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PHILOSOPHICAL AND LITERARY INTERRELATIONSHIPS IN “POEMAS NOVOS”, BY RUBENS RODRIGUES TORRES FILHO

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Abstract: This text seeks to point out certain aspects and procedures that enable a dialogue between horizons of lyrical creation and certain active forces of skeptical philosophy (NUNES; 2010; KRAUSE, 2004; BRITO, 2013), especially in the compositions arranged in the set of “Poemas novos”, by Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho (1997). In association with this purpose, the metacritical study (COMPAGNON, 2001; TODOROV, 2015) of texts from the reception stands out, which highlight the skeptical and ironic bent of the poet’s lyrical creation. Among them, the examinations carried out by Viviana Bosi (2004) on the ways in which the ironic procedure and the skeptical perspective interact together with the attitude of the poetic subject in a horizon of historical narrowing, or, then, in interrelation with the understanding of reality. and the world associated with the creative process of composition, seen by Isabela Gaglianone (2013). Thus, it is emphasized that poems such as “in the beginning” and “praise of the hollow” provide, simultaneously, movements of contention of acquiescence and of compositional expansion.

Keywords: Skepticism; lyric; metacriticism.

PRELUDE

Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho published by Massao Ohno his first book of poems, *Investigação do olhar*, in 1963, when he was still studying Philosophy at the University of São Paulo (FFLCH, 2021). Indeed, such professional conjunction signaled a certain attention of the poet towards an interdisciplinary vision and action. As can be seen from the opening epigraph of the book and the constitution of the poems, Torres Filho’s first work already highlights the effort to delimit the concern with the elaboration of language as one of the central resolutions of poetic making. Notably, compositions stand out in which procedures that orbit the

metalinguistic, imagery and lyrical spheres predominate, expressing spheres through which literary creations transit in amorous, existential and self-reflexive themes. As the researcher Viviana Bosi (2004) points out, the initial literary creation of Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho would approach certain poetic productions of some Brazilian modernists with a strong imagery tendency, French surrealism and the lyrical creation of Paul Éluard. In this context, the critic emphasizes the significant cut that was given in the compositional procedures of Torres Filho: “The way in which his particular form of writing matured was not gradual and gradual, having passed from a higher and rarefied language in the years 60 to the other, predominantly ironic and elliptical, from 80 onwards.” (BOSI, 2004, p. 93). Notwithstanding the affirmation of the difference of a highlighted compositional tonic for these phases that are dimensioned in the work of Torres Filho, we emphasize that certain visions of the world and certain forms of experiential interrelationships are present in the first book and will be one of the core aspects of his work. lyrical. Such similarity of conditions can be glimpsed in certain compositional horizons, as arranged in the poem “link”¹:

I ask the obscure religion of the birds or the inexplicable talent for the sadness of these squares.

And we’ll cry together in the guilty afternoon **while the sun dies on our eyelids and the night, enemy and sweet**, come to eat our memory.

(TORRES FILHO, 1997, p. 158; excerpts that were highlighted by us)

In “connection” the constitution of a poetics that emphasizes nuances of transience, precariousness and relativity for certain spheres of human existence and its body of knowledge is already configured. In view of this, the

1 The books of poems by Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho are gathered in the collection: *Novolume* (1997).

lyrical creation of Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho in his first reflections already points to the scope of the tragic artistic dimension and the skeptical theoretical perspective, as his compositions in advance sought to permeate the beacons of the launch of the potentiality of the moment and the distrust in relation to the accuracy and longevity of certain human assessments.

COMPOSITIONAL OVERTURES

The core of aspects and worldview mentioned earlier continues in a different way, but still very incisive in the poet's later works, especially in the literary creations of his latest publications, according to what Viviana Bosi says: "In *Poemas Novos* (1994-97), more recent and smaller, the praise of the moment becomes clear, the examination of the here and now that at least is not deceived by mystifications. Attempts beyond are disqualified as laughable, inaccurate." (BOSI, 2004, p.99). Such preponderance of the compositional core stands out in three ways of constitution. Initially, we highlight the compositional opening aimed at the appreciation of the correct moments of existence in contrast to the theoretical or abstract plans of reassembly of the moment, visualized, for example, in the lyrical creation "nitido Céu":

Clear parked plural sky at the angle of the necks that flex some walking angels as we are when raising noses without pride (and without greed, as Goethe said) in that direction: starry night, **ride to the eyes but abyss** for the imagination, that poor thing.

Declared page and plain text that quotes, ellipsis or metaphors in vain populate, trying to supply them with infinite portables. Board of dangerous moves, innocent.

(TORRES FILHO, 1997, p. 19; excerpts highlighted by us)

Situated in the domains of metapoetic and

existential compositions, the verses of "clear heaven" establish a combination of forces, potentialities, situations and attitudes that provide a scope through which the poetic subject projects a certain matter of decision. As mentioned earlier, there is a clash between the evident strength of experiencing the moment and the arduous coexistence with the coldness and abstraction of the initial point of artistic construction (seen in the difficulty of conducting literary expression after the lived moment). Such a contrast, while effective, gives rise to an interactive scope in which borders blend and duality unfolds in interactive resonance. Thus, the suggestion that opts for the primacy of the moment, on the other hand, also takes pleasure in the gathering of creative elements. To illustrate, we can list the intertextual forces that play with other modalities of impulses and vitalities, as can be seen in the mention of Goethe, in Mallarmé's remission (artistically arranged in the uniqueness and dramaticity of the moment – "Board / of dangerous lances [.. .]") and in the discreet adnomination to the philosopher Nietzsche next to the poem's title (extending the lyrical circuit to an expansion along with vitalist philosophy).

The second compositional opening that we emphasize in the creations of "Poemas novo" (1997) falls within the scope of the creational proximity to the proposal of suspension of judgment – of skeptical extraction – through which the continuity of search and research is proposed, in a continuously temporary design. from a dubious (distrustful) perspective of the evaluative act. This perspective field can be associated both with the skeptical path (KRAUSE, 2004) - which has in the search (*zétesis*) and in intellectual tranquility (*ataraxia*) strengths of an inquiring disposition - how it can be integrated into certain skeptical modes of argument (BRITO, 2016), such as the highlighting of the

variability of circumstances in the perception of the object (by way of didactic schematism, we discount, in this case, the subject/ object). This adherence to skepticism takes place in a detached, oscillating and sporadic way. It is not, therefore, the entry of the poetic instance to a certain philosophical school. In a different way, certain modulations of mood strata unfold in the literary composition, having in this doubtful perception one of the generating factors of lyrical creation, as expressed by Viviana Bosi:

In Drummond de *Alguma Poesia*, in Oswald and in a certain Murilo, humor or jokes pointed to the confusion between norm and reality or between individual and society, but still the water of modernization was not as polluted as it was from the mid-60s onwards, when Paes' new irony and Sebastian asserted himself. From then on, the horizon of the future becomes increasingly narrow and, especially with the marginalized, disenchanted. We believe that Rubens cultivates the **skeptical playfulness** of this new wave of 'post-utopians'. On the other hand, if there is any similarity between his poetry and that of the marginals – due to the apparent lack of commitment to 'social and cultural institutions', in him this is not due to some kind of youthful enthusiasm but, on the contrary, to the **skepticism** that nor in his own – skepticism – he believes. (BOSI, 2011, p. 206-207; excerpts highlighted by us).

In this panorama, the researcher diagrams the adoption of humor in its different origins and projections in certain currents of Brazilian literature in the 20th century, highlighting a continuous process of the humorous vein of detachment from the bonds of the surrounding context. As for the particularities of the humorous injunction along with the lyricism of Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho, the essayist emphasizes a certain performance similarity with José Paulo Paes and Sebastião Uchôa Leite, however, of a different order, as an aftermath, perhaps, of different artistic

and philosophical influences. In Torres Filho, this different view of the use of humor can occur through a game of various aspects and procedures, mediated by skeptical distance, which offers gradations of evaluations of certain truths arranged with society and the production of knowledge. Let's move on to the poem "in the beginning":

Philosophy then began in the liquidation attempt of the universe (arrangement, prop, cosmetic): promise free-flowing pitted **and etc.**

Mediterranean **meditations.** Archaic hydraulics. Absolute dissolute.

Is the first inaccuracy the one that remains?

(TORRES FILHO, 1997, p. 20; excerpts that were highlighted by us)

On the one hand, in the composition "in the beginning", the walk of the trails laid out in the initial processes of affirmation of Greek philosophy as a systematized set of knowledge is resumed. On the other hand, the poem raises the sedimentation of crystallized phrases and proverbs consecrated in certain social groups and in certain circumstances of colloquial use. In between these two indications come tempered internal creative relationships that provide effects of polysemy, estrangement, similarity and sound repetition, compulsory syntactic continuity, paradox and syntagmatic alterations. The constructions of the verses provide, simultaneously, a questioning/redirection of popular sayings and locutions and an inquiry about some philosophical yearnings that are in search of preemptory elucidations. More specifically, the claims of the first movements of philosophy carried out by the so-called pre-Socratic philosophers – in this case, Tales of Mileto, one of the advocates of the centrality of certain guiding principles of the functioning of the universe, such as water, for example. The course of this so-called "skeptical playfulness" retrospectively recovers

the sphere of the need for the continuous search for more knowledge, independent of assertoric or categorical assessments. Perhaps, a trajectory that is close to that depicted by Tzvetan Todorov (1991), through which the possibility of being aware that the truth is not captured and, however, one continues to seek it. The critic Isabela Gaglianone talks about the suspicious direction of the lyric of Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho:

It is the problem of disenchantment with the future, typical of the mockery of marginal poets and which is characterized by an **exacerbated skepticism**. But a skepticism that cultivates jest or deception, which results in a cutting irony. In Rubens's poetic work, the anonymity of poetry in the philosopher's hands finds in the penetrating and biting irony the evasion for the **disillusionment of the world and of the historical and systematic idea of truth**. (GAGLIANONE, 2013; excerpts that were highlighted by us).

Considering the way in which compositional processing is launched, the waters of Torres Filho's poems alternate between the force that impels new suspicious movements and the traps of abstentionism's atony. A troubled game, which can oscillate between the euphoria of a finding, the robustness of an attitude, the inconvenience of exposing an unpleasant argument and discursive annihilation. For now, let us return to the dimension in which skepticism touches the areas of criticism of criticism, punctuated by Antoine Compagnon:

I will be asked: what is your theory? no doctrine but hyperbolic doubt in the face of every discourse on literature. To the theory of literature, I see it as an **analytical and aporia attitude, a skeptical (critical) learning**, a metacritical point of view aimed at interrogating, questioning the presuppositions of all critical practices (in a broad sense), a perpetual 'What do I know'. (COMPAGNON, 2012, p. 23)

To slide on this ice rink, Compagnon glimpses the aporetic feature of metacriticism, which needs to transit and sew through antinomies of contexts, knowledge and knowledge, which are both valid and saturated. However, perhaps, what situates the evaluation of a fleeting situation is directly the oscillation of the gaze and the consideration of the conjugations of possible incitements - the thought as provocation, which admonishes and welcomes simultaneously. Therefore, let us come to the poem "praise of the hollow":

The hollow dispels the doubts about the emptiness of what is no one is left without a message. We all know right what matters about you.

Hollow is easy and honest.

I don't say the same for the rest.

(TORRES FILHO, 1997, p. 22; excerpts that were highlighted by us)

The composition "praise of the hollow" allows the presentation of a certain type of poetic incitement. Such instigation exposes a situation in which the core of the argumentative example comes from a competition that is much less expected. In addition to contradicting certain peculiar skeptical expedients such as the artistic feature of the distrustful guideline ("The hollow clears the doubts [...]") and a certain performance irresignability, the composition goes beyond empty transcendence (which would point to a dismissal of contents metaphysical and sublime, very dear to the poetics of modernity after the second half of the century – especially French) and can reach, for example, the meanders and backstage of learned simulations and dissimulations.

The third compositional opening of the literary creation of Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho that we emphasize in "Poemas novo" (1997) is the one through which the poetic subject visualizes the concert arranged in the

anesthesia and in the median of contemporary society, simultaneously standardized and diminished, as we find in “never always” or “after the beep signal”. Let’s look at this first:

First was better (worth more) wanting nothing than wanting nothing. Not deserving a single dignified comma now life ends, life fits in much, the **most**, of **smallness**, the small life.

There comes a time when you don’t want anything and the least willing will take the prize, **the stimulus award for the best minimum** – and this is the maximum. Thereby we are, and being with it, is everything – **poor and binary combination**.

I answer the phone about it all.

I can only answer with the busy.

(TORRES FILHO, 1997, p. 22; excerpts that were highlighted by us)

In “After the beep signal”, the compositional opening resumes the articulation between the evocation of a philosophical framework – Sartrean, existentialist, nihilistic, etc., through the fragment “First was better (it was worth more) / wanting nothingness [...]” – and the expression of the colloquial universe of everyday life. However, this artistic disposition now transits through other labyrinths, such as those available in the relationship of place and time intervals in which the sociabilities constituted in this redundant contemporary consonance are inserted. In this vein, the lyrical creation oscillates between tones of anguish, melancholy, denunciation and dissonance. Such a horizon can be seen in “never always”:

I searched in vain for a single object that was at once expressive and quiet, useless and complete, as is often only what is right and when it comes to the case, but never always, quiet the restless intentions and irresponsible gestures falsely consistent and appreciated at parties where the god Pan, so sober, never manifests himself.

(TORRES FILHO, 1997, p. 24; excerpts that were highlighted by us)

In these verses of the latest creation of “Poemas novo” the compositional opening that drives the criticism of the contemporary combination based on the parameters of anesthesia and median acts distinctly from the constitution of the previous poem. In “never ever” the anguish and dissonance spread in colors through which irony is arranged in units figured by oxymorons, contrasts, contradictions and paradoxes. Such an artistic framework provides the amplification of the antecedent questioning, however, denying the boredom and, on the other hand, girding the derision.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the compositions of “Poemas novo” we see an articulation between the maintenance of a certain artistic core that remains in the lyrical creation of Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho (on the one hand, with the construction of a literary proposal that highlights elements of transience, precariousness and relativity of various scopes of human existence; and, on the other hand, by the imagery exploration of the verses) and the sharpening of certain paths (contrast with the theoretical or abstract plans of reassembly of the moment; scope of creational proximity to the proposal of suspension of judgment; and criticism of the contemporary combination based on anesthesia and median parameters) through which ironic and skeptical expedients interact with the attitude of the poetic subject in the perspective of historical narrowing. Thus, compositional openings expose certain potentialities inherent to the interrelation of the understanding of reality and the world associated with a creative contact of elaboration, providing, dissonantly, movements of contention of acquiescence and compositional expansion.

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