



# AESTHETICS, ART AND INTIMACY

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# The *total relation*: poetry, real, and intimacy in António Ramos Rosa

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*Não existe espectáculo para a visão mais íntima [...].*<sup>2</sup>

António Ramos Rosa, *Ciclo do Cavalo*

*A realidade exterior passou a ser a matéria mais íntima e mais pura da relação total [...].*<sup>3</sup>

António Ramos Rosa, *O Aprendiz Secreto*

“How to be being to be being/ next to the united and firm/ and trembling/ mouth of the poem?”<sup>4</sup>; “How to say what is clearer than clarity? [...]?”<sup>5</sup> or “How to unite a light design and an obscure gesture?”<sup>6</sup>;

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2. “There is no spectacle for the most intimate view [...]” The translation of the epigraphs into English, as well as of all quotations from texts by António Ramos Rosa and other Portuguese authors presented throughout this article, is performed by us, since there are no English translations of the respective works. To that extent, whenever we include quotations of texts written in Portuguese, its original version is added in a footnote.

3. “The external reality became the most intimate and purest matter of the total relation [...]”

4. “Como estar sendo ser estando/ junto à boca unida e firme/ e trémula/ do poema?”. António Ramos Rosa, *Boca Incompleta* (Lisboa: Arcádia, 1977), 51.

5. “Como dizer o que é mais claro que a claridade [...]?”. António Ramos Rosa, *Gravitações* (Lisboa: Litexa, 1983), 56.

6. “Como unir um desígnio claro a um gesto obscuro?”. António Ramos Rosa, *No Calcanhar do Vento* (Coimbra: Centelha, 1987), 48.

and also “Who may be as faithful as a silent plant?/ Who has the ear of idleness the indolence of a reptile?”<sup>7</sup>. These questions, as well as many others that emerge from the poetic and essay writing of António Ramos Rosa (1924-2013) — who was not only one of the greatest contemporary Portuguese poets, but also a notable thinker of the field of the poetic phenomenon —, represent different modulations of the same angular question: that of the relation between poem and reality, or, more radically, between poem and being. And if such a question spreads into so many formulations it is because, in António Ramos Rosa, its scope is total, simultaneously aesthetic and ontological, metaphysical and spiritual. It is, therefore, this question that we will try to answer by looking into one of its possible faces: how can poetic creation be at the same time the most intimate gesture and the one that touches most deeply the undomesticated matter of the real, that absolute and unapprehensible Other?

### 1. Writing *where the word is not yet spoken*: poetic word and real

By matching poetry and thought through the exercise of a true poetic meditation<sup>8</sup>, Ramos Rosa dares to answer the radical questions he formulates by means of two different but concordant voices: the essayistic voice and the poetic one, the affirmative voice that reflects on the origin and destiny of poetry and the voice that, in its essential obscurity and poverty, risks, as Eduardo Lourenço says, a “schizophrenic combat with the very matter of the poem”<sup>9</sup>. We will therefore follow these two voices, as well as some *third voices* of poets and thinkers with whom Ramos Rosa dialogued, naming from now on the author “poet” or “essayist”, according to each of the voices we quote.

What is then the relationship between consciousness, poem,

7. “Quem poderá ser fiel como um vegetal silencioso?/ Quem tem ainda o ouvido do ócio a indolência de um réptil?”. António Ramos Rosa, *Génese seguido de Constelações* (Lisboa: Roma Editora, 2005), 47.

8. This *meditation* emerges as a fundamental characteristic of modern poetry, in which Ramos Rosa includes himself. In the essay “Why poets?” (which was dedicated precisely to one of the founders of poetic modernity, Rilke), Heidegger — one of the philosophers who have influenced António Ramos Rosa the most — presents what appears to be the desideratum of such poetry: “Admittedly, the first thing we must learn at this moment of world history is that making poems is also a matter of thinking. We will take the poem as a practice exercise in poetic reflection.” Heidegger, “Why Poets?”, in Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Off the Beaten Track* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 207.

9. “[...] esquizofrénico combate com a matéria mesma do poema”. Eduardo Lourenço, “Palavra com Poeta Dentro”, *Relâmpago*, n.º 5 (Outubro 1999), 7.

and reality? Ramos Rosa's answer to this question is framed, on the one hand, in a global vision of the human being and, on the other, in his perspective on the so-called "modern poetry", a concept that becomes the central theme of the Rosian essayism. In the early essays of the 1950s, those he published in the magazine *Árvore* [*Tree*] (1951-1953)<sup>10</sup> and others that, printed through diverse means, would later be collected in *Poesia, Liberdade Livre* [*Poetry, Free Freedom*] (1962), the essayist conceives man as a being who "longs to be one with the world and with himself"<sup>11</sup>, as "the very act of consciousness becoming the sense of wholeness"<sup>12</sup>, with poetry emerging as a medium of this movement, at the same time retrospective — as recovery of the lost unity —, and prospective — of futuristic construction of the human —, insofar as it reveals and updates the infinite possibilities of his creative freedom, and thus of himself and of the real.

Well, according to Ramos Rosa, modern poetry (and art, in general) is a fertile ground for this poetic asceticism of consciousness. In this poetry, whose precursors were Novalis, Holderlin, Shelley, and Blake, among others — poets who raised poetry to a religious and regenerative movement, and who share that same tendency of modern poetry towards the recovery of an original nature preceding the fall<sup>13</sup> —, there are voices like those of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Rilke, or René Char, but also those of Portuguese authors like Mário de SáCarneiro and Fernando Pessoa, as well as of several other Portuguese and foreign poets, contemporary with Ramos Rosa, evoked in his critical texts and essays. Unlike classical poetry, which is based on a demarcation between subject and object and on the affirmation of the anteriority of content in the face of form in the artist/poet's own consciousness, thus legitimising the primacy of the symbol, of correspondence (between words and their referents), and of interpretation, modern poetry nullifies the distance between subject and object, as well as between content and form. Thus, with poets like Rimbaud and Mallarmé, an impersonal and "objective" poetics is inaugurated, in which the split between subject and object is abolished, and the

10. Although he had only published his first book, the poetry collection *O Grito Claro*, in 1958, Ramos Rosa had already printed some poems in the 1940s, and in the early 1950s he affirmed himself as a poet and a critic in the magazine *Árvore*, of which he was one of the founders and directors, along with António Luís Moita, Luís Amaro, José Terra, Raul de Carvalho, and Egito Gonçalves.

11. "[...] anseia ser uno com o mundo e consigo mesmo [...]". António Ramos Rosa, *Poesia, Liberdade Livre* (Lisboa: Moraes Editora, 1962), 17.

12. "[...] o próprio acto de consciência perfazendo-se no sentido da totalidade." *Ibid.*, 24.

13. Cf. *Ibid.*, 170-1.

work/poem becomes an absolute object<sup>14</sup>. Let us see: against a creative subject understood as a psychological and social self that precedes and guarantees the work, the notion of an anonymous and impersonal voice that is constituted only and totally at the moment of creation — “[...] je suis maintenant impersonnel, et non plus Stéphane que tu as connu”<sup>15</sup>, Mallarmé confesses to Henri Cazalis in a letter of 14 May 1867, and Rimbaud asserts, in a letter of 13 May 1871 addressed to Georges Izambard, his former professor of rhetoric: “Je est un autre”<sup>16</sup>; against the poem understood as expression, reflection or reproduction (of the interiority of the subject or of the world), the notion of poem as creation, as an absolutely free, inaugural, autonomous and revolutionary invention. In this perspective, instead of expressing a previous or external reality, something already given, the poem is itself an event, and an event that produces the real<sup>17</sup>, coinciding in it spirit and reality, poet and poetry:

Therefore, the poetic act must be understood as a human achievement that establishes with the world a non-servile or passive relationship, but truly a productive and creative relationship. Such a relationship exists, it is a real relationship, and, let us say, realiser, producer of the real [...].<sup>18</sup>

[...] the poet approaches the poetic matter until he burns and becomes consumed in it: spirit and reality will coincide, because the poem no longer limits itself to commenting on an external reality: poet and poetry tend to merge, to identify with each other, since the poem is pre-

14. Cf. *Ibid.*, 40.

15. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance: 1862-1871*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., org. Henri Mondor (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), 242.

16. Arthur Rimbaud, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Pléiade, 1983), 345.

17. In an interview given to the newspaper *Público*, this idea is reiterated and formulated by the poet as follows: “A poet writes so that in a poem certain words appear, so that these words say anything that only they could say. So there is a reversal here. Rather than awaiting something, the word itself is already something: creation. It is the word that creates itself.” [“Um poeta escreve para que num poema apareçam certas palavras, para que essas palavras digam qualquer coisa que só elas poderiam dizer. Portanto, há aqui uma inversão. Em vez de a palavra estar pendente de qualquer coisa, a própria palavra é já qualquer coisa: criação. É a palavra que se cria a si própria.”]. António Ramos Rosa and Hélia Correia, “Um Poema é sempre uma Heresia”, *Público*, supp. *Mil Folhas* (23 Outubro 2004), 6.

18. “Há que entender, portanto, o acto poético como realização humana que institui com o mundo uma relação não servil ou passiva mas sim verdadeiramente produtiva e criadora. Tal relação existe, é uma relação real e, digamo-lo, realizante, produtiva do real [...]” António Ramos Rosa, *A Poesia Moderna e a Interrogação do Real I* (Lisboa: Arcádia, 1979), 63.

cisely an act of settling in the being.<sup>19</sup>

At this point, it is necessary to ask what relation, or what intimacy, that autonomous body, freed from any obligation of subservience to the real, can have with that same real. And this question necessarily leads to another, which will guide the beginning of our response: when words become objects in themselves, *how* and *what* can they signify? Or, in other words, what do poetic images figure? Lucidly aware of the distance between words and things, poetry opens its space precisely in the insurmountable gap between signifier and meaning, in that zone of fissure, emptiness, and death where the poetic word discovers its paradoxical condition, but also its productive power. Not nullifying this void, which is the condition of its manifestation, the poetic word is truly creative, inasmuch as, just as the essayist states in one of the texts of *A Poesia Moderna e a Interrogação do Real I* [*Modern Poetry and the Interrogation of the Real I*] (1979):

[...] the poetic word, the word in the poem, returns to itself (to the fullness of the signifier), finds itself and identifies itself by overcoming the arbitrariness signifier-signified by another arbitrariness, but an opposite sign one, because it is carried out in the sense of the identification of the signifier with the signified.<sup>20</sup>

Detached from the correspondence game that animates the regular use of language, the poem constitutes itself as an object, as the inauguration of a new real, in such a way that its meaning is not something anterior or external (resulting from something that pre-exists in the conscience of the poet or in the world), but rather something that emerges in the immanence of the text. That does not imply, however, the annulment of the signification issue, since in dissociating itself from a precise meaning, the poetic word discovers “an unlimited pos-

19. “[...] o poeta abeira-se da matéria poética até arder e se consumir nela: espírito e realidade coincidirão, porque o poema já não se limita a comentar uma realidade exterior: poeta e poesia tendem a fundir-se, a identificar-se, já que o poema é, precisamente, um acto de radicação no ser.” António Ramos Rosa, “Algumas Considerações sobre Poesia e Arte Modernas”, *Colóquio: Revista de Artes e Letras* (22 Fevereiro 1963), 44.

20. “[...] a palavra poética, a palavra no poema, retorna a si mesma (à plenitude do significante), encontra-se e identifica-se vencendo a arbitrariedade significante-significado por uma outra arbitrariedade, mas esta de sinal contrário à primeira porque se realiza no sentido da identificação do significante com o significado.” António Ramos Rosa, *A Poesia Moderna e a Interrogação do Real I*, 22-3.

sibility of meanings”<sup>21</sup> – it is in that space of infinite relations between words and of the dissemination of meanings that the adventure of modern poetry takes place.

No wonder, then, that we find in Ramos Rosa’s work echoes of Mallarmé’s warning that poetry is made with words. In this sense, we see the Portuguese poet defend that, as Fernando Pessoa understood well, the fiction (or the pretence) that the poem constructs underlies the poetic veracity, not in a game of correspondence between the text and the interiority of the poet, but in the plane of the text itself, precisely because it coincides with the action of language on itself<sup>22</sup>. Within this conception of the poem as an essentially verbal *opus*, the symbolic interpretation ceases to make sense, because the poetic language does not represent, that is, it is not in the place of something else. No longer referring to the world, to absent things, poetic images impose an original presence, becoming an apparition of an absolute absence. We are, therefore, very close to the notion of poetic image used by Blanchot — one of the authors Ramos Rosa read and quoted the most — in *L’Espace Littéraire* (1955), according to which “L’image n’a rien à voir avec la signification, le sens, tel que l’implique l’existence du monde, l’effort de la réalité, la loi de la clarté du jour”, in such a way that “[...] elle risque aussi constamment de nous renvoyer, non plus à la chose absente, mais à l’absence comme présence, au double neutre de l’objet en qui l’appartenance au monde s’est dissipée”<sup>23</sup>. The paradigm of perception or vision through which the image is traditionally thought of gives rise, in Blanchot as in Ramos Rosa, to the fascination, the “passion of the image”<sup>24</sup>, to a sort of acoustic or contemplative look before the unprecedented presence that the image constitutes.

But “To write is to open in the shadow a shadow”<sup>25</sup>, because if in the interiority of the poem “the world is far away” — as Paul Celan’s verse<sup>26</sup>, celebrated by the commentaries of Levinas and Derrida, affirms —, and with it the corruptibility of the connection of words with things, that is not why the word moves steadily through clarity. In a poem which is part of *Gravitações* [*Gravitations*] (1983), precisely entitled “As palavras” [“The words”], the poet asks: “What do the words

21. “[...] uma possibilidade ilimitada de significações.” António Ramos Rosa, *Poesia, Liberdade Livre*, 42.

22. Cf. António Ramos Rosa, *A Poesia Moderna e a Interrogação do Real I*, 34.

23. Maurice Blanchot, *L’Espace Littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), 350, 353.

24. “Ce qui nous est donné par un contact à distance est l’image, et la fascination est la passion de l’image.” *Ibid.*, 29.

25. António Ramos Rosa, *A Construção do Corpo* (Lisboa: Portugália, 1969), 154.

26. “Die Welt ist fort, ich muß dich tragen.” [“The world is far away, I have to carry you.”] Paul Celan, *Atemwende* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), 93.

face?”<sup>27</sup>, then replying: “The mirror/ of the night its impossible/ ellipse/ come out of the night shattered wounded/ and are the tiny light of the cracks/ between the pyramidal stones”<sup>28</sup>. Aiming at the *non-formulated*, the unknown, the night, the poem faces “the mirror of the night”, its reflection, and in this Orphic movement, which is its impossible ellipse — “never does the bow meet the target/ maybe because the target is never beyond/ but below us”<sup>29</sup> —, the poetic word is the one that faces the greatest risk: that of saying nothing about the night that veils itself behind the mirror.

This is, thus, according to the essayist, one of the apparent paradoxes of modern poetry: when searching for its centre or source, about which there might not be any previous certainty, it finds the *non-formulated* as an experience of unity. However, recovering the verses cited above, poetry is still, or nonetheless, “the tiny light of the cracks/ between the pyramidal stones”, that is, the possibility, although always uncertain, of relation with that incommunicable. The essayist declares in the aforementioned volume *A Poesia Moderna e a Interrogação do Real I*:

The poetic saying does not nullify the part of the *non-formulated*, it does not translate that which belongs to the domain of the radical experience of being, but it tears a secret opening in the obscure that is already a consequence of the silent attention of language to the life that it senses in its antennas [...].<sup>30</sup>

Like the myth, the poem “senses” the vibrations of that original background and constitutes itself as its invention, as “[...] the fable/ of a unity that will always be uncertain or future or improbable”<sup>31</sup>. And in this *sensing* lies the nature and the most intimate movement of the poetic act: by summoning the creative intuition, this act is played at a pre-reflective level, prior to the logical categories and principles, and

27. “Que enfrentam as palavras?”. António Ramos Rosa, *Gravitações*, 30.

28. “O espelho/ da noite a sua impossível/ elipse/ saem da noite despedaçadas feridas/ e são a minúscula luz das frestas/ entre as pedras piramidais”. *Ibid.*

29. “Nunca o arco encontra o alvo/ talvez porque o alvo nunca está além/ mas alguém de nós”. António Ramos Rosa, *A Imobilidade Fulminante* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 1998), 20.

30. “O dizer poético não anula a parte do informulado, não traduz o que pertence ao domínio da experiência radical do ser, mas rasga uma secreta abertura no obscuro que é já uma consequência da atenção silenciosa da linguagem à vida que ela pressente nas suas antenas [...]”. António Ramos Rosa, *A Poesia Moderna e a Interrogação do Real I*, 86-7.

31. “[...] a fábula/ de uma unidade que será sempre incerta ou futura ou improvável”. António Ramos Rosa, *Génese seguido de Constelações*, 15.

thus to the grammatical rules themselves: “I write where the word is not yet spoken”<sup>32</sup>. We speak not of the moment of the constituted real, but of the “nascent moment of the real”<sup>33</sup>, of the zero level, of infinite possibilities, of indiscernibility between consciousness and world, form and matter.

## 2. The *total relation*, or the (re)construction of an intimacy

And how should one express *that* which is sensed, that faceless and motionless point whose irresistible vibration threatens to kill its lovers? The word that knows nothing but to be desire, the poetic word, has only one way left: to welcome silence, to be a silent, ambiguous, polysemous word, a word that is poor and helpless, stripped of the clothes of concepts and of the organisational demands of the rational discourse. The poet expresses in *Génese seguido de Constelações* [*Genesis followed by Constellations*] (2005): “I greet what I do not know/ the unmentionable obscure/ with words of the purest incoherence”<sup>34</sup>.

In this way, by pursuing a primitive, pre-reflective unity, the poetic discourse moves away from the principles of identity and non-contradiction<sup>35</sup> (for to look directly at Medusa is to petrify). This does

32. “Escrevo onde a palavra ainda não se diz”. António Ramos Rosa, *Volante Verde* (Lisboa: Moraes Editora, 1986), 17.

33. Cf. António Ramos Rosa, *A Poesia Moderna e a Interrogação do Real I*, 48.

34. “Saúdo o que não conheço/ o inominável obscuro/ com palavras da mais pura incoerência”. António Ramos Rosa, *Génese seguido de Constelações*, 65.

35. Let us consider, in this regard, a text by Miguel Real entitled “António Ramos Rosa. A obra literária basta-se a si própria” [“António Ramos Rosa. The literary work is self-sufficient”]: “Science, ideologies, philosophy are based on the logical principle of non-contradiction, inscribing a human order different from the natural order, whose being or substance generates, as a paradoxical motor, numerous, plural and multiple senses of the real [...]. In this ‘new level where the imaginary and the real identify themselves’, the aesthetic or poetic language [...] dispenses with the absolute principle of non-contradiction, establishing an emotional or aesthetic sense (the ‘sensitivity’) that implies both the ‘identity of opposites’ and the absolute independence of each term. Thus, beyond and underneath every rational human consciousness, the poetic image imposes an ‘original presence’, originary and originating [...]” [“A ciência, as ideologias, a filosofia fundamentam-se no princípio lógico da não-contradição, inscrevendo uma ordem humana diversa da ordem natural, cujo ser ou substância gera, como um motor paradoxal, inúmeros, plurais e múltiplos sentidos do real, que a linguagem estética recria e cristaliza, assumindo a mesma liberdade geradora da natureza. [...] Neste ‘novo nível em que o imaginário e o real se identificam’, a linguagem estética ou poética (no sentido grego de poiêsis, criação originária, originante e original de uma ‘obra’) dispensa o princípio absoluto da não-contradição, instaurando um sentido emocional ou estético (a ‘sensibilidade’) que pressupõe tanto a ‘identidade dos contrários’ quanto a independência absoluta de

not mean, however, that such discourse is a mere connection to the irrational, even if it is welcomed by it, since it is the optimal place for the appearance of meaning, that is, for the passage from the indeterminate to the form<sup>36</sup>. As the essayist warns, the poetic act, as it has just been described, implies a short circuit of traditional notions of being and consciousness, as well as of the relationship between them. To a degraded ontology now corresponds the dynamism of a being based on non-identity: such as the self, the being “is Other or rather the movement that leads the same to become another”<sup>37</sup>. And to a consciousness which, privileging the representative function, promotes the self-positioning of man in the world (so highlighted by Heidegger) now corresponds an impersonal consciousness that is constituted in the relation with the other, becoming non-power and non-knowing. At this level, an intimacy between the poetic consciousness and the being (thought as the indeterminate), between interior and exterior, is established, which has effects on man himself and on the structure of the real. Let us return to the voice of the essayist, who in his early texts stated:

Poetry founds a new reality of transmutation of the material that does not precede itself in the reflective consciousness, but which it discovers itself in the arcana of the human soul. Thus poetry connects itself to the origins of being.<sup>38</sup>

And yet, from the latter essays collected in *A Parede Azul* [*The Blue Wall*] (1991):

We see poetry as [...] the purest and wildest intimacy of something that we cannot translate or determine according to the schemas of rationalising understanding.<sup>39</sup>

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cada termo. Assim, para além e para aquém de cada consciência humana racional, a imagem poética impõe uma ‘presença original’, originária e originante [...]” Miguel Real, “António Ramos Rosa. A Palavra Poética Basta-se a Si Mesma”, *Letras Co(n)m Vida*, n.º 4 (Lisboa: CLEPUL/Gradiva, 2.º sem. 2001), 208.

36. Cf. António Ramos Rosa, *A Parede Azul: Estudos sobre Poesia e Artes Plásticas* (Lisboa: Caminho, 1991), 24.

37. “[...] é Outro ou, antes, o movimento que leva o mesmo a tornar-se outro”. *Ibid.*, 23.

38. “A poesia funda uma nova realidade de transmutação do material que não lhe é anterior na consciência reflexiva, mas que ela própria descobre nos arcanos da alma humana. Assim, a poesia se religa às origens do ser.” António Ramos Rosa, *Poesia, Liberdade Livre*, 51.

39. “Vemos assim que a poesia é [...] a intimidade mais pura e mais selvagem de algo que não podemos traduzir ou determinar segundo os esquemas da compreensão racionalizante.” António Ramos Rosa, *A Parede Azul*, 14.

This means that the wild, chaotic energy without object that propels poetic creation at the level of a pre-language, still void of any concept, is a source of communication in which non-knowing (or non-sense) manifests itself without ever reducing or losing its energy, thus feeding the organisation matrices of the real and of formation of the world.<sup>40</sup>

At this point, we would also like to evoke one of the poet's later works, entitled *O Aprendiz Secreto* [*The Secret Apprentice*] (2001). In this fragmentary text of initiatory inclination, halfway between poetic prose and essay, it speaks to us a kind of anonymous, oracular voice which if, on the one hand, is a living expression of the notions of poetic consciousness and discourse that we have spoken of, on the other, it deepens the sense of the relationship that we have been drawing closer to. The text is based on three capital terms that are continually reiterated: the constructor, the construction and the work — figures of the poet, the poetic act and the poem, which are reciprocally constituted. The central *topos* of the work is thus the unification movement through which the three terms and the mystery or unknown of which those are desire are brought together in the same intimacy. Accompanying a more joyful and mystical penchant manifested by the Rosian poetry, especially since *Volante Verde* [*Green Steering Wheel*] (1986), the meaning of that unification is deepened and extended to a total, cosmic, dimension, pointing to the integration of man in life, in nature, and in the universe. In and through construction, that is “like a ring that brings together the beginning and the end, the origin and the target”<sup>41</sup>, “the movement of the unification of body and space, of light and shadow, of presence and absence”<sup>42</sup>, the constructor enters into a kind of *third state* in which the oppositional games, the antinomies (consciousness/world, spiritual/elemental, inner/outer) are diluted, and the “total relation” is founded:

This is why the constructor integrates himself into the landscape and, reflecting it, does not elaborate or alter it. His whole life is intact and

40. “Isto significa que a energia selvagem, caótica, sem objecto, que impulsiona a criação poética ao nível de uma pré-linguagem, vazia ainda de qualquer conceito, é uma fonte de comunicação em que o não saber (ou não sentido) se manifesta, sem nunca se reduzir ou perder a sua energia, alimentando assim as matrizes de organização do real e de formação do mundo.” *Ibid.*, 25.

41. “[A construção] é como que um anel que reúne o princípio e o fim, a origem e o alvo [...]”. António Ramos Rosa, *O Aprendiz Secreto* (Vila Nova de Famalicão: Quasi Edições, 2001), 44.

42. “[...] o movimento da unificação do corpo e do espaço, da luz e da sombra, da presença e da ausência”. *Ibid.*, 55.

fully secure in the indistinction between his inner self and the protruding and fresh serenity of the surrounding landscape. The outer reality became the most intimate and purest matter of the total relation and, conversely, the contemplator became an element of the landscape that sees it from its point of view and sees himself in it.<sup>43</sup>

If the intimacy that unifies conscience, poem, and real is drawn in this way in the work of António Ramos Rosa, by extending itself from the immanence of the text to the possibility of the poetic (re) creation of the real, it is because, as we read in a metapoem of *Volante Verde*, “The construction of the poem is the construction of the world/ Not symbols, not images, simple creatures/ From the air, obscure evidences, luminous enigmas”<sup>44</sup>. But it is also because, as Robert Bréchon rightly observes, the Portuguese poet “trusts equally in language and in the world, to the point of confusing them within the same love”<sup>45</sup>.

In Ramos Rosa’s work, poetry and art in general thus reveal themselves as the privileged *locus* of the *total relation*, the relation in which consciousness, poem/work, and reality are reunited in such an intimacy that they are reciprocally formed, being born simultaneously. But if such a birth is possible at any moment, it is because the intimacy that brings the three terms together precedes them, going back to a primordial, distant and indeterminate fund that knows no divisions. This idea, which will accompany Ramos Rosa’s poetic and essay writing, is already present in the texts that the author publishes in *Arvore*, as shown in the following lines of a critical review that he writes in the first number of the magazine: “When a true poet appears, [...] we also feel that this voice comes from afar, beyond the confines of a distant intimacy. The surprise is that of a reunion.”<sup>46</sup> We are, therefore, faced

43. “Por isso o construtor se integra na paisagem e, reflectindo-a, não a elabora nem a altera. Toda a sua vida está intacta e plenamente segura na indistinção entre o seu íntimo e a túmida e fresca serenidade da paisagem que o envolve. A realidade exterior passou a ser a matéria mais íntima e mais pura da relação total e, inversamente, o contemplador converteu-se num elemento da paisagem que a partir dela própria a vê e nela se vê.” *Ibid.*, 32.

44. “A construção do poema é a construção do mundo/ Não símbolos, não imagens, simples criaturas/ Do ar, evidências obscuras, enigmas luminosos”. António Ramos Rosa, *Volante Verde*, 62.

45. “[...] confia por igual na linguagem e no mundo, ao ponto de os confundir num mesmo amor.” Robert Bréchon, “António Ramos Rosa: O Silêncio e o Grito”, *Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias* (2 Março 1982), 6.

46. “Quando surge um verdadeiro poeta, [...] sentimos também que essa voz vem de longe, dos confins duma longínqua intimidade. A surpresa é a dum reencontro.” António Ramos Rosa, “*Hora Entendida*, de Maria da Encarnação Baptista”, *Arvore: Folhas de Poesia*, n.º 1 (Outono 1951), 69.

with the affirmation of a realism, not of the one that is played in the epidermal layer of the real, inevitably degraded by historical and social constraints, but of an ontological realism, in which the word — obscure, but never arbitrary, word that the poet wanted to be exact and naked —, when risking itself in that magnetic field of abyssal form in which everything is pure possibility, truly becomes creation.

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