali piolhos ladros tão vermelho
Fazem com dente agudo o pau leiteiro,
Que o cata muita vez; mas ao tocar-lhe
Logo o membro nas mãos entra a pular-lhe.»
(id.: 134)

Bocage grants this soiled ‘brute’ an unexpected night bath, aggravating the degradation, before maritally joining him with a female “genital enxúndia”, at which point the violent bestialization returns:

“Prossegue o desalmado; mas a esposa
Que não pode aturar-lhe a dura estaca,
Dando voltas ao cu, muito chorosa,
Com jeito o membralhão das bordas saca;
Ele irado lhe diz, com voz queixosa:
“Não és uma mulher como uma vaca?
Porque fazes traições, quando te empurro
O mastro? Quando vês que gemo e que zurro?”
(id.: 140-141)

Although close to obscene satire, these compositions resort to a set of procedures that manifest affinities with pornographic literature: enumerative strategies, amplifying the number of partners or positions; the male perspective, focused on penetration and excitement of the male imaginary; a tendency towards undifferentiated objectification of women, more evident in the sonnets and in the *Ribeirada*. There are also several metaphorizations of rape, with different agents and situations as varied as the marital scenario in the *Ribeirada*. The poem ends with a curious didactic note, not so much in the sense of enlightened emancipation, but of practical advice. It is especially addressed to the “fodilhões encarniçados”, informing them that in the face of the outrageous actions of “fodaz Ribeiro”, a positive lesson should be drawn: “Que não são tais porrões ao gosto delas: / Que lhes não pode, enfim, causar recreio / Aquele que passar palmo e meio” (id.: 143).

In the sonnets, Bocage further emphasizes the transition between the satirical obscene and the pornographic obscene, a movement that we can root in Bocage’s own persona and a conspicuous form of life, which would lead to the nineteenth-century concept of literate bohemia, with which Bocage maintains a foundational relationship¹⁰. This tendency for the presentation of

10 In Bourdieu’s words: “As an ambiguous entity, the bohemian inspires ambivalent feelings, even among its most ardent advocates. First, because he defies classifications: close to the “people” whose misery he often shares, he is separated from him by the art of living that socially defines it and which, though ostensibly opposed to bourgeois conventions and conveniences, places it more close to the aristocracy or the big bourgeoisie than the orderly petty bourgeoisie, especially in the order of relations between the sexes where all forms of transgression, free love, venal love, pure love, eroticism are experienced (...)” (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 77, my translation).

the self is announced in two autobiographical sonnets. The first one consists of the uncensored version of the well-known *Magrão, de olhos azuis, carão moreno*, varying in the final verse, now in a dysphoric register; the second stages his own death, ending with an epitaph: «Aqui dorme Bocage, o putanheiro; / Passou vida folgada e milagrosa: / Comeu, bebeu, fodeu sem ter dinheiro» (id.: 72).]

The diversity of the human gallery represented in the sonnets reinforces the social implication of these verses, directed to preferential targets. The clergy benefit from a vast gallery, including “frades”, “fradanhões”, “franciscanos”, “velhos impotentes” and “semi-clérigos”.

He also addresses the dissolute clergy whom he literally asks to “desentolhar esses conventos”, properly regimenting these “serviçais da preguiça”: «Existam estes lobos carniceiros, / Para não arruinar inteiramente / Putas, pívias, cações e alcoviteiros» (id.: 92). A healthy girl can move at a glance from being a simple seamstress to the hands of a pimp, ending up as a “menina de muleta” in the infirmary (id. : 102). Anticlericalism is popularized in Lobo de Carvalho, a sonnetist with a certain mastery of form and a clear tendency towards transgression and abjectness.

Prostitution is one of its most recurring themes, with unprecedented variations on the dissolution of morals (“fanchonismo” above all¹¹), disease (Gallic evil, recurrently), misery, and a whole urban underworld that has rarely been laid so bare in eighteenth century verse.

The epocal fixation on the figure of the prostitute, which he himself presents in a monetized urban context, with its places and rituals, leads him to dedicate a sonnet to Nicholas Tolentino himself, against the mania of “making verses to whores and footmen”. The sonnet *Se a lira pulsas e o pandeiro tocas* ends with the explicit warning:

11 “Fanchonismo” tends to be associated with court depravation. In one of his sonnet *Contra o fanchonismo*, Lobo de Carvalho describes what he understands to be a disease:

“Das tartáreas masmorras o Diabo
Trouxe nos cornos a brutal punheta;
Jurando aniquilar com manha e treta
Delícias feminis, por quem me babo;

Corre Lisboa do princípio ao cabo;
Inspira em corja vil que esquive a greta,
Que ao gosto singular da mama e teta,
Hoje a mão substitua, a bimba, o rabo;

Lavra o prazer bastardo; eis Madragoa,
Eis Taipas, Cotovia em abandono,
Rara pica nas bordas já se assoa:

E perdeu tanto a voga o pobre cono,
Que até certo taul viú em Lisboa
Um gato sodomita, um cão fanchono!”
(Carvalho, 1852: 152)

“Prossegue, Nicolau, na fácil peta,
Que os versos teus são fulminantes raios
Que contra a plebe sacas da gaveta;
O céu te dê à Musa altos ensaios,
Porque eu te juro que hás-de ser poeta,
Enquanto houverem putas, e lacaios.”
(Carvalho, 1852: 132)

The universalization of the condition of the prostitute does not fail to translate a certain societal anxiety, in which power, misery and money increasingly intersect and prostitute each other. In Bocage poverty subsists and the cynical irony at the ‘metal’ obtained at the cost of an agonizing disease - ”Uma empada de gálico à janela (...) Tudo em metal por dois canais ajunta.” (Bocage, 2004-05, vol. VII, p. 107 and 114).

We are faced with what Bataille called ‘low prostitution’, a form of the utmost degradation of the prostitute woman, to the point of making the perception of the wrongdoing itself unfeasible (Bataille, 1988, p. 117). Their language inscription is equally varied. Bocage takes advantage of empirical poetic advantages, addressing his Nise in terms that denote the indifferentiation of prohibitions, as if the courtesan who knows how to transgress and the prostitute who survives beyond the society that recognizes the prohibition are in equal circumstances:

“Não lamentos, ó Nise, o teu estado;
Putas tem sido muita gente boa,
Putíssimas fidalgas tem Lisboa,
Milhões de vezes putas têm reinado.
(...)
Todas no mundo dão a sua greta
Não fiques pois duvidosa
Que isto de virgo e honra é tudo peta.”
(Bocage, 2004-2005, VII: 93).

It was also the whole of this obscene poetry that the Encyclopedic Journal had in mind when it wrote, in the year of Almeida Garrett’s birth: “Poetry has often prostituted its talent to wickedness and to the most infamous obscenities.” (1799, p. 166). Between Bocage, the figure that clearly protagonizes the obscene, and Lobo de Carvalho, the heteronomy of the poetic is manifested in this muse no longer through a descent to the strictly political, but to the social and corporal materiality, the multiple universe of transgressions, the repressed and the marginal.

Portuguese literature does not demonstrate robust versions of the francophone libertine heterotopia. The verse maintains a dual relation with local materiality and expressive tradition, but it is apparent that the erotic-libertine love of the *Cartas de Olinda e Alzira* already hides some compromises regarding the intimacy of the emerging bourgeois love, as reflected in the “coração sensível”.

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