**The monolingualism of identity
or aporias from the end of the world
(Indicial notes on *Fogo cruzado*)¹**

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‘Rosebud’
Citizen Kane

To Roberto O.

somos ese quimérico museo de formas inconstantes,
ese montón de espejos rotos.
Elogio de la sombra

To Quique R.

Determinations

In a classic, indeed Platonic gesture, Jacques Derrida has reminded *our selves* of *something* by writing “‘Yes, I only have one language, yet it is not mine.’” (Derrida 1998: 2) And we, readers, are left with just two interpretative lines. Coexistent. But discursively serialised. The first one (at a pragmatic level) operates as that *something* recalled by his writing: our plane of immanence —the very condition of our possibility as beings of reason. The second (at a grammatical level) appears formulated as the plane of consistency of Derrida’s life: his constitutive variant within the generic condition. At the level of this second plane, I will propose a Galizan version: *Yes, I [only] have two languages, yet neither is mine*. But, first, let me invite you to the movies to watch the spiralled spectacle of my reading’s determinations.

Every cinema lover knows the initial sequence: Xanadu, interior, night —Charles Foster Kane is dying, a snowstorm falling from his right hand. And we witness his last word —last will perhaps, as the film is going to show us in a minute: impossible chasing of a secret where identity congeals and, at the same time, disintegrates. There is only a problem: no one else has (over)heard it. Kane was alone (was he?) lying in a baroquely immense bed in a baroquely excessive castle. The film’s only proposition is *about us*, who became the sole bearers of the pictorial-pictographic structure of the sequence —a sort of synecdoche of the castle contained in the snowstorm. Or of those soft watches, ants and frozen, deserted landscapes painted —and later deconstructed— by Salvador Dalí in *The persistence of memory*. A fainting syntax: like that blood imprint on a marmoreal female forehead, eyes closed, in René Magritte’s both

attempts at *Memory*. *We*, therefore, and finally, have become the single supporting language of the whole cinematic bridge between memory and identity. But, are we just spectators? And...

Where then *are we*? Where do we find ourselves? With whom can we still *identify* in order to affirm our own identity and to tell ourselves our own history? First of all, to whom do we recount it? One would have to construct oneself, one would have to be able to *invent oneself* without a model and without an assured addressee. This addressee can, of course, only ever be presumed, in all situations of the world. But the schemas of this presumption were in this case so rare, so obscure, and so random that the word “invention” seems hardly exaggerated.

If I have described these premises well, then what is monolingualism, my “own” monolingualism? (Derrida 1998: 55-56)

By way of inscription

‘Apresentamos aqui [...]’..

In 1989, on 25 July, and on what is such a significant, complex and contradictory date for Galiza and, indeed, for Spain, a collective volume of ‘textos literários em prosa’ titled *Fogo cruzado* was published. The result of the more or less common effort of eight writers and a graphic artist, one of the final product’s basic characteristics was pre-figured by it’s authors’ explicit theoretical intervention. This preceded the project’s creative part proper and took the form of a text which went *untitled* but which was *signed* by them all (from now on F.C. 1989: 11-12). *Lack* of title and foregroundedly *explicit* signature shall be the two defining conditions in which their discourse should be situated. The first phrase, the very beginning of the text, was: ‘Apresentamos aqui [...]’. In fact, and deliberately, in the absence of any other way of referring to it, this was also how the authors chose to include it in the book’s table of contents.

‘Aqui’. Where? As a first and very simple answer (though, always, and as a matter of principle, simplicity is to be distrusted), a very obvious one: in *this* book. Where else? But the power of such a deictic lies, above all, not only in placing this in(tro)ductory discourse within a greater discursive field (and thus differ[entiat]ing/deferring it) but also in inscribing the latter in a much broader landscape. ‘Aqui’ operates as a very precise cut within a section both of

European history and of its supplements in the West. 'Aqui' is but ostensibly a spatio-temporal inscription.

The world ended that year. And, with it, the ontologically non-existent twentieth century. That is to say, in 1989, at the same time that one world was ending, that other one which, with Karl Marx, we can call the era of the real subsumption of the labour force into capital began an extremely painful (and, worse still, a no less sad) agony. It is not, therefore, a late-capitalist world which declines with the fall of the Berlin Wall; it is rather the fabulous spectacle of a set of representations, with which the immediately previous world had staged itself.² Nor was it communism that died, then, either. Eastern European hyper-nationalised societies, with their brutal hypertrophy of State monopoly capitalism, had been solely —and, despite the analytical irrelevance of the fact, they had also considered themselves to be— Socialist States.³

The noisy fall of so huge a cluster could have been staged as a bang, and somehow that was the case during the Autumn and Winter of '89. Especially in Berlin. But, at the end of its internal logic, the logic of its own production, and some decades before, it just went out with a whimper. That was the way that the anomalous forces unleashed by the then young revolutionaries of 1968 —embodied symbolically in Paris and in May— finished it off. Perhaps at few other junctures will there be such a dramatic convergence (for there is something of classical tragedy here as well) of the greatness and the misery of those involved. As protagonists, they had dreamed of a world where imagination would become the *only* apex of power. A new world, furthermore, which was to be the creature of a revolution indebted neither to old watchwords nor to the repackaged manuals of the old communist parties; but, rather, committed to the practice of the same dynamic that the new world would use to designate the only desirable structure of power. In the end, these same protagonists collided with the simple realisation that the paper tiger at their heels was not the old world, and that the empire of the imaginary (as so described by Baruch Spinoza in the heart of the Baroque, when Modernity congealed) was becoming, precisely because of the revolutionary character of their actions, the

definitive centre of a new productive operation of capital. This new operation would bury the era of formal subsumption of the labour force and dynamite its vital centre: the factory. The processes of the immaterialization of work were accelerated, and the logic of capitalism was disseminated into the body social. Such dissemination subtly colonised and then crudely assaulted other structures in order to reduce all subjectivities to one alone: the labour-force-subject. One feels a certain irresistible and pleasurable vertigo when, still, after all these years, one realises that the most brilliant contemporary analysts of the phenomenon were a group of irreverent *saboteurs* centred on the better known figures of Raoul Vaneigem and Guy Débord and introduced to the world as the *Situationist* movement.

Spectacle, then. For there is no other centre for this new, and definitive, phase of that mode of production whose primary accumulation had begun around the fifteenth century. Marx reserved for this final phase, in his unpublished chapter VI of *Capital*, the thought that it was the sole phase properly deserving fully the designation 'capitalist'. It was spectacle, in the end, that the protagonists of the '68 revolution were to convey; and spectacle was the cipher of their defeat. They showed their faces —and they got them smashed in. It is difficult to find something of such magnitude and significance in what is (now was) left of a nominal twentieth century.⁴ The protagonists of that revolution were (now are) new aristocrats. Defeated ones. They at least had their own war, a war on a par with their greatness. After that, there was just one lesson to be learned, classically independent of the posthumous dust which their biographies have become: never hope again. And, consequently, never be afraid. Finally: never teach anything, either, once any possibility of connection with even a fraction of the next generation has been severed.

Eventually, to have become posthumous can be seen as a real achievement. To have had the decency of recognising it is dazzling. To have had the strength to become a contemporary again is even dignified. The others, those of us who came into the world when that event was happening or had already happened, were born posthumous to the aporetic structural landscape of capitalism. And we have not even known how to acquire a battle of our own, only

skirmishes. We survive or, at best, resist within the new society of immaterial circulation that is now dying without having anything to replace it and without even having produced its own stage and stage-set. There is just the devastation of postmodernity. The centrality of immaterialization and the becoming abstract of labour were necessarily encompassed by the embedding of the sphere of reproduction and circulation into the sphere of production. However, all the liberating potential of this revolution in the determinations of labour is currently being controlled and suffocated. The visibility of those determinations is also being displaced as a regulated automatic producer of value for consumption that tendentially subsumes even language into the images it produces. Indeed, this new formation of capitalism has needed to make a last imperialist effort, and to project its mechanisms onto other structures with which it is now forced to cohabit.

After the spectacular end of this world... the desert. But on one condition: Gilles Deleuze knew that there is no absence or void in that desert. 'What a strange confusion —that of void with lack' (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 90). On the contrary, life goes on. Even if underground. Even if like an old mole.

The world, then, *a* world, ended in 1989, closing an essentially insubstantial century. This is not, however, precisely the case of the Spanish Galiza of the years when the shots of *Fogo cruzado* were unable to penetrate the hard cuirasses of the cultural, and specifically literary, mechanisms of production of its immediate national context(s). Roberto Ouro drew, in 1991, the master lines of the book's discursive armoury, thus contributing to the distinctive nature of its symbolic shots:

Agora bem, os acontecimentos deste final de século, mais candentes que nunca no 1991 tornam a dar a *Fogo Cruzado* um novo pulo. A obra já não é, simplesmente, um relatório em clave artística da situação duma nação num momento pontual da sua história, mas também a expressão palpável dos problemas da sociedade mundial desta época, e ainda de muitas outras. Temas como a defesa dos valores culturais de cada povo ou a enigmática linha existente entre o ódio e o amor no conjunto das relações humanas põem *Fogo Cruzado* no caminho da universalidade, esquecendo o 'tipiquismo' e o folclorismo que tanto dano fez sempre 'as letras galegas'. A obra, utilizando palavras de F.F. Santos [...], transpõe a 'situação histórica

particular no plano do histórico fundamental'. Já só isto seria suficiente para procurar-lhe um espaço no 'peculiar' mundo literário galaico. Mas creio mau dever como cidadão que tenta pensar e analisar as coisas que estão a ocorrer neste seu país, parafraseando com isto as palavras autodefinidoras de J.M Novais na apresentação do livro em Outubro do 1989 na Corunha [...], responder ao prólogo com que se abre o livro, por outra parte ponto capital e fundamental do mesmo, pois na minha mais pessoal decodificação (vaia por diante a *terminologia*) constitue, mais a lá duma simples chamada de atenção, autopoética, ou semelhante, um autêntico S.O.S. em favor da Galiza 'espanhola' e de todas as 'galizas' em situação semelhante que achamos no viver quotidiano e após o falso 'optimismo burguês' [...]. Achei, depois de muitas voltas, uma proposta de actuação, uma linha, um sendeiro incerto traçado à esperança. (Ouro Vilharaviz 1990-1991: 164-165)

After all, though Spanish Galiza is not part of the *story* of almost any of the worlds that I have mentioned, it is, of course, part of their *history*.

At this point, we should reconsider the designation uniformly used until now of 'Galiza espanhola'. We could say that it is a real symptom and, thus, we would also be pointing in the direction of the immediate (and, in some cases dangerously distorting) medical resonances invoked by such a term.⁵ Therefore I would prefer to say that we find a clue *locked up* in the syntagm.

First of all, the qualification made by the adjective 'espanhola' operates within a non-explicit opening of a space of signification. In order to consider the Spanishness of Galiza in such succinct terms, we must either assume the existence of a(nother) non-Spanish Galiza, and one even externally recognised according to international borders; or assume the existence within that abstract, diffuse entity we call Galiza of one section which *is* Spanish and another section which simply *is not*. In both cases the adjective 'espanhola' performs a restrictive ('a Galiza espanhola', that Galiza which is Spanish), rather than an explanatory qualification ('a Galiza [pause, comma] espanhola'; that is, Galiza, which is Spanish).

Heuristically, I am going to gamble on both possibilities and to make them the very foundations of my hypothesis. Without, of course, ever losing sight of the identifying centrality imposed by the adjective 'espanhola', as well as of the persistence of the otherness enclosed in the definition operated by the syntagm 'Galiza espanhola'.

And, secondly, in consequence, the grammatical constitution of such a syntagm works as *undecidability* rather than as ambiguity or, even, as contradiction —being, in Deleuzean terms, its plane of consistency. There is, however, an obvious limitation to be imposed on such undecidability by the two options I have considered, each of which offers complex lines of escape.

The grandeur and misery of Galizans might be there to behold, but the situation remains complex. To explore their condition in terms of undecidability, displaced identity and negative otherness indexes our thinking on the specific problem of those processes of national construction currently in operation within the Peninsula *qua* territory (though clearly also in relation to other territories), no less than it has done for the last five hundred years.

This intelligent task has been addressed most notably by António Gil Hernández.⁶ It is he who has forced the wedge of a stubborn rethinking of the issues into an already over-elaborated structure of Galizan nationalisms. It is he, too, who has accounted for the principal discursive effects into which such identities have gelled: *the language*.

The language as defining entity has itself been constructed in negative terms in relation to Spanish. Its subsidiarity has been taken for granted whenever regulatory spelling and grammatical practices have been implemented... with grave repercussions. The language has thus operated as a sort of major synecdoche for national definitions of Galizanness. The feeling has persisted that this essential defining element can be analytically exposed as the black hole from and into which all cultural confusions have appeared or disappeared.

It is a centre out of orbit, and one which regulates both the voices and the silences of a set of conglomerate identities in which all positive as well as all negative possibilities are subsumed. How are we to manage the synchronic condition of a Portuguese-speaking *aquém Minho* and the diachronic genealogical condition of a Galizan-speaking *além Minho*? *Fogo cruzado* again:

Numha Galiza mutilada selvagemente polo projecto nacional
espanhol, materializado afinal na Constituição de 78, onde as agressões em

matéria idiomática, cultural, económica, social e política som tam brutais, proclamamos⁷ ser impossível a consolidação de umha literatura de nosso. Entender isto é o primeiro passo para conseguir a independência da Nação porque a autonomia monárquica espanhola não serve mais que para mascarar e impedir defrontar os graves e grandes problemas levantados. Persistimos em fazer da cultura um bem colectivo; e sabemos que para isso se produzir tem-se de impulsar como labor colectivo umha práxis de igualdade e solidariedade que a social-democracia europeia está a esvaziar de conteúdo. [...] Como escritores denunciámos o processo de substituição linguística destinado a eliminar o galego-português do nosso território. (F.C. 1989: 11)

Displaced identity then. The amputation to which Galiza is being subjected operates doubly, if inseparably. Mutilation (national) within. Mutilation (national) without. A with/out which *operates*, and *is operated upon*, at a distance and as a difference from the whole. And the operative word is '*mutilada*'. Physical force, passive presence. Or *state*. Trauma is taken for granted ('selvagemente'), but the limitations of this trope are vital. Mutilation is always of, or part of, an organ not decisive for the continuation of life but, when amputated, still possessed of a certain spectral condition, even when considered biologically no longer alive. Yet, internally and externally, the tentative definition of Galiza proposed by 'Apresentamos aqui [...]' has major repercussions. While it presents the independence of the Galizan nation as a mechanism of repair —a process of separation from the other (aggressor's) body (the Spanish national project)— it enciphers the hopes of a *Galego* national project within a collective presumption as to what are deemed to be cultural activities. In the process, it disseminates and defers the violent metaphor out of which the discourse had been constructed. Disseminating and deferring, it does not however exclude. Rather does it project restrictions which are also lines of escape. The identity game that we play functions as a fulcrum.

A first restriction: the activity of a collective offered as a 'repair' mechanism (in which the primordial role given to 'umha literatura de nosso' is, paradoxically, and categorically, prohibited by the very conditions of the mutilating aggression in which it might operate). Thus, the only way of thinking of such a collective and of such a process is also to think the body that remains, after mutilation, *not* the organ or organs already amputated.

A second restriction: a detail. (Suddenly the text abandons metaphor in order to enter the discourse of sociolinguistics). Denunciation of the process of linguistic substitution, the aim of

which is the elimination of the language of that literature to which such an essential role was reserved during the fight for independence, and whose name is here given as ‘galego-português’.

The conjunction of these two restrictions prompts a deconstruction of the initial metaphorical schema; because one of the amputations has already (always?) been designated — language. And because the quality of the said amputation must be seen as still in progress (otherwise, had the process of linguistic substitution been completed, we could only revisit the problem in terms of a haunting). Also because in the second part of the designation that identifies the language we have, for the first and last time in the text, the adjective ‘português’ — after a hyphen. A hyphen the trace of which in the definitive working of the language is the vector that allows us to consider the first of the meanings of the verb ‘mutilar’ (to deprive of a limb/member; to cut off, or to cut off part of, a limb/member) as the dominant one which rules over the figurative meanings (to truncate; to distort; to destroy part of). Hyphen, then, *qua* instability.

Indeed, the Spanish national project has produced this mutilation. What happens, assuming as much, is that the working of a part of the organism when deprived of one or more of its organs becomes, irrefutably, impractical: the symbol(ic) which the Portuguese imaginary brings into play cannot be an organ or part of an organ which is biologically dead. It is appropriate then to invert the terms (or rather, to consider that the word *Portugal* seals as it congeals the mutilated organism) or to assume that mutilation works as it does with earth-worms (and, therefore, henceforth, we are dealing with two mutilated bodies, which are or have been, reciprocally, an organic part one of the other and which simultaneously and in the same amputating process have become organisms with minimal conditions for independent life). In both cases, the hyphen is frontier, demarcation line, or guillotine. (This is the metaphorical world of the ideologies and linguistic practices known in Galiza as *isolacionistas* or *independentistas* [from Portuguese]).

Mutual mutilation *aquém e além Minho* always (and already) remains traceable: a scar. Within this assumption, a certain practice of historical memory becomes requisite, as does the application of the scalpel of a highly problematic cosmetic surgery. All possibilities pointed to in the name ‘Galiza espanhola’ are at play, again, here. And, clearly, they are controlled by two basically sinister agencies: Spain (as perpetrator of disaster) and Portugal (as the *unheimlich* of *la hispanidad*), in the conjuncture (and under the yoke?) of their identifications as States and as Nations. *Fogo cruzado* opted to be a project already pre-inscribed, however, in that metaphorical sphere which is theorized in the *reintegracionista* practices of the language. Precariously, it remains indexed by the spelling employed.

In summary, throughout the whole interpretative exercise performed on this first and different(iated) text of *Fogo cruzado*, one outstanding in(ter)vention has emerged in the operation of describing/defining Galiza: mutilation, whereby instability has/is become the marker of the setion(ing)s, the part(s) and the body (whether this or that).

Further, we must highlight the scar inscribed by the hyphen: in the degree of cure (i.e. the degree to which the wound may still be operating or operated upon), as in its ‘restorative’ possibilities, other facets of the (t)issue may be confronted. In such aesthetic surgery, the role reserved for written practices and, especially, for literary praxes, becomes decisive. The surgeon and/or the psychoanalyst are/is replaced, in the operation performed upon the body politic, by the intellectual, the writer, the artist.

In the defining dislocation of identity just outlined, the essential element is that of language. There is no better description than that of the sociolinguistic situation of Spanish Galiza as model of the linguistic and cultural market in the Iberian Peninsula. On it will be replicated any attempt at defining the national.

The question is posed in terms of ‘normalization’; of the ‘adequation’, it should be understood, of the Galizan linguistico-communicative conditions to those of other communities

in which there are *not* two languages in use. The first descriptions of the initial situation as ‘bilingual’ were easily and justly dismissed as reductive, ideologically inspired, annihilating, since the social use of two languages is un-economical insofar as both might cover the same functions. If this is not the case, at the outset, both languages are at once insufficient yet necessary. But at the next stage, one of them can begin to invade the ambits of the other’s use, rendering itself thus not so much necessary as unavoidable at the same time as it makes the other communicatively redundant, unnecessary or, at worst, hardly possible. The latter situation is the lot of the Portuguese language in Galiza (the basic sociolinguistic map of which has been drawn up by Lluís Aracil 1989: 5-15).

However, the explanatory schema rehearsed within Galizan nationalism beyond that of bilingual simplification has been privilegedly that of diglossic rationalization, following a certain categoric re-elaboration carried out by J A Fishman. It attributes to each of the two languages in contact a different role in the social hierarchy and does not focus on the internal effects which such a structuration may have operated sociolinguistically *within* each of them.

As António Gil Hernández has shown with such lucidity (Gil Hernández and Rabunhal Corgo 1989, Gil Hernández 1989a, 1989b, 1996), at one with the Aracil mapping, such a theoretical operation is based on mutilation as a completed process which produces two related but independent organisms. This, then, is the very heart of the linguistic planning of Galizan isolationism. Opposed to this, the analysis of Gil Hernández invests in the concept of diglossia as initially developed by Charles Ferguson, thus creating a more complex sociolinguistic and, by extension, socio-cultural map in which the mutilating metaphor of the thresholded text of *Fogo cruzado* finds its peculiar plane of immanence. Grossly simplified, the very precise argumentation of Gil Hernández considers that diglossic correlation is produced within each of the two languages in contact with each other. He argues that the said contact takes place as the invasion or the dislocation of ‘more formal(ized)’ levels of usage of Portuguese language in Galiza, modelled on similar usages in Spanish. The situation could be thus defined, for the language in the process of being substituted, Portuguese, as being *dislocated* diglossic

correlation. Only two extreme options are open for Portuguese language in Galiza. Its definitive subsumption into Spanish. Or, the ‘restoration’ of the essential minimum equilibrium in the diglossic correlation for the maintenance of the language. To achieve this aim, and in accordance with Ferguson’s concept, the combination of the more formal(ized) of the modelling levels of Portuguese language in Galiza may be considered as relatively stable in other territories where the same language is spoken, at a stage of textual creation corresponding to a state of language anterior to the advance of the *destructive* process, or in both cases.

The form of expression of this dislocation of identities (of which the sociolinguistic description outlined is an excellent paradigm) is linked with a mechanism of undecidability, the second of the conditions to which we have referred above and on which the thinkability of Galiza is founded. It is, in short, its glossopolitical expression. It is essential, in my view, in order to identify, in this kind of disabled or truncated rhizome (a multicentred chaotic structure), to situate and, in the very act of situating, to destabilize the status of the book *Fogo cruzado* as an ‘alephic’ instance⁸ in which the being and the comings into being of ‘Galizan literature’ (or rather, of the literature in some form of Portuguese written in Galiza) are concentrated. *Fogo cruzado* as ‘black hole’ of the written (and, specifically, literary) Galizan world. The presentation of Roberto Ouro is far, therefore, from being abusive. And the resonances arising therefrom recover, in an infernal variation of eternal return, those conditions of thinkability of Galiza which we have been analysing:

Cento e vinte e seis anos depois de Rosalia de Castro publicar os seus *Cantares Gallegos*, na Galiza continuam a sair da imprensa livros e livros (tampouco em excesso) escritos nalguma ‘língua’, dialecto ou jerga diferente em maior ou menor grau da língua oficial do Estado Espanhol, ao que estas terras nortenhas pertencem politicamente. Et non solum, porque também há outras publicações de carácter mais minoritário, se cabe, escritas em português da Galiza, galego-português ou simplesmente português. Uma destas publicações, do ano 1989, é *Fogo Cruzado* [...].

Bem certo que não era a primeira publicação em português na Galiza, mas neste país não deixa de ser estranho que um grupo de gentes se reúnam com a intenção de lançar uma proposta, de abrir-se em batalha verbal, cultural, literária, com a pressão dum estado oprimido e subdesenvolvido. (Ouro Vilharaviz 1990-199: 164)

And further on, he is more precise:

Por outra parte, o antigo refrão '*escrever em galego implica um posicionamento político*' tampouco é admissível: haveria que precisar em que galego. Nem sequer as chamadas ortografias de concórdia são realmente operativas, pois supõem pactar uma falsa trégua num combate que se sabe pactado para a morte.

A postura de *Fogo Cruzado*, e com ela a de todos os autores que estão a escrever em português nestes últimos anos de implantação reintegracionista é, pois, a única que realmente pode, ou poderá num futuro, considerar-se como literatura nacional galega. (Ouro Vilharaviz 1990-1991: 170)

Is it, will it, be able to do so? Not only is it the linguistic condition which defines the national and, in a co-extensive move, the literary condition; the orthographic option also (and, to a far lesser extent, despite the slippery territory of intersection of both, the grammatical) acquires the strongly operative character of defining the language. And then the nation. And then, though differently, the literature. Defining? We can see more or less how. But who does the defining?

Numha literatura de consumo académico, que é fiscalizada por editores e que tem nuns pessoeiros de partidos políticos nom galegos umhas mascotes exportáveis, nom está de mais que por fim escrevamos os escritores. E, de passagem, cremo-nos na obriga de declarar o que a seguir pode ler-se. (F.C. 1989: 11)

We, we who 'apresentamos aqui'. 'Os escritores'. We who go on to declare... 'de passagem', taking the opportunity, like a supplementary shot provoked by circumstances without which it would never have been necessary to *apresentar* at all. To declare and to denounce, as well. To whom?

Either, though not consisting of that literature described as being for academic consumption, to its same audience *and other*. Or, again not being part of it, solely to that otherness. Obviously, only the first supposition here makes sense; since it is the only one demanded by a certain defining dislocation in which the text to be analysed operates, and since it is also required by the reconfiguration of one of the two discursive battle grounds at which the book's title points.

There is, then, a section of the addressees of the book which is constituted relatively alongside the subjects producing it, in so far as its texts are considered as being part of a culture which is to be made 'um bem colectivo'. However, this does not necessarily imply that a

collective or even common operation is being postulated as the only cultural creator. Not necessarily but *potentially* (in the Spinozist sense given by Toni Negri (1981) to the term *potenza* as opposed to the term *potere*), because no other is the structural (un)doing⁹ that, though expressed in ambiguous and even contradictory terms, is going to be drawn immediately: ‘Persistimos em fazer da cultura um bem colectivo’ and ‘sabemos que para isso se produzir tem-se de impulsar como labor colectivo umha práxis de igualdade e solidariedade que a social-democracia europeia está a esvaziar de conteúdo.’ (F.C. 1989: 11)

With the autonomous collective effort¹⁰ surrounding the premises of equality and solidarity neither is there any commodity already in the market being made into a common one, nor is there any collective cultural product. What is produced, unmediated, is culture.

Unmediated. That is the vortex of contradiction in which the syntagm ‘we, the writers’ is enclosed: on the one hand they somehow inscribe themselves in the discourse as being, in strictly modern terms, the notables of a nation (*les notables de la nation*). On the other hand, they consider themselves to be part of the people of that same nation, a nation which is being constituted without either having a proper notability or becoming, as a whole, as a collective, its own notability (this last alternative is disallowed by the precarious conditions of cultural description offered in the text itself).

In passing, then, and, even if undesired, with some degree of mediation, ‘cremo-nos na obriga de declarar o que a seguir pode ler-se’. Can it be read? And what can be read?

The readability of this in(tro)ductory text is determined by a mutilating definition of the Spanish and a mutilated one of the Galizian national project (symbolized in the affirmation that for the latter to have a literature is impossible) in which the roles of active and passive are differently but complementarily distributed, and in which instability and negativity are *almost always* associated with Galiza.

Yet, and this is the major theoretical momentum of the text, the territory on which the war between two national projects is staged and produced is included in the ambit of Galizanness itself, of Spanish [blank space] Galiza. The factions do not present themselves as cleanly

separated: Spain *versus* Galiza; but as intrinsically enmeshed: Spain inside Galiza. But also Galiza, in the apparent need of the qualification ‘Galiza espanhola’, inside Spain. Such is the trace that the adjective, ‘espanhola’, inscribes both on the Spanish and on the Galizan body politic: it points to the undecidability and the excentric condition of their (national) definition. In other words, it points to the status of Portugal: first of all as that flaw or lack which the Hispanophone community has not been able to avoid feeling like a wholly ghostly amputation. Secondly, the status of Portugal as the only ‘other’ towards which the identifying marker could, for Galizans, tend.¹¹

If these are the conditions of readability, what can be read into them? Only the hint of a project of equality and solidarity which would bring dynamism to the social (and therefore cultural) fabric and for which no clear-cut path has been marked out. The partisan hint of ‘retomar o conceito de soberania estética da Naçom galega que outros antes que nós defenderam e a que estes textos querem contribuir.’ (F.C. 1989: 11) And a denunciation, expressed in the recognition of the great symbolic watermark on which any possibility of identity is encoded: ‘A nossa coerência e legitimidade ortográficas servem de desculpa amiúde para silenciar um discurso que no ideológico detesta claramente o actual estado de cousas em que somos obrigados a viver.’ (F.C. 1989: 11), thus opening up the possibility of taking a stance only intelligible in that assertion: ‘Como escritores denunciemos o processo de substituição lingüística destinado a eliminar o galego-português do nosso território.’ (F.C. 1989: 12)

This *can* be read. In suspended silence, to an audience not wholly implicated in the discourse and with a definition of the identifying problem the dislocation of which neither fully territorializes nor de-territorializes Galiza, so that even ‘a independência da Naçom galega’ (explicitly linked to ‘ser impossível a consolidação de umha literatura de nosso’) overlaps with such an undecidability because it operates under those conditions of readability described above: independence (symbolic and/or political and/or cultural?) in respect of Spain... And in respect of Portugal, what?

This, I suggest, *can* be read, too. In close relation with silence as the only regulator of the discourse. And, in this case, as a productive instance of the first and differentiated text of *Fogo cruzado*, since, in the described circumstances in which it moves ‘Pensamos que já som tempos de suspender responsavelmente o silêncio a que muitos de nós estamos condenados polas máfias académicas, institucionais e editoriais consagradas à prática adulterada da ré-edición e à magnificação de textos que muitas veces e à margem de consideraçons estéticas nom questionam absolutamente nada.’ (F.C. 1989: 11)

Finally: ‘*a margem de consideraçons estéticas*’. On the margins, then, of the specific quality that defines the literary. And in negotiation with a (non-)questioning of ‘o actual estado de cousas em que somos obrigados a viver’. This is not a gesture towards suspending the literary. At least, not only. Certainly, it supports the negation of the possibility, in the ‘estado de cousas em que somos obrigados a viver’, of the ‘consolidação de umha literatura de nosso’ (and not national, explicitly named as such). It deconstructs the complexities of a very contemporary suture of thought.

Especially crucial, then, are two moments in the text: (1) the postulation of a ‘we’, ‘writers’, holders of writing, the nation’s notables.¹² (2) The vocation of a collective praxis in no way related to the denouncing of the catastrophic consequences with which the Spanish national project and its implementation by European social democracy are mutilating Galiza; (2.1) associated with this, a responsible suspension of the silence to which the legitimate practitioners of a way of writing the Galizan language are condemned; and (2.2) a stance which does not remove the undecidability of that continuous dislocation of identity through which the Spanish national project has been introduced into the defining of Galiza as an internal operator (and even as regulator), not as an external enemy.

Especially crucial, I wrote, were two moments. The model grants consistency to that undecidability brought about by the dislocation as has been explained by António Gil Hernández (1996: 9-53) on the basis of developing a theory of the ‘double bind’:

Refiro o conceito de *duplo ligame* ao, também frutuoso, de *diglossia*, em que o insiro, e, conjuntamente, à hierarquização (ou organização) dos processos comunicativos na *modernidade*, em que um e outro se validam.

Defino o conceito de *duplo ligame* relativamente aos agentes (humanos) dos processos comunicacionais, *emissor/estimulador* e *receptor/respondedor*, que, em chave política, se apresentam, respetivamente, como *dominante* ('classes dirigentes', hierarquizadas, ou, apenas, 'poderes' 'legislativo-executivo-judicial' e 'académico-informacional') e *dominado* ('cidadãos-súbditos'). Lembre-se que a Espanha é Reino.

Em situações normais de *correlacionamento diglósico*, o *duplo ligame* segura a eficácia dos processos comunicativos nos âmbitos que os 'poderes' públicos declararam nível superior e modélicos dos outros, em que habitualmente se verificam as interações humanas. (Gil Hernández 1995: 124)

In 'normal' sociolinguistic situations, the double bind is the very condition of communicability.

Normal sociolinguistic situations are those in which the diglossic correlation is not distorted and in which the distribution of linguistic usage is based on one language alone. It happens, however, that in situations such as the Galizan one the double bind turns into a factor enforcing pathologically either a socio-political domination or an idiomatic substitution, inasmuch as the instructions which constitute it are presented as firmly counterposed. *Double bind* becomes, in this way, the guarantee of dislocated diglossic correlation and uneven distribution of uses of the two languages in Galiza:

O conceito de *duplo ligame*, referido aos usos de língua, foi inicial e expressamente tratado por Lluís V. Aracil [...] quem, por sua vez, acomodava o conceito batesoniano, que expõem Watzlawick *et alii* [...]. Pela minha parte, adverti que, além da psico-social, pode oferecer uma vessante glotopolítica que contribui a explicar *o que se passa na Galiza*.

Na 'Parte introdutória' ao meu *Silêncio ergueito* desenvolvo-o sumariamente. Lá estabeleço que é em virtude do *duplo ligame* que 'a *Notabilidade espanhola* (em conjunto), liga, por uma *forte relação complementar*, os *Notáveis galegos*' de jeito a 'recebe[re]m (incôncios?) a *instrução* de normalizar, no território espanhol da Galiza, os usos do idioma galego, a qual não de obedecer e, simultaneamente, desobedecer para a cumprir, porquanto se acham obrigados a manter o *estado de cousas* vigente, em que predominam os usos de espanhol'.

Aduzo, a modo de conclusão teórica: 'a *correspondente obriga peremptória* de o *Notável galego* pensar, razoar e se exprimir *dentro* desse *estado de cousas* contraditório e paradoxal faz que se perceba confusamente vítima de um jogo absurdo e desleal, que nunca poderá esclarecer pois só o facto de se aventurar a enquadrá-lo nalgum paradigma teórico e tirar as suas consequências pertinentes, *descobrimo-o, dizendo-o*, transgride a proibição primigénia, implícita na sua condição de membro integrado no conjunto notabilizador da *Nación-Reino de España* "una e indivisible"'.

E, praticamente, concluo que na presente situação a *Notabilidade nacional espanhola* e os próprios *Notáveis* (supostamente) *nacionalizadores da Galiza* farão *per fas et nefas*:

a. Que a sua *relação complementar* persista; assim a *Notabilidade espanhola* continuará a ser a subordinante e a *galega* a subordinada.

b. Que seja impossível o quadro jurídico e social de uma nova relação entre as Comunidades ‘galegófono’ e hispanófono, subsequente a uma nova relação entre as Notabilidades respectivas, porque a galega transgredirá a *instrução*, ‘nova’, de normalizar os usos do *seu* idioma para cumprir a *instrução*, ‘velha’, de manter normais os usos da língua castelhana. [...]

c. E, por fim, ‘que alguns Notáveis nacionalizadores da Galiza [não] possam discutir e ultrapassar a confrontação dos *discursos*, prevalecente nesta parte do território espanhol, de modo que os respectivos objetos [não] se invertam, quer dizer, que o português, hoje denominação mundial do *idioma galego*, [não] se torne, enquanto *língua nacional*, em objeto do *discurso da necessidade* para aquém Minho e a *raia seca*, como já a é além a fronteira, e, aliás, o *castelhano* acabe sendo apenas objeto do *discurso da possibilidade*’. (Gil Hernández 1995: 123-124)

By way of intuition

‘[...] proclamamos ser impossível a consolidação de umha literatura [...]’

I argued, with regard to the marginalization of the aesthetic in this first text of *Fogo cruzado* that, under deconstruction, emerged a contemporary philosophical suture: subsuming the whole operation of the work into the aesthetic activity generally referred to as *poiesis*. In relation to the orthographic choice practised by the authors of the text, Roberto Ouro affirmed that such a stance would be ‘a única que realmente pode, ou poderá num futuro, considerar-se como literatura nacional galega.’ (Ouro Vilharaviz 1990-1991: 170). Previously, he had commented as follows, in reference to the proclamation of the impossibility of a literature ‘de nosso’, a literature of our own, and by taking up ‘o conceito de soberania estética da Nação galega que outros antes que nós defenderam’ with which the text plays:

A importância da afirmação é enorme. Não era a primeira vez que se defendia a impossibilidade de falar de ‘literatura galega’ baixo o auspício duma estrutura lingüística e administrativa subsidiárias das espanholas [...]. Estas teorias vão-se aos poucos aceitando polos sectores ‘afins’ à colectividade conscientemente lusófona do país. Neste sentido cabe afirmar que a ‘literatura galega’ (coloquem-se os epítetos que julgar necessários) tem e tinha antes de *Fogo Cruzado* alguns exemplares de excelente qualidade. Foram já muitos autores conscientes de que só podemos falar de literatura galega se usar a língua própria da Galiza convenientemente

normalizada e, por suposto, normativizada, no seu âmbito próprio da lusofonia e com umas estruturas políticas que permitam à nossa Nação regir os seus destinos sem interferências nem relações de dependência, mas em *Fogo Cruzado* vemos uma das primeiras definições explícitas e das primeiras realizações colectivas unificando-se em tais critérios. (Ouro Vilharaviz 1990-1991: 169)

Although any interpretation which confers upon the linguistic quality of a particular literary discourse a defining centrality by inscribing it in a given literary tradition does result in excess if confronted with the text we are analyzing, it certainly signals the importance of the linguistic question. And it is not the only one to have done so. On the 13th December 1989, at the launch of the book in Santiago de Compostela, Uxio Novoneyra, one of the major contemporary Galizan poets, asserted:

O certo é que, polo que seja, por ultraconscientes ou por acurralados, sodes valentes —semelhades-me ser valentes— por jurar bandeira de umha ideologia difícil, como é difícil quanto é ou pretende ser puro e manter-se em rigor. E nom somente jurades bandeira de umha ideologia que exige rigor, senom que adoptades a ‘ensenha’ maldita de umha escrita convencional frente a outra escrita convencional aceptada e imposta como oficial, só polo qual já seríades arredados. E nom só isto, senom que proclamades a vossa pureza e fazedes manifesto expreso encabeçando o libro da vossa verdade e decisom. [...] Sodes malditos ‘apor de’ ser puros. Sodes perfectamente o escritor ‘à contra’, o escritor resistente, e nom só contra o discurso mais ou menos ‘instaurado’, senom contra o discurso da mocidades do vosso tempo. [...] Ainda que eu nom seja dos vossos anos nem da vossa ‘ensenha’ convencional, saúdo a vossa valentía, sem a qual nengum escritor novo que se preze pode começar a sua andadura. (Novoneyra 1989: 501-502)

And the truth is that such a(n) (ortho)graphic signal would mark the destiny of the book even before its publication since, after a complex and fascinating night meeting at which the nine authors gave the finishing touches to the opening text and agreed upon a unified spelling to be used in all the texts to be published in the book (given that all were writing in different degrees of proximity to the Portuguese orthography, the use of nasal *til* being the only different element: some of them had used it in every appropriate case, others only in some, the rest not at all), the search for someone to market the product began. The decision on orthography consisted of a compromise or a ‘middle way’ already adopted by other writers and publications in Galiza concerning the use of the *til*.¹³

The editorial trajectory of the book was to be, nevertheless, complicated and difficult. When finally the *Associação Galega da Língua* (AGaL), in order to accept the publication (after various publishers had refused it), insisted on only one condition, namely an overruling of the author's spelling agreement reached after a long discussion in favour of the uniform adoption of the reintegrationist proposals defended by AGaL (consisting, basically, in the use of all Portuguese orthographic conventions with the significant exception of the *til*¹⁴), the crisis broke out. One of the authors affirmed that if the publishing house required such formal adaptation of texts in Portuguese which were individually signed and were the responsibility of their respective creators, it should also, and as a consequence, accept the book's ideological position and, especially, that of its opening text—which presented the project as unified. More crucially, another of the nine authors, for coherence's sake, decided not to sacrifice any collectively taken decisions, further pointing out that all the authors were members of AGaL and that some of them had already played significant roles in the campaign for the use of the *til* to be admitted in publications of the Association even for those authors who were not Portuguese, or rather, for Spaniards in Galiza, Galizan Spaniards. As a result, Amado L. Caeiro withdrew his contribution from the project.¹⁵ With the withdrawal of 'Retalhos Obscénos', an obscenity was indeed denounced. And the most resounding of the texts about the entanglement of sociolinguistic conditions in Galiza was to disappear from the book leaving the mark of its absence.

We writers seemed to be brave... or so Novoneyra claimed in Compostela. And we were brave depending on the context in which we were operating. Perhaps that was more obviously the case if the suffocating, repressive conditions imposed over the reintegrationist movement are taken into account and if we consider *Fogo cruzado* as the far-reaching project originally conceived but finally disabled (to a certain extent precisely because of the new orientation the book was acquiring during the publishing process, an orientation the first effect of which was the withdrawal of 'Retalhos Obscénos' and Amado L. Caeiro from the project). Perhaps it was

not so much the case if, not being able to maintain our position in the symbolic struggle over the definition of the language, we confront the notables we would have liked to be(come).

Roberto Ouro claimed that a stance on defining the language, and of which spelling is the most symbolic moment, would be ‘a única que realmente pode, ou poderá num futuro, considerar-se como literatura nacional galega.’ And we would now ask: is it? Can it be?

One premise had been pointed out in the opening text of *Fogo cruzado*: that the predominant image of Galizan literature addressed there was ‘a margem de considerações estéticas’. However, in counterbalance, the aesthetic referent operated in a very strong inscription of the history of Galizan nationalism:

Face a umha literatura oficial incluída no projecto político espanhol
somos partidários de retomar o conceito de soberania estética da Nação
galega que outros antes que nós defenderam e a que estes textos querem
contribuir. (F.C. 1989: 11)

Two immediate effects of such a difference in the application of criteria: first, the continuing difficulty of inserting into this first, collective text the challenge represented by the six drawings and the cover of the book, all by Eduardo Casal. Secondly, it is only the first criterion (the one referring to official literature linked to academic, institutional and editorial *mafioso* practices) that is really consistent if we are talking about literature. For two complementary reasons:

a. Because that other defence of aesthetic sovereignty of the Galizan nation which others had proposed earlier is easily traceable: it is reproduced as a discursive, organizational and pragmatic effect after the historic nationalist Assembly of the *Irmandades da Fala* in Lugo on 17th and 18th November 1918. In the Manifesto in which it is formally incorporated there is a final section, which comes after the account of political, administrative, juridical and economic principles tending towards the ‘autonomia integral da Nación Galega’ to be obtained ‘do Gobierno da sua Maxestade El Rey’:

VII. Aspectos artísticos

1^a Proclamar a soberanía estética da Nación Galega que se exercerá:

- a) Sobor as contrucións urbanas e ruraes, ditándose unha lei que obrigue ós propietarios a axeitare o estilo das súas construcións ó estilo xeneral de cada vila galega.
- b) Na expropiación de moimentos e paisaxes.
- c) Na organización do ensino artístico, con creación d-unha escola musical galega. (O Manifesto 1918: 2)

No mention is made here of literary creation, as if suggesting that the only reference which *Fogo cruzado* wishes to make explicitly to a tradition of meditating on Galizan literature has to fall into proclaiming its impossibility (such is the assertion made in *Fogo cruzado*'s introductory piece).

It is noteworthy that this reference is to a political Manifesto which contemplates measures applicable to the world of art, and not to a literary Manifesto contemplating political measures from the intervention of a creative avant-garde such as that written and published in 1922 by Álvaro Cebreiro and Manuel António, titled *Mais Alá!*, which substantially addresses issues similar to those of the opening of *Fogo cruzado*. It is in relation to this that we must consider the conscious absence of title for the text and, thereby, the renunciation of cataloguing it: in fact, this decision would facilitate a balancing act between artistic and political manifesto, a presentation —‘Apresentamos aqui’, its first words, used, as we know, to include it in the book's table of contents—, a simple prologue-cum-preface and, finally, a Proclamation. The conditions of its discursiveness, however, its way of addressing the questions which it opens up, relate it more closely to the ‘Declaração de Pamplona’¹⁶, in which some of its authors had participated, taking into account the differences which the fact of being materially prologue *and* preface induce in it.

b. Because Galiza, being part of the history of the world which in 1989 is in its death throes and of the other world which in that same year is symbolically collapsing, does not take part in their story. And the result of this structural intersection converts certain productive practices in Galiza, to some extent *differently* from other territories of capitalism, into a coincidental paradigm of the conditions of the aporetic world of our real subsumption.

While the processes of primary accumulation of capital are implemented in the nascent Iberian nation-states from as early as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by virtue of the looting and exploitation of the riches of the recently ‘discovered’ colonies, the successive critical movements of the mode of capitalist production would go on happening *sui generis*: their structural implementation converts the economies of the nation-states of the Peninsula into subsidiaries (certainly in a different way from the so-called Third World nations) and simultaneously controlled by the same section of society which goes on modifying its position in the class divide. Thus, the ideological and representative repercussions which accompany capitalism throughout almost all the Western world are being implemented in the territories of Southwestern Europe with what has already become an indelible characteristic of their inscription into Modernity: *a certain delay*.

In this situation, Galiza’s position is even further relegated, since it is a subsidiary within subsidiary, according to traces which define it as a kind of endogenous colony within Western Europe.¹⁷

Spain and Portugal are thus going to participate in the history of successive productive worlds implemented by capitalism, and will have reserved for them a place, even as a footnote (but the centrality of footnotes is, often, essential to analysis and action), in their stories... and Galiza will function like a Babelic silence permanently deferred and disseminated, though effectively articulating some of those stories.

We were in 1989. Symbolic finale of the world of the formal subsumption of the labour force into capital (whose operating logic perished with the events of 1968). Definitive detection, too, of the aporia of real subsumption. (Aporetic, because its attempts at colonizing other creative structures of subjectivity collude with the defence and attack mechanisms unleashed by them). Delimitation, too, of the way in which production is rearticulated with society.

In the same way that the invention of printing sets in motion the first modern industry and, with it, is the first to operate in accordance with the determinations of capital at the same time as the modern notion of literature imposes itself; its last phase, which we are now living, operates that powerful suture upon communication whose model has been, in strict Saussearean terms, the moment of the circulation of commodities. In the first case, the book is effectively reduced to the sphere of reproduction. In the second, the reproductive sphere is the only one already properly productive. In the first case, the subject who reads can feign to be shielded against the factory by the book. In the second, the discourse of the book is an archaeological experience in the moment of production as in the moment of consumption, and the condition of the literary, within it, has been blown apart or reduced to a mere image. The immaterialization of the productive processes also converts into archaeology the old knowledge of the intellectuals and the intellectuals themselves. At the same time that it introduces the material basis for a radical democracy, it has to dismantle the status that Modernity has conceded to '*les notables*'.

Fogo cruzado, in its pro-logue-cum-pre-face-cum-declaration, reunites all the conditions which render impossible —through defect of nation and excess of State— a Galizan literature.¹⁸ *Proclamation* of inveterate local determinations as radically coincident with those produced at the end of postmodernity. Where other societies have experienced the impossibility of the literary through excess of State and excess of nation, Galiza seems to aspire still to grant itself the mechanisms of textual and, specifically, literary consumption which are already exhausted in other areas of the world of real subsumption. Such is the specific index of its misery and —in place perhaps of its grandeur— of the paradoxical effect of its full contemporaneity.

This is then the third of the conditions to which I had alluded to above as configuring the situation and the (how to) being of Galiza over the last five centuries: together with a certain dislocation of identity and a structuring undecidability, now, an expressive negativity:

‘proclamamos ser impossível a consolidação de umha literatura *de nosso*’ in the very instant in which all and every literature begins to become impossible.

It is evident that something is at play in the term ‘consolidação’, as mark of the different way of arriving at the productive effect of contemporaneity. It is also obvious then, in the light of effect and difference, that another glance can be cast over the literary texts produced in Galizan-Portuguese for five hundred years and, more specifically, over those of which this Proclamation of *Fogo cruzado* is, rather than introduction or threshold, implicit risk(iness).

By way of non conclusion

‘Encontrará o leitor no presente volume, para além dos textos, a colaboração de um artista plástico que acha através do desenho, a cor e a forma, os seus caminhos de comunicação artística.’ (F.C. 1989: 12)

But there is another ‘text’ in the book. The one to which the last lines of the prologue refer after marginalizing it throughout the rest of its discourse. The experience of such a ‘text’ is purely imaginary and, to see it, we must, however, from memory, try different descriptions in an attempt at approximation. Since we do not see with our eyes, but with our language(s). This ‘text’ is then produced by our in(ter)vention regarding the monochrome drawings which punctuate the ‘textos literários galegos em prosa’ and on the impressively colourful explosion of light and fire which is the cover of the book. This ‘text’ is, also, reminding us, authors as readers, of our condition of spectators in relation to this *story*, within this *history*: only (im)possible witnesses of Kane (impossible) last word? That is: there is not outside the text. But then, there is only text outside the text. Or is, otherwise, as Jim Morrison put it, the spectator a dying animal? *Where, then, are we?*

In *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* Jacques Derrida plays with the contradictory purity, at once painful and pleasurable, of his condition as monolingual French-speaking Jew in Algeria:

An immanent structure of promise or desire, an expectation without a horizon of expectation, informs all speech. As soon as I speak, before even formulating a promise, an expectation, or a desire *as such*, and when I still do not know what will happen to me or what awaits me at the end of a sentence, neither *who* nor *what* awaits whom or what, I am within this promise or this threat —which, from then on, gathers the language together, the promised or threatened language, promising all the way to the point of threatening and *vice versa*, thus gathered together in its very dissemination. Since subjects competent in several languages *tend* to speak only one language, even where the latter is dismembering itself, and because it can only promise and promise itself by threatening to dismember itself, a language can only speak itself of itself. One cannot speak of a language except in that language. Even if to place it outside itself.

Far from sealing off anything, this solipsism conditions the address to the other, it gives its word, or rather it gives the possibility of being its word, it gives the given word in the ordeal of a threatening and threatened promise [...]: monolingualism and tautology, the absolute impossibility of metalanguage. (Derrida 1998: 21-22)

In *Fogo cruzado* we authors play with the aporetic impurity, at once painful and pleasurable, of our impossible monolingual condition as Lusophone Spanish Galizans. We are somehow Babelic. Not because we do not have words or structures in one of the languages in unequal hierarchical distribution in our territory, or even because we have excessive words and structures in both; but because we shall never know with certainty what the hell it is that we are speaking, what the hell it is that we are writing... At once more than and less than language... At once more than and less than literature... We showed our face, too: they smashed it in. It was worth it.

Thus, we shall have to reconstruct our language from memory, because ‘a vida só pode dar-se ou empenhar-se por algo decisivo para o comum, como é crer e fazer crer novamente na língua’ (Novoneyra 1989: 502), because that memory is only the conjunction of precise determinations that (linguistic) descriptions of imaginary processes articulate; because *Ceci n’est pas une pipe*. And literature has become, already, as in the *Disintegration of the persistence of memory*, but a residue.

Nada se edifica sobre la piedra, todo sobre la arena, pero nuestro deber es edificar como si fuera piedra la arena... (J.L. Borges, ‘Fragmentos de un evangelio apócrifo’)

Notes

¹ I am indebted and deeply grateful to Bernard McGuirk for discussing with me the ideas of this article and for his kind and generous help in rendering my intricate Portuguese into this English version.

² In relation to the hypothesis of the end of the twentieth century and its specific non-existence because of lack of any material configurations other than those of the nineteenth century see, for instance, Negri (1989). Variations on such an hypothesis are found, amongst others, in Guattari and Negri (1987), Hardt and Negri (1994 and 2000) and Albiac (1992, 1993, 1999).

³ There is abundant bibliography on this issue. Apart from the books mentioned in note two, there should be mentioned here some of the seminal works of Althusser (1977) and Balibar (1976), as well as these others which in different forms are negotiating both amongst themselves and with Althusser and Balibar: Albiac (1989), Badiou (1985, 1991), Béjar (1991), Negri (1990, 1990a) and Vidal Boução (1990).

⁴ In relation to the new subjective conformations in the era of real subsumption it is highly recommendable to read López Petit (1994).

⁵ In that sense the consideration of the history of the language of Galiza as “clinical” should be referred to. This was the synecdoche within a metaphor used—as a way of indispensable premise of any attempt to divide in periods and analyse that language’s history—by Ricardo Carvalho Calero in his classic article of 1980 ‘A fortuna histórica do galego’ (Carvalho Calero 1983: 15-27). Although he will resort to other tropes to approach Galizan’s Portuguese history (some of the ones used in his last books being of special interest), this is, perhaps, his most successful figure of speech in terms of circulation. Its resonances are traceable in the introductory text of *Fogo cruzado* and I shall come later on to the specificity of its formulation there: the territory of traumatic or savage amputation somehow becoming a body without organs.

⁶ In this respect the attentive reading of, at least, the following is crucial: Gil Hernández 1985, 1986, 1986a, 1987, 1995; and, especially, as at the same time synthesis and prolongation of Gil Hernández’s explanatory hypothesis, his book *Silêncio ergueito*, published in 1996.

⁷ The original included a misprint of ‘proclamados’ for ‘proclamamos’.

⁸ In Jorge Luis Borges’s short story ‘El Aleph’ (in *El Aleph*, 1949) an Argentine voice describes successively such a thing as ‘uno de los puntos del espacio que contiene todos los puntos’, ‘el lugar donde están, sin confundirse, todos los lugares del orbe, vistos desde todos los ángulos’, ‘¡El microcosmos de alquimistas y cabalistas, nuestro concreto amigo proverbial, el *multum in parvo*!’. Another voice observes on ‘[t]he puzzles about the one and the many’ (*Philebus*, 14d 4-5): ‘Arribo, ahora, al inefable centro de mi relato; empieza, aquí, mi desesperación de escritor. Todo lenguaje es un alfabeto de símbolos cuyo ejercicio presupone un pasado que los interlocutores comparten; ¿cómo transmitir a los otros el infinito Aleph, que mi temerosa memoria apenas abarca?’ The contemplation of the Aleph is, clearly, a gift. But a poisoned one; a damnation, a curse: ‘Por lo demás el problema central es irresoluble: la enumeración, siquiera parcial, de un conjunto infinito. En ese instante gigantesco, he visto millones de actos deleitables o atroces; ninguno me asombró como el hecho de que todos ocuparan el mismo punto, sin superposición y sin transparencia. Lo que vieron mis ojos fue simultáneo: lo que transcribiré, sucesivo, porque el lenguaje lo es. Algo, sin embargo recogeré.’ ‘Algo’ which has to be *literal* because ‘[q]uizá los dioses no me negarían el hallazgo de una imagen equivalente, pero este informe quedaría contaminado de literatura, de falsedad’. There is only one remedy for that curse: oblivion... or, perhaps, precisely, the trick—bordering contamination—of making an adjective out of a noun: “alephic”.

⁹ Rather than a shot, here, a burst with a machine gun: the intuition expressed by the link, in the same paragraph, of the Spanish national project’s discursiveness (centred around the textuality of the 1978 Spanish Constitution) with the culturally devastating and terrorist practices of European social-democracy, with the Spanish well ahead on that, is amongst the major social and political moments, in terms of dignity and decency, of *Fogo cruzado*’s project.

¹⁰ In the sense given to these terms by the experiences of the *autonomia operaia* movement. See, for instance, Toni Negri’s ‘Carta arqueológica’ (Negri and Guattari 1987: 91-104).

¹¹ Cf. Gil Hernández (1996) and Suevos (1987).

¹² A duplicate and inclusive ‘we’, of course. That is to say: we, who individually (though maybe in common) wrote *Fogo cruzado*’s pieces but collectively did the first text. And we, those individuals who wrote each ‘texto narrativo em prosa’ and other individuals of their same silenced condition as a result, above all, and ‘à margem de considerações estéticas’ of ‘no ideológico detesta[rem] claramente o actual estado de cousas em que somos obrigados a viver’. The

‘desculpa’ for that silencing being ‘a nossa coerência e legitimidade ortográficas’. This is also the meaning conveyed by Roberto Ouro when he says: ‘A postura de *Fogo cruzado*, e com ela a de todos os autores que estão a escrever em português nestes anos de implantação reintegracionista [...]’ (Ouro Vilharaviz 1990-1991: 170)

¹³ It would be used only in certain cases: basically, nouns ending in [áu] or [áη] (depending on the Galizan-Portuguese dialectal zone) were expressed as -ão in the singular and -ãos in the plural (‘mão/mãos’); nouns ending in [ón] were rendered -om (‘revoluçom’); nouns ending in [óns], [ós] or [óis] (again depending on the dialectal zone) were expressed as -ões (‘revoluções’); the use of words with a final -m in the remaining forms in which the rest of the Lusophone areas have opted for final nasal diphthongs or final -n; and some other minor changes derived from this adjustments (for instance the use of ‘umha’ instead of ‘uma’).

¹⁴ Regarding this delimitation of borders in the definition of the language (which is also dependent on the operative diagram determined by double bind and dislocating diglossia) and its sociolinguistic and glossopolitic repercussions see Álvarez Cáccamo and Herrero Valeiro (1996) and Vidal Bouzón (1994).

¹⁵ Less than a year after these events, the AGaL will republish a book, in the same collection of *Fogo cruzado*, strictly observing the spelling option used by his author in a previous edition under other publishing house —precisely, *Fogo cruzado*’s authors agreed option. Actually, that book’s previous edition had been one of the crucial references taken into account by them when deciding on the compromise solution adopted in order to unify the written norm of *Fogo cruzado*. Nowadays, Galizan authors using *til* in all the cases required by the international orthographic conventions of the (Galizan-)Portuguese language can get their work published by AGaL.

¹⁶ On the civic movement made up of a number of citizens coming from different parts of the Spanish State that drew up this text, on the conditions of its discursiveness, the details of its composition and the effects it had on different contexts see Aracil and Gil Hernández (1993).

¹⁷ See the chapter ‘III. A naçom galega no quadro europeu-ocidental’ of Suevos (1983: 45-71).

¹⁸ Cf. Aracil (1987) and Vidal Bouçã (1990-1991, 1994 and 1994a).

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