

Criteria Estertor

Almost methodical doubt

Desperate, I drove my spirit down Saldanha, staying a short time in the Marquês de Pombal and heading cunningly and stylishly down Avenida da Liberdade. Could this be my home? I didn't really understand, even though I enjoyed some sympathy and tolerance towards the passers-by. I went here and there, from one side to the other, looking for signs of satisfaction and arrived at the cinematheque, where I had a coffee, a little after I had updated the films at the São Jorge.

This was not my land, much less Beirolas, which had disappeared from the map to make way for Expo Norte. Even so, that summer, I ran my heart out, met an American who gave me a lift and I ended up alone and worn out, but happy, in Cais do Sodré, while a black man ten years older than me, whom I met next to Lux, on a break to drink water, continued on to Cascais, on the line, one might say next to the train, as I used to do as a boy back in the other Marquês do Marquês land, next to a lot of things, where the aviators also came from, as Alves Redol tells us.

Strangely enough, my "Infinite Demanda", which I illustrate in one of my books, had ended, not because I resolutely and determinedly put an end to it, but because I had found love in Lisbon, a reason for which I had long wanted to abandon it and had not actually done so.

I was moved by the idea of Portugal, it moved me, I was no longer in time to follow Michel Giacometti, but when I had a car, I would leave Lisbon in abeyance, if only for a few days...

Then I decided not to put any more pressure on myself for anything to happen, and I followed the day, the lapses, the game, like someone reading a chronicle from *Tal e Qual*. I found myself at Sete Rios Station trying to continue my trip, heading for Cascais, up there, in Verdosa, where I was going to teach for a day. Philosophy, of course. It was my little bit of a place in the sun, albeit with a lot of hassle, because, in truth, the teaching profession is very discredited, we don't know how or why, I think they should even do a study on this...

So I lived in those days in almost methodical doubt, that is, I felt the oscillation of love between going-not-going, between being and not-being and place and *non-place*, as train stations were, as one of my masters, Marc Augé, once said?

Sometimes I felt abandoned to my fate and didn't even feel like leaving home, as a young man in Lisbon, where I even asked for a job as a taxi driver. In fact, I was between being and appearing, between belonging and not belonging more or less cosmopolitan in the Black City, which I understood in one way or another more or less occasionally or in depth, from my readings, as much as from my Spanish blood, as from my childhood spent in France. Yes, I oscillated between various thoughts, the post-traumatic stress of the colonial war and emigrants in France and Germany...

Since I learned how to make sautéed vegetables I have never been hungry again, on that almost summer day when I finally saw MEC shining in the new Portuguese press, with his soft and white chronicles in this very newspaper, every day, the young man still had plenty of hard-ons, as they say with a certain clumsiness, to pass on some of his thoughts, after the memorable times of *O Independente* and Assírio e Alvim of the late Hermínio Martins, which had its headquarters in Jardim Constantino, precisely?

Then, in these summer days, I decided to let loose the America inside me, everything made sense, there were no breaks or bumps, the Metro started to fly and the buses started to swim, and I went where, to the beach, where I even asked for an American cookie.

But no, I was just a Frenchman who resented not being able to see the local in the cosmopolitan, so I wandered around the Bairro Alto with Morais and maybe I didn't have much success with the opposite sex because I was an eminently theoretical guy, if that, it mattered, one thing or the other, one thing leads to the other and I still tried to dignify my speech and behavior, after being in Largo do Independente and Martim Moniz, for obviously different reasons?

The oil from the African fruits would stick to the skin of my hands, like my hair and their hair properly straightened for aesthetic purposes. Yes, an aesthetic of the blacks, like Mafesolli's in "The Time of the Tribes" or "The Excluded Third"...

Between the moment, a lack of hunger, and a place, I was living, that day I would have preferred to get home instead of going to Martim Moniz to do some scientific apostolate?

Victor Mota