

Rui Sousa

Mário Cesariny's Perspective on Portuguese and International Surrealism: Dialogue and Distinction

Abstract: The present paper aims to offer an overview on the surrealist movement's reception in Portugal, as well as the perspectives adopted by Portuguese surrealists from a peripheral position in the international panorama. In addition to approaching certain critical aspects characteristic to Surrealism in Portugal, the present paper also traces the path that leads from the marginalization and obscurity of the main authors and episodes of Portuguese Surrealism outside of national borders to the increasing international recognition of the Portuguese groups and main authors. This shift is largely attributed to the historiographical and promotional work carried out by Mário Cesariny de Vasconcelos, a poet and artist who will serve as the primary reference in my overview.

Keywords: Surrealism; Periphery; Abjeccionism; Mário Cesariny; Anthologies.

RUI SOUSA

University of Lisbon, School of Arts and Humanities, CLEPUL, Portugal
ruidnsousa@gmail.com

DOI: 10.24193/cechinox.2024.47.14

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to assess the relationship between Portuguese Surrealism and the international surrealist movement, considering the partially peripheral nature of the Portuguese surrealist groups. I will focus on the work of the poet Mário Cesariny, who extensively explored Surrealism in its different forms, with a particular emphasis on the uniqueness of Portuguese Surrealism.

I would like to start with a reflection on the theoretical proposals put forth by the Warwick Research Collective, considering the important interactions between the unequal development rhythms of the relations between geographic and cultural contexts within the framework of the world-system and the configuration of the concepts of Modernity and Modernism. Two main ideas arise from this approach.

First, I follow the Warwick Research Collective's approach to Modernism, namely by questioning the usual tendency to encapsulate different realities within uniform notions of Europe and the West, and to ignore the asymmetries that exist within the European geographic and cultural

space itself, with centres of centralization and different rhythms of peripheralization. As suggested in *Combined and Uneven Development*, the concepts of “core”, “periphery” and “semi-periphery” can be seen as a dynamic structure, “relational rather than geographical or geopolitical”. It refers much more to how certain expressions of the modern and modernist traditions are positioned in relation to the great poles of model diffusion than to actual indications of development or lack thereof. Thus,

“Peripherality” [...] names the modality of a specific *inclusion* within a system: a given formation is ‘peripheral’, that is to say, not because it is “outside” or “on the edges” of a system, but, on the contrary, because it has been incorporated within that system precisely as “peripheral” [...]¹

I would also like to retain the idea proposed by the WREC that the plural and disseminated history of Modernism reflects, at least in some authors and places, the different configurations of “a cultural formulation of resistance to the prevailing – indeed, the hegemonic – modes of capitalist modernization in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe”². The cultural paradigm derived from this dominant model tends to present the West as a civilizational bloc, which should not obscure the fact that this paradigm was experienced and received in distinct and opposing ways, depending on each country’s historical trajectory and, most importantly, the location they began to occupy at a specific point in time.

Furthermore, deriving from this perspective, I also would like to retain the

idea that (semi-)peripheral spaces tend to develop specific forms of Modernism, according to processes of anachronism and syncretization of influences, crossing the models promoted by European and North American cultural centres and the cultural specificities of each location. According to Marko Juvan, it is not uncommon for peripheral cultural identities to form confusing relationships with both the local setting and the centres from which they receive their relative peripherality:

[European peripheries] found themselves in ambivalent position: on the one hand, they had to place themselves vis-à-vis a particular tradition of nationalism in their dominated country and hereby risk to succumb to its retrograde, anti-cosmopolitan tendencies; on the other hand, they interacted with contemporaneous patterns of cosmopolitan modernism which, under the guise of universality, emanated from hegemonic centers³.

Critics who have recently focused on these issues have explored the syncretic nature of the peripheral and (semi)peripheral expressions of unusually successful worldwide movements, such as Modernism or, more specifically, Surrealism. I would like to highlight Eleni Kefala’s approach, which is, in fact, closely related to the points of view that I intend to present in this paper. Kefala developed the notion of *amphi-models*, in order to define the syncretic nature of Modernist and Post-Modernist expressions from two distinct geographical realities, Argentina and Greece. She contends that peripherality can be viewed as a symptomatic reaction to the periphery’s

interaction with modernity, in both Western and non-Western countries subjected to the modernization paradigm espoused by cultural centres, such as the Netherlands, England, France, and the United States. Thus, in terms of cultural and creative expressions, the peripheries tend to express distinct forms of resistance. Thus, they offer a new idea of culture that is multilateral and multitemporal, with implications in the experience of their unique nationalism. The peripheral countries creatively convey their knowledge that culture cannot be a pure, homogeneous, and unchangeable construction. When we consider the matter from this perspective, the fundamental concept of periphery must be treated in a new way:

The term periphery is to be conceived not just as the "outer space" of what is conventionally or sometimes arbitrarily considered to be the "centre" but also as the "circumference" of this very centre. In other words, each centre, wherever it is and however it is considered, has its own periphery, its osmotic porous space of ambivalence where disparate traditions meet, contest and mingle with each other. [...] This is not just due to the fact that cultural influence originates in all geographical coordinates regardless of centres and peripheries but essentially because hybridity and impurity lie at the heart of any culture: they constitute, as it were, its *raison d'être*.⁴

According to Alys Moody and Stephen J. Ross's approach to the subject of Global Modernism, in (semi-)peripheral contexts, the relationship with the modernist legacy

and its most representative centres and expressive paradigms is often equivocal. The interpretation of the global modernist experience is defined by the acknowledgment of the idea of belonging to a common movement as well as the critical knowledge of the asymmetries between the many scales of development of this movement. This process is expressed by a certain tendency towards processes of questioning canonical synchronicities through the reactivation of forms and motifs considered archaic or residual and by the exploitation of alternative historical paths interrupted by the cultural uniformity promoted by the main cultural centres. In agreement with Moody and Ross, I would like to highlight the modernist tendency towards self-theorization. This tendency serves as a structural axis of the simultaneous process of expressing the singularities of peripheral and (semi)peripheral modernisms (and surrealisms), as well of intervening in the formation of the global panorama of these movements⁵. This reactive and critical dimension of the peripheral point of view is especially important because it brings to light several blind spots within the modernist tradition itself, prone to academization and museification. As observed by Maria Irene Ramalho, the centre's imaginary invariably presents itself as an instance of power, an axis from which many processes of dependence emerge. In this sense, Ramalho emphasizes, using Fernando Pessoa as an example, that an alternative identity affirmation can involve the contrapuntal proposal of a universal look. Thus, the power dynamics shift towards a domain that is essentially symbolic, imaginary, and poetic⁶.

It is also important to consider Delia Ungureanu's reflections on the Surrealist

Movement, deemed a privileged exponent of world literature. According to Ungureanu, the internationalist nature of Surrealism coincided with the exploitation of an anti-colonialist, anti-nationalist and anti-imperialist political agenda, making the movement attractive to peripheral spaces. Indeed, as Ungureanu observes, Surrealism sought to assert itself from the very beginning as a programmatic scope that largely transcended the horizons of its Parisian origins, even when André Breton and his group came to be regarded as a kind of basic orthodoxy of the movement within and across borders⁷.

In this paper, I want to reflect on the emergence of Surrealism in Portugal, as well as on the interpretation that Portuguese surrealists were shaped by the international surrealist movement and its marginal status within the broader framework of that movement, according to the aforementioned ambiguous and reactive. In fact, in addition to the complex relationship that the Portuguese surrealists maintained with the national tradition and the social and political circumstances experienced during the *Estado Novo*, there was some scepticism about the centralizing excess of the Parisian surrealist group and the limits inherent in this centripetal nature. The Portuguese surrealists were early on consigned to obscurity by their international counterparts, partly due to a clear ideological divergence from the Bretonian group. This divergence resulted in a particularly significant experience of the impacts of being on the periphery. Thus, I intend to present some particularly relevant examples of different authors and moments within the Portuguese surrealist discourse. The discourse is inherently self-reflexive as

is the prerogative of a certain critical manifestation of Global Modernism and thus tends to problematize both its specific circumstances and the broader framework of a global review of the movement.

The primary focus of this reflection will be on Mário Cesariny de Vasconcelos and his persistent and complex historiographical and theoretical work, which, at one point, acquired a vertiginous and unusual international expression, culminating in a pioneering anthology of reflection on the global surrealist movement following André Breton's death and Jean Schuster's declaration of the extinction of the movement, in 1969. Cesariny's reading of the relationships between Portuguese Surrealism and its context derives both from the recognition of the importance of the surrealist worldview in contesting the cultural totalitarianism of European origin and in recognizing the need to value the Portuguese expression of the movement and, subsequently, the appreciation of Portuguese singularity in the global panorama of Modernity.

The Need for Autonomy in Portuguese Surrealist Discourse

From the moment Portuguese surrealist group was first formed, the need to assert a certain extent of contextual autonomy somewhat coincided with the relative scepticism towards the practices of the French surrealist group. In a letter from Alexandre O'Neill to Mário Cesariny, dated September 16, 1947, O'Neill proposed that "it is most convenient that there be complete autonomy in relation to the French movement, [...] not denying the evident 'filiation' in 'surréalisme'" but

also taking into account the local peculiarities of “our characteristic super-realistic achievements”. O’Neill also expressed some misgivings concerning the level of French surrealists’ compromise to the movement’s basic beliefs, exhibiting some knowledge of the emergent critics to André Breton’s conservatism and the correlating evidence of paralysis in the Parisian group⁸.

O’Neill and Cesariny were two of the most emblematic poets linked to Portuguese Surrealism. They were among the first to discuss the conditions for introducing the movement in Portugal, and thus became co-founders of the first Portuguese Surrealist group. Therefore, these observations would remain valid throughout the different stages of affirmation of Portuguese Surrealism, including the confrontations between the two main groups.

The earliest deliberate surrealist expressions in Portugal are commonly dated back to the exhibition on November 11, 1940. The event was a display of works by António Dacosta, António Pedro, and Pamela Boden. However, the other possible earliest manifestation could have also been in 1942, the year in which António Pedro edited the first of two issues of the luxurious magazine *Variante* and published the novel *Apenas uma Narrativa*, which contains strong surreal influences, in addition to other works, such as Manuel de Lima’s humoristic novel *Um Homem de Barbas*. The surrealist experience relies on a sense of collective identity, despite the absence of a clear program. It also requires a conscious connection to the dynamics of a specific aesthetic movement and its peripherals, which is not consistently present in the meetings that had taken place in Café Hermínius.

I believe that an adequate interpretation of the surrealist experience depends on an idea of collectivity, despite the fact that the very idea of a group was systematically questioned along the way. To distinguish the different stages of the course of the surrealist movement in Portugal, we need to establish distinctions between two periods, a period prior to contact with Bretonian Surrealism and its derivatives, and a period that, while marked by a critical attitude towards the Parisian paradigm regarding collective activities, developed according to an aprioristic knowledge of the group dynamics and procedures that are specific to the movement and that were partially used in Portugal.

As proposed by Perfecto E. Cuadrado⁹, Portuguese Surrealism responds to some basic assumptions in order to be considered an avant-garde movement. First, it is based on the notion of young, anti-systemic communal structures. From 1940-1942, there was para-Dadaist activity at Café Hermínius, followed by a period of counterpoint between two groups, the Surrealist Group de Lisboa and Os Surrealistas (1947-1953), and then less structured groups around cafés like Royal and Gelo from the mid-1950s onward. Second, these organizations gave room for a few prominent individuals to emerge, like José-Augusto França, Cândido Costa Pinto, António Pedro, and Mário Cesariny, who achieved gradually an almost unparalleled fame. These individuals helped to shape the group’s programmatic and polemic discourse and its historiographical memory. Third, these collective organizations were able to create identifiable interventions along two main axes: the artistic, through collaboration on collective productions

like manifestos and *cadavre exquis*, and the organization of collective exhibitions, and the sociopolitical, through an aggressive discourse regarding the structures of the Estado Novo regime and a divergent position vis-à-vis the core tenets of the contemporary social order, in areas such as sexuality and ideological affirmation.

Several occurrences in 1947 indicated a conscious effort to establish a Surrealist Group in Portugal in connection with the main international surrealist group, André Breton's Parisian group. According to Adelaide Ginga Tchen, this condition is "in direct relation with the reorganization of the surrealist movement at an international level and alongside the climate of cold war on a global level"¹⁰. An aspect that is not unimportant, given the recurring observations regarding the lateness of the Portuguese Surrealism. Indeed, it is important to consider that almost all of those who would shape the movement are still very young at this point, and that their views on Surrealism were guided by a desire for intervention and contestation. Their views were aligned with the paradigms of the re-emerging Surrealism, which actually differed from those defended in Breton's manifestos before the Second World War. As proposed by António Cândido Franco, "the 1940s, despite or because of the absence of media attention, were a step forward for Surrealism and an extremely auspicious period for the growth of Surrealism in Portugal", given the confluence between the departure of the Portuguese surrealists from a neo-realist perspective and the moment in the worldwide surrealist movement that contradicts prior approaches to the vocabulary and goals of historical materialism¹¹.

The first major aspect of Surrealism in Portugal, regardless of who first made contact with André Breton in order to start a surrealist group in Portugal, is the well-known break with the main contemporary artistic forms, particularly Neo-realism. Luiz Pacheco emphasizes, in his own style, this overview:

They had to fight on two fronts: the regime and its acolytes (PIDE, fascists) and the neo-realists and their leaders, who had already been swept up in the pursuit of success and crowns, the money. In the early days of surrealism, the phrase had a derogatory connotation and could refer to both crazy and sissy, drunk, chicken-stacker, or cultural terrorist. However, it was entertaining, free, and spontaneous, reflecting each individual's innermost feelings. Even the works of Maurice Nadeau or Breton, which they carried as doctrinal references, were not bibles to be revered or emulated blindly, but rather scripts and flinging weapons against the for the Lisbon apathy¹².

Surrealism appears to be the most appealing solution to pre-existing problems in the minds of Portuguese surrealists, particularly the necessity to discover a method of expression that is fundamentally different from the contemporary cultural milieu. Moreover, it is the fact that Surrealism is understood as a solution to a specific very persistent local problem, marked by secular conservatism, with different declinations of an obsessive and emasculating religiosity and a cult of messianic and absolute leaders who imposed a severe code of conduct on collective conduct, at political and cultural

levels. An alternative solution that, however, from the very first moments, made it clear that there was a need for systematic autonomy in respect to worldwide doctrinal paradigms, such as those advocated by André Breton. In several letters dated mid-1947, published in 1974 by Cesariny and Cruzeiro Seixas under the title *Contribuição ao registo de Nascimento Registo e Extinção do Grupo Surrealista de Lisboa* [*Contribution to the registration of the birth, existence and extinction of the Lisbon Surrealist Group*], this is one of the most evident topics considered by the young Portuguese surrealists. Thus, on August 17, 1947, Alexandre O'Neill and António Domingues, in a letter addressed to Cesariny (who was in Paris at the time), signed as "surréalistes au Portugal," reflecting an utopic spirit of shared experiences and communication between Portugal and France that emerged from the idea that "in this fertile field of surrealism there is a 'place where' for 'this proper noun', once I manage to throw all the prepositions into the centre of the papers [...]"¹³. Therefore, learning a technique to articulate the traits unique to a conception deemed sufficient.

A month later, O'Neill highlighted stance of balanced detachment from the two different axes of identity of the Portuguese surrealists:

For the very super-realist reasons that you and I, at least, have adopted, it is most convenient that there be complete autonomy in relation to the French movement, that is: not denying the evident 'affiliation' in 'surréalisme' (hence I prefer 'super-realism' for us) not committing ourselves beyond the principles we discover and adopt.

I don't believe in literary nationalism (and that's why I deny the value of both neo-realism and S.P.N. and Socialist Realism, knowing, however, that there are good intentions in two of them (the hell lies with good intentions...)).

And so If I don't believe in literary nationalism, I think it's impossible for there to be a 'Portuguese super-realism': what there is, of course, is – by accident (an accident that doesn't escape mezological constraints...) – some Portuguese individuals who are super-realists. It obviously brings a certain number of our characteristics to our super-realistic achievements, but it is still a problem, after all, of style [...]¹⁴.

Thus, the Portuguese surrealists question their dual affiliation. On the one hand, they recognize the importance of certain specific cultural accidents, to which the national literary tradition and the social and political circumstances of the Salazarist context were not unfamiliar, but which did not limit them to a narrowing of the national horizon. On the other hand, the Contact and dialogue with international referents, including those most capable of equating an individual and collective experience of controversial affirmation, had, from the very beginning, been marked by a certain distrust and critical awareness that would eventually last for decades. It is thus a peculiar picture of how the surrealist affirmation was processed, whether in connection to an explicit and reductive literary nationalism or to an absolute reliance on Bretonian orthodoxy, which would result in the entire erasure of Portuguese

cultural idiosyncrasies. As a result, Portuguese surrealists do not reject Portugal or Portuguese culture in general, but rather the ways in which the Portuguese heritage has been hijacked by the current governmental system or specific artistic movements. Therefore, there is a belief that the Portuguese environment has distinct features that should not be aligned, even if imported artistic paradigms, such as the surrealism movement, are followed.

One of Cesariny's letters seems to support this idea. In the letter addressed to O'Neill and Domingues (his chosen interlocutors at that initial exuberant stage) he distanced himself from the Lisbon Surrealist Group. Cesariny brought several accusations to the members of this group: attempting to convert Surrealism into yet another ineffective branch of the literary system, completely disconnected from profound objectives of individual transformation and revolt against the surrounding environment, as well as being excessively close to the "surrealist behaviour as it was and has been lived and theorized by both Breton and Calas, among many others"¹⁵.

The second half of the 1940s provided a considerably more suitable climate for the formation of Portuguese surrealism than the preceding decade, which was characterized by the efforts and exhaustion of surrealism's dedication to dialectical materialism. The discourse of distance from the Bretonian paradigm is more noticeable in the context of the anti-group *Os Surrealistas*, within which Mário Cesariny found a privileged means of expression after breaking away from the Lisbon Surrealist Group. However, it is important to take into account some considerations from the Surrealist Exhibition, which occurred in

January 1949, without the contribution of the author of *Corpo Visível*.

The catalogue began with a questionnaire in which each member of the group justified their adherence to Surrealism, with O'Neill emphasizing the desire to break free from convention and António Pedro emphasizing the need to discover Man in all of his layers, even those that were deemed inconvenient, but also an intransigent need for individuality. Fernando Azevedo responded by saying that "I consider reality to be authentic; my transformations are valid for me through it, and yours are valid through me". José-Augusto França, praising the liberating poetic possibility of the movement, highlighted that "the Surrealism leaves me an open door to all the individual-social activities in which I desire or come to desire". Summarizing this ideas, António Pedro wrote in the "Posfácio a uma Actuação Colectiva" [Afterword to a Collective Action] that "the act of liberation will be exclusively individual for those who want to be naked and do not aspire only to replacing one model with another model, one rule with another rule of dress"¹⁶.

In addition to the catalogue, considered the first of the collection of so-called *Cadernos Surrealistas*, the other volumes were presented in the exhibition, including: the best-known surrealist poem by António Pedro, the *Proto-Poema da Serra d'Arga* (1948), Alexandre O'Neill's unique collage exercise, *A Ampola Miraculosa* (1948), the strange and polemic essay *Balanço das Actividades Surrealistas em Portugal* (1948), by José-Augusto França, and later the conference *A Razão Ardente (Do Romantismo ao Surrealismo)* by Bulgarian Surrealist Nora Mitrani (1950). Among other

controversial considerations, influential in the way in which the Portuguese surrealist movement was understood in France in subsequent decades, França argued that the delay in the appearance of Surrealism in Portugal was due to the absence of poets of creative imagination in Portuguese culture, thus proposing that Portuguese Surrealism comprised of an outbreak of isolated and ephemeral activities¹⁷. It is also important to highlight an interview given by Fernando Azevedo, Fernando Lemos and Vespeira, during a collective exhibition in 1952, in which the third proposed as justification for the dissolution of the Lisbon Surrealist Group a certain mismatch of schedules among group members, as well as the need for individuals to assert their own individuality and creative liberty outside of any collective programmatic line¹⁸.

In November 1949, the anti-group Os Surrealistas published the *Comunicação dos Surrealistas*, in which they launched an attack on the Lisbon Surrealist Group, accusing them of irresponsibility, aestheticism, and ineffectiveness. This document also opened the possibility of an internal split, given the affirmation of a stance in the context of the global Surrealist Movement described as “anti-collectivist; literary anti-stable and anti its procession of hopes, beliefs, and flavours; anti-aesthetics; anti-moral (religious and otherwise)”¹⁹. In 1966, Cesariny published an excerpt of this text in *A Intervenção Surrealista*, describing it as “end of a manifesto”. The selected excerpt highlighted the anti-group’s national and international programmatic references. The emphasis on the 1947 edition of the Manifestos of Surrealism is noteworthy, as this volume contains some of the movement’s most representative

programmatic documents, specifically the important manifestos published after World War II, which indicate significant shifts in the movement’s assumptions. The anti-group manifesto mentioned precisely the documents that aligned with the spirit and needs felt in Portugal during the adoption of Surrealism, such as *Prolégomènes à un troisième manifeste du surréalisme ou non* [*Prolegomena to a Third Manifesto of Surrealism or Not*] (1942), *Rupture Inaugurale* (1947), and *À Bas les Glapisseurs de Dieu* (1948), which were almost contemporaneous with the emergence of the movement in Portugal. The Surrealists’ attitude of absolute distancing from any partisan affiliation was emphasized²⁰.

The selection of names included at the end of the anti-group manifesto, corresponding to the usual process of election of a lineage in surrealist manifestos, allows for the formation of a representative tradition, with certain deviations from the French panorama. On the one hand, it comprised practically all the important names of the Portuguese Surrealism canon of Portuguese poets and writers, namely Gomes Leal, Raul Brandão, Ângelo de Lima, and Mário de Sá-Carneiro, as well as a first sign of the controversial dialogue with Fernando Pessoa, referred to through a heteronym, “[the] killer of Fernando Pessoa: Ricardo Reis”²¹. On the other hand, the international panorama is defined according to a heteroclitic lineage considered to be the “collective work”, which includes Heraclitus, Hermes Trismegistus, Novalis, Arthur Rimbaud, Sigmund Freud, Vladimir Ilyich [Lenin], Guillaume Apollinaire, Antonin Artaud, Victor Brauner, Roberto Matta, Jacques Hérold, Max Ernst, and Marcel Duchamp. It is interesting to highlight

the interest in occultism and magic, some ties to German Romanticism, a plural approach to essential Surrealism ancestors such as Freud and Apollinaire, and a focus on surrealist visual artists. More notable, however, is the use of names ousted by the Bretonian group, such as Artaud, Brauner, and Matta. Furthermore, these exclusions reflect one of the first major differences between the Portuguese surrealists and the Bretonian paradigm, as evidenced by letters by António Maria Lisboa and works by Mário-Henrique Leiria.

Before delving deeper into several texts that point to Mário Cesariny's complex approach to the global panorama of Surrealism, I would like to emphasize three texts by Pedro Oom, António Maria Lisboa, and Mário-Henrique Leiria that clearly reflect the need for autonomy among poets involved with the anti-group Os Surrealistas, as well as the complex and oppressive conditions under which this group lived, which had a noticeable impact on the programmatic assumptions of their discourse.

In 1949, in the "Carta ao Egito", text published by Mário Cesariny in *A Intervenção Surrealista*, Pedro Oom, addressing the poet Egito Gonçalves, states that "the poet is a rebel without premeditation, a demolisher of everything and himself", reason with "should be considered incompatible notions such as poet Catholic, Marxist, surrealist, existentialist, anarchist or socialist [...]"²². As this statement clearly suggests, the refusal of any collective designation for the poetic activity is immediately extended to surrealism itself. This view is not far from Mário-Henrique Leiria's considerations from May of the same year, in which he reacts to the sessions at J.U.B.A.

and characterizes his own path in the context of Surrealism, before the contact with the anti-group Os Surrealistas: "I will now try to draw the outline of my position, as I consider myself to have been a surrealist well before the emergence of any more or less surrealist, surrealizing or even surrealist groups"²³.

Within the framework of this approach to the surrealist worldview, namely one that dispenses with, or at least does not necessarily depend on the logic a group environment, we must consider António Maria Lisboa's *Erro Próprio*, a conference held at the Casa da Comarca de Arganil in March 1950. In this manifesto, which may be regarded as a synthesis of Lisboa's primary ideas and theoretical assumptions, the poet embraces his role as a thinker of Surrealism as a movement independent of any national context, and thus as a philosophical expression and worldview. He thus reveals the reasons that led him to join Surrealism, or, more specifically, to a broader and less codified notion of Surreality:

Within the scope of generic names, broader and capable of sheltering the most disparate personalities, Surrealism appeared to me as the most appropriated till today, because its principles and, thus, common denominators are few and vague [...]. Nonetheless, the many Surrealist colours were swiftly put to use (without contradicting their principles, of course!) and in such a way, and so much more fiercely, that the Movement either becomes the tail of an Inadmissible Pontiff or falls into the offensive and futile conflict of the I AM you are not [...]. And, in reality, it was: FREE, [the

poet] not even to community of Free people can be umbilically linked²⁴.

In a letter contemporary to this text, António Maria Lisboa provides an overview of his creative journey, portraying his future project as a process of constructing a Metascience and pointing to an even more obvious divergence from Surrealism. The movement is no longer viewed as the sole core of the concept of Surreality, but rather as one of its representations: "But Surreality is not simply about Surrealism, which today clearly has a limit in action and knowledge; Surreal belongs to all great poets, regardless of their singular experiences"²⁵.

Erro Próprio is also crucial considering that it communicates the key programmatic assumptions of Abjeccionism, a specifically Portuguese feature of the surrealist experience, particularly marked by the situations encountered in the setting of the Estado Novo²⁶. In one of the most expressive sentences of the text, Lisboa establishes a complex interconnection between the surrealist demand for the transfiguration of the world and humanity, the definition of the abjectionist motto and the demand for a concept of freedom appropriate to the autonomous experience of an individual's own ontological reaction to an oppressive context:

A shift in EVERYONE and EVERYTHING must begin with each of us. 'What can a desperate man do when the air is vomit and we are abject beings?' – We must consider this a nuclear statement. And this posture of abjection, of irreversible hopelessness, leads us to the one viable position:

SURVIVE, but FREELY, for there is no survival under slavery except by refusing to accept it. 'Being free' means having the ability to combat the forces that oppose us rather than collaborating with them²⁷.

Finally, the text under scrutiny in the present paper is "Comunicado dos Surrealistas Portugueses", composed by Mário-Henrique Leiria, João Artur Silva, and Artur do Cruzeiro Seixas. The text, dated April 25, 1950, was sent to Simon Watson Taylor as a contribution emblematic of Portuguese Surrealism, intended for publication in a collection of works by surrealists from around the world that was never published. Mário-Henrique Leiria's fiercely critical voice stands out in this pronouncement, which presents an impressive panorama of the impossibility of a really surrealist worldview in Portugal, at least in terms widely recognized internationally:

In each country, the surrealist position must be defined in accordance with its unique possibilities and forms of action, according to the context in which it exists and is forced to exist, and utilizing the ability to revolutionize-destroy-create that the same environment gives. The surrealist is not a martyr of science or any other myth accepted by so-called organized society, nor is he a hired (or unpaid) soldier serving orders from any party or organization, political or humanitarian in nature. The surrealist employs his own myth, whether it comes from the caves of the seven-eyed dwarves or the ancient sewing machines; he employs his particular myth to follow the dark

paths while discovering where there are bridges made of old mannequins, and he employs it in accordance with his personal need and fury within the environment in which he happens to exist, rather than seeking the heroic-patriotic shitty martyrdom of party members. As a result, the acts must be tailored to the environment in which they occur. Hence our conclusion that, in Portugal, no so-called surrealist organization or movement can exist, but simply surrealist individuals acting, sometimes together [...] ²⁸.

National and International Surrealism According to Mário Cesariny

Despite the steady extension of its borders across the globe before and during World War II, Portuguese Surrealism was virtually disregarded by the international surrealist movement in the decades that followed. This situation was mainly due to the French surrealist group's little interest in keeping up to date with Portuguese events after 1948, the moment in which José-Augusto França set out a historiographical sketch in the *Balanço das Atividades Surrealistas em Portugal* (1948) and Mário Cesariny joined a new group, the anti-group Os Surrealistas. This situation would change in significant ways only from the second half of the 1960s onwards, when Cesariny sought to react to the persistence of critical silencing by directly addressing international interlocutors.

The first two relevant moments of this significant turning point in the path of Mário Cesariny and the Portuguese surrealist movement were the reaction to

the contents of the book *Vingt Ans de Surréalisme*, by Jean-Louis Bédouin (1961) – a work in which a reductive and paralyzed vision of the Portuguese surrealist movement persisted –, and the publication of Cesariny's anthology *A Intervenção Surrealista* – which would arouse the interest of figures such as Sergio Lima, founder of the Surrealist Group in São Paulo, and Laurens Vancrevel, a member of the Surrealist Group in Netherlands ²⁹.

In 1965, Cesariny wrote to Jean-Louis Bédouin in an attempt to rectify the French critic's narrow perspective on Portuguese circumstances in his book *Vingt Ans de Surréalisme* (1961). Bédouin continued to broadcast a reading of surrealist expressions in Portugal that was limited to the Lisbon Surrealist Group and the elements exposed by José-Augusto França in his *Balanço das Atividades Surrealistas em Portugal* (1948), or transmitted by Nora Mitrani, a Bulgarian surrealist poet who was in Portugal and gave the lecture *The Burning Reason (from Romanticism to Surrealism)*, *A Razão Ardente (Do Romantismo ao Surrealismo)*, published as one of the volumes of the *Cadernos Surrealistas* (1950). The letter, dating May 3, 1965, focused on two main gaps in Bédouin's assessment of the events in Portugal.

On the one hand, Cesariny makes a clear distinction between two experiences of the surrealist movement. He describes França's essay as a reflection of the Surrealist Group of Lisbon's demise and a result of a misunderstanding of the movement: "This 'Balanço', this publication, is the written process of adherence, in an external manner, to an occasional surrealism, as distant as possible from everything that surrealist activity has always been." Cesariny

considers himself a representative example of another Surrealist experience, citing a 1948 letter to André Breton in which he criticizes the confusion among members of the Surrealist Group of Lisbon and declares his determination to "fight until a salutary dissolution" of this group takes place³⁰.

On the other hand, the letter is linked to the desire to provide a broad and continuous overview on the surrealist presence in Portugal, placing it before and after the information given by José-Augusto França in the fourth volume of *Cadernos Surrealistas*. Cesariny rejects the idea that surrealist expressions were limited to the late 1940s, stating that "surrealism brought together, from 1947 to 1953, those whom I consider to be the most valid of the young generation from the post-war period". Cesariny also questioned França's dismissal of the national literary tradition, remembering some key precursors in the 18th and 19th centuries and assigning a distinctive position to the contemporaries of the surrealist movement in France: "However, it is in the first three decades of the 20th century that a poetic movement announces itself in ways which normally should lead to surrealism, such as you knew it in France at the time of the First Manifesto"³¹.

This explicit remark of the *Orpheu* group becomes slightly more significant when we consider Cesariny's attention to an important intervention made by Nora Mitrani, a Bulgarian surrealist poet who was in Portugal during the years of transition between groups and can be seen as one of the main sources of Breton's knowledge of Portuguese Surrealism. The poet recalls Mitrani's translations of Fernando Pessoa, who introduced the poets of the heteronyms to the panorama of international

surrealist movement in the second issue of *Le Surréalisme Même* (1957). Cesariny's perspective in 1965 aligns with the core guidelines of his main publications and historical frameworks of the time, concretized in two influential anthologies from the 1960s, *Surreal-Abjeccion (ismo)* (1963) and *A Intervenção Surrealista* (1966). *A Intervenção Surrealista* is particularly significant, as it highlights the need for a critical review of the dominant historiographical panorama on Portuguese Surrealism. The book produces a reduction of the role of the Lisbon Surrealist Group and highlights the diverse activities of the anti-group, The Surrealists.

Cesariny's broad chronology, *Prolegómenos ao Aparecimento de Dadá e do Surrealismo*, portrayed the numerous national and international facets of the historical Vanguards as clear antecedents, with a focus on Pessoa and *Orpheu* and, subsequently, the creation of Surrealism. Cesariny's chronology, as well as the selection of texts and the way they are internally structured, demonstrate a unique type of Portuguese movement integration with the international stage. It is a clear representation of dual identity, paying respect to both the national literary legacy and the major international references that are largely disregarded in Portugal. The movement's broad inscription in the global context of the Avant-Gardes, not limited to Surrealism, is also significant, as is the need to highlight clear distinctions from the Bretonian paradigm. The anthology includes almost all the main texts of an individualizing or abjectionist kind, as well as statements such as:

Matta and Brauner are expelled from the Surrealist movement. Mário

Cesariny, António Maria Lisboa, Pedro Oom, and Mário-Henrique Leiria argue against these exclusions, considering them parapsychological incidents or reminiscences from the 1930s and 1940s, which should be avoided. On the contrary, while journeying through France, José Augusto-França signs the two painters' 'minutes of expulsion'. Breton then crosses out the signature of J.A. França in the document³².

This observation, which traces the distance, both in relation to Breton and in relation to the stance of a representative of the Lisbon Surrealist Group in the critical year of 1948, is reinforced by the publication of texts by Antonin Artaud and Victor Brauner, translated and presented in the first exhibition of *Os Surrealistas* (1949), alongside texts by Breton and Benjamin Péret.

Cesariny's worldwide breakthrough was anticipated by the anthology *A Intervenção Surrealista* (1966), which helped him establish a network of contacts through the efforts of Sergio Lima and Laurens Vancrevel³³. In the decades that followed, the relationship between the Portuguese Surrealism and the larger Surrealist movement shifted dramatically. The marginalization and silencing of authors and works produced by members of the anti-group *Os Surrealistas* gave way to a period of international diffusion. Cesariny gradually sought to affirm the singularity and importance of these contributions, with particular emphasis on the manifestos written by António Maria Lisboa, a mythical figure in the context of Portuguese Surrealism, who died quite early but produced some of the movement's most emblematic programmatic texts.

This moment was also important in terms of identifying the Portuguese case with the broader direction of the movement, especially after the proclamation of the end of the French surrealist group in 1969. We must also note that, on October 4, 1969, Jean Schuster published, in the newspaper *Le Monde*, a text in which he proclaimed the end of the collective activities of the Parisian surrealist group and, according to him, of Surrealism itself. This polemic manifesto also stated that Surrealism could simultaneously designate an ontological component of the human spirit and a movement historically localized, identified with the French group and the international manifestations inspired by it:

Surrealism is an ambiguous term. It refers to both an ontological component of the human mind, its eternal counter-current escaping history in its latent continuity to become inscribed in its manifest continuity, and the historically determined movement that recognized the counter-current and assigned itself the mission of exalting, enriching, and arming it in preparation for its triumph. Between these two Surrealisms, an identity relationship exists, similar to that between a constant and a variable. It follows that Surrealism, described as 'historical' in connection to 'eternal' Surrealism, it is of a double nature, in the sense that it temporarily merges with 'eternal' Surrealism, which is a particular manifestation of the unconnected inscription in history³⁴.

Cesariny would become part of a series of international debates, publications

and exhibitions of the international surrealist movement which rejected Schuster's notion of historical Surrealism and sought to counterpoint the centralizing impulse of the French matrix with a plural understanding of the movement, both in chronological and geographical terms.

In a letter dated October 1970, addressed to Laurens and Frida Vancrevel, Cesariny proposes a necessary path that the French surrealists should have taken a long time ago, a process that echoes António Maria Lisboa's fundamental concepts, namely the centrality of self-questioning as a controversial effect of re-elaboration and persistence: "Because I feel that, particularly in France, the only contemporary hope for the renewal of the surrealist assault is through severe, albeit fair, criticism of the surrealists by the surrealists themselves. They should be at each other's throats, not pretend to be buddies and good peers"³⁵. In a letter to Sergio Lima on October 31, 1991, with similar content, the criticism levelled at the French surrealists centers on the idea that they have always been and continue to be incapable of carrying out an effective and internal critique of Surrealism's past, main moments, and directions, process that should be considered crucial in a moment of necessary reconstitution of the movement following Schuster's proclamation³⁶.

It is also worth noting that in the first chronology of Portuguese surrealists written for an international audience, published in Édouard Jaguer's magazine *Phases* in 1973, Cesariny chose to present, to an international audience, the main local precursors of Portuguese surrealism. Thus, he implicitly proclaimed the Portuguese movement's relative autonomy and

the pioneer contributions of some autochthonous roots prior to André Breton and his manifestos. Cesariny also suggested that Portuguese surrealism reached its zenith in an environment that valued the autonomy of each of its representatives, fostering a richness that allowed for truly diverse ideas. This environment enabled the critical examination of surrealism itself, including the willingness to denounce signs of stagnation and academization within the movement, particularly in France.

In this document, Cesariny defended that, despite its peripheral nature and the little interest it aroused within and outside borders, Portuguese Surrealism had anticipated the process of a critical review of the international movement, only comparable to that which would be promoted during the crisis related to the death of Breton and Schuster's proclamation. In the Portuguese version of that document, Cesariny added a note addressed to national critics, scolding them for not having realized that the poetry of those who among them truly believed and committed themselves to the surrealist proposal is the less influenced by French surrealist poetry and, therefore, less marked by canonized practices, having sought other means of expression.³⁷

We must also note Cesariny's participation in the international inquiry *Rien or Quoi*, promoted by Vincent Bounoure in 1970, with the aim of discussing what to do with Surrealism after Schuster's proclamation. Cesariny asserted that the surrealist movement could not be appropriated by any particular view or interpretation:

However, it is crucial that we communicate with each other. What comes to mind first is that we cannot discard

surrealism or attempt to write the history of a future surrealism, whether or not we label it as such. Similarly, we cannot have a surrealism that extends unbroken from 1924 to today. IT DOES NOT BELONG TO US³⁸.

This perspective, aligned with the proposal for a more pluralistic expression of the surrealist movement, characterized by the dialogue and confluence of different expressions of André Breton's legacy, according to different contexts and experiences, was conjugated with an explicit purpose of valuing Portuguese Surrealism and its pioneering conclusions. According to Cesariny, the main questions that structured inquiries, such as that of Vincent Bounoure, had already been approached in-depth in António Maria Lisboa's manifestos. In many ways, they represented the necessary steps in the evolution of the pioneering debates that had been held in Portugal since 1949:

One of the reasons for surrealism's demise, in my opinion, was the sect-like spirit, the overall spirit of a party (I'm not sure if I'm expressing myself well), a constituent assembly, with admissions, excommunications, and so on: the bureau. The Magicians' Bureau! If that were true, we would have completely revolutionized our lives! Not simply *our lives*, no matter how much we changed them: LIFE! António Maria Lisboa, our finest surrealist poet, chose to avoid these features of surrealism in France. And the questions you ask me are, in many ways, a clear development of what we debated here in 1949. Without, mind you, finding any conclusive response³⁹.

In this context, the Parisian surrealist group was largely considered greatly responsible for the lack of a necessary process of historical self-questioning promoted by Surrealism itself, which, among other things, would revisit episodes such as the expulsion of Antonin Artaud, Victor Brauner, and Robert Matta.

It is with this background in mind that the project of the anthology *Textos de Afirmação e de Combate do Movimento Surrealista Mundial* (1977) must not be overlooked. This anthology constitutes Cesariny's most significant contribution to the history of international Surrealism. Composed of a vast, multifaceted and comprehensive set of texts by surrealists from around the world, the anthology proposes the constitution of an ecumenic interpretation of Surrealism by the most representative members of a group explicitly recognized as peripheral and clearly divergent in relation to the orthodox guiding axis of the entire movement. It is also a project that presents itself as a proposal for personal intervention in the context of controversies surrounding the historical memory of the Surrealist movement, suggesting a potential research direction to be pursued in the future.

The anthology *Textos de Afirmação e de Combate do Movimento Surrealista Mundial* (1977) would eventually be recognized as an exemplary and unparalleled project, despite the much broader scope of its ambitions, particularly given the programmatic willingness to combine not only documents representing different geographies, but also different expressions of each space, some of which are undesirable. In the preface to the recent reissue of the anthology, Laurens Vancrevel related the project to the

environment derived from the 25th of April 1974, considering that in this work "Cesariny decided to concentrate on the often arduous task of collective struggle for freedom, leaving out internal discussions and conflicts of the surrealist community". It was received with respect and admiration for different members of this community, such as Franklin Rosemont, John Lyle, Vincent Vincent Bounoure or Édouard Jaguer⁴⁰.

However, as the correspondence with Sergio Lima and Laurens and Frida Vancrevel demonstrates, despite his efforts to engage in an increasingly decisive critical review of the international surrealist movement, Cesariny was always determined to inscribe the specific case of Portuguese Surrealism in the critical debate provided by the progressive decentralization in relation to the Parisian paradigm. In this context, for example, one might place a project to enlarge the 1977 anthology that was never completed, wholly dedicated to the concept of "Iberian Surrealism" or, more accurately, the Portuguese and Spanish Surrealism. His concept of Surrealism, which dates back to his early involvement in the movement in the late 1940s, always included a willingness to engage in dynamic interaction between singularities and shared critical concerns. For this reason, the need for a review of the historiographical narrative of the various stages undergone by the movement in Portugal coincides with the progressive departure from the excessive weight of doctrinal orthodoxy that would eventually lead to the concept of "Historical Surrealism" validated by Jean Schuster and José Pierre.

The way in which Portuguese Surrealism finds itself positioned in relation to the international surrealist movement seems

to be similar to Cesariny's perspective of Portugal's historical situation within the broader context of European Modernity⁴¹. On the one hand, Portuguese Surrealism seems to be described as a movement largely ignored by its international counterparts, especially by those who relied on what was conveyed by critics belonging to the Parisian surrealist group. On the other hand, this peripheralization allowed for a pioneering critical distance, as well as the conditions for the development of a syncretic combination between the recognized influence of the basic purposes of Surrealism and the Portuguese literary and cultural tradition.

Similarly, as Cesariny made clear in books such as *Vieira da Silva, Arpad Szenes e o Castelo Surrealista* (1984), or in many of the interviews he gave, Portugal is considered one of the main victims of the rise of the civilizational paradigm represented by the West, with its totalitarian and colonialist project, philosophically structured on Greco-Latin and Cartesian rationalism. As a result of a development considered uneven and poorly suited, compared to the European paradigm, Portugal was a country marked by stagnation and the inability to resist the great international powers, retaining its archaic features, combined with the adaptation to dominant models imposed by successive political regimes since the 16th century. However, in the Portuguese cultural roots Cesariny recognizes the deep foundations of another possible direction for European culture that had been silenced since the 16th century but could still be found in marginalized authors throughout the subsequent centuries.

A notable example of Cesariny's complex proposal can be found in a 1991

interview with Torcado Sepúlveda. In this interview, he argues that Portugal's history was undoubtedly more intriguing than the history of Surrealism. He suggests that Portugal represents a different civilizational moment, reflecting aspects of other civilizations dominated by the modern West, or embodying a sense of rupture from the European rationalist paradigm that shaped the core goals of Surrealism⁴².

Thus, with his proposed interpretation of Surrealism, Cesariny outlines a form of evaluative recognition of the (semi)peripheral experience of the Portuguese surrealist movement. The link is therefore with both the resistance to the Bretonian orthodoxy influx and the sociopolitical persistence of mythologies built at the intersection of conservative stereotypes and subservience

to the dominant Western paradigm, in its Greco-Latin and Judeo-Christian roots.

On the one hand, the fact that Portuguese Surrealism emerged late, more than twenty years after the Manifesto of Surrealism was published, is understood as an expression of the uneven development of the possibilities of accessing an environment of significant cultural freedom. On the other hand, this apparent delay is also valued, as it fostered a detached and original perspective on the Surrealist movement, while also allowing for its acclimatization to the specific Portuguese tradition. In short, Portuguese Surrealism seems to illustrate the circumstances in which the various modernisms developed and were critically imposed on a (semi-)peripheral environment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A.S.O., "Pequeno escândalo no Chiado... A Arte não resolve problemas mas sugere problemas – dizem-nos três pintores surrealistas", in *Colóquio/Artes*, nº 94, 2ª série, 1992, p. 8.
- Cesariny, Mário, Mário Cesariny, *Três Poetas do Surrealismo*, Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional, 1981.
- Cesariny, Mário, *A Intervenção Surrealista*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1997.
- Cesariny, Mário, *As Mãos na Água A Cabeça no Mar*, 3ª ed., Porto, Assírio & Alvim, 2015.
- Cesariny, Mário, *Um Rio à Beira do Rio: Cartas para Frida e Laurens Vancrevel*, edição de Maria Etelvina Santos e Perfecto E. Cuadrado, posfácio e comentários de Laurens Vancrevel, Vila Nova de Famalicão/Lisboa, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda/Documenta, 2017.
- Cesariny, Mário, *Sinal Respiratório: Cartas para Sérgio Lima*, edição e posfácio de Perfecto E. Cuadrado, apresentação de Sérgio Lima, Vila Nova de Famalicão/Lisboa, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda/Documenta, 2019.
- Cesariny, Mário, *Uma Última Pergunta. Entrevistas com Mário Cesariny (1952-2006)*, organização, intro. e notas de Laura Mateus Fonseca, prefácio de Bernardo Pinto de Almeida e posfácio de Perfecto E. Cuadrado, Lisboa, Documenta, 2020.
- Cesariny, Mário, *Textos de Afirmação e de Combate do Movimento Surrealista Mundial*, preâmbulo de Laurens Vancrevel e posfácio de Perfecto E. Cuadrado, Vila Nova de Famalicão/Lisboa, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda/Documenta, 2021.
- Cuadrado, Perfecto E., *A Única Real Tradição Viva. Antologia da Poesia Surrealista Portuguesa*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1998.
- França, José-Augusto, *Balanço das Atividades Surrealistas em Portugal*, Lisboa, [s.n.], 1948.
- Franco, António Cândido, *Notas para a Compreensão do Surrealismo em Portugal*, Évora, Licorne, 2013.
- Franco, António Cândido, *O Triângulo Mágico. Uma biografia de Mário Cesariny*, Lisboa, Quetzal, 2019.
- Gil, Isabel Capela, "From Peripheral to Alternative and Back: Contemporary Meanings of Modernity", in Achim Hölter (ed.), *The Languages of World Literature* (Vol. 1), Berlin, De Gruyter, 2016, pp. 85-102.

- Juvan, Marko, "Peripheral Modernism and the World-System: Slovenian Literature and Theory of the Nineteen-Sixties", in *Slavica Tergestina* 23 (2019/II), EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, Trieste, 2019, pp. 168-199.
- Kefala, Eleni, *Peripheral (Post)Modernity. The Syncretist Aesthetics of Borges, Piglia, Kalokyris and Kyriakidis*, New York, Peter Lang, 2007.
- Lisboa, António Maria, *Poesia*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1995.
- Moody, Alys and Ross, Stephen J., *Global Modernists on Modernism: An Anthology*, London, Bloomsbury, 2020.
- Pacheco, Luiz, *Figuras, Figurantes e Figuroes*, Lisboa, O Independente, 2004.
- Petrus, *Os Modernistas Portugueses, Volume III. Dos Independentes aos Surrealistas*, Porto, C. E.P., 1962.
- Ramalho, Maria Irene, *Fernando Pessoa e outros Fingidores*, Lisboa, Tinta-da-china.
- Schuster, Jean, "Le Quatrième Chant", *Le Monde des Livres*, 4 Octobre 1969, p. IV.
- Sousa, Rui, *A Presença do Abjecto no Surrealismo Português*, Lisboa, Esfera do Caos, 2016.
- Sousa, Rui, "A Crítica da Temporalidade Ocidental nas entrevistas de Mário Cesariny", *Metamorfoses*, v. 19 n. 2 (2022): Centenário - Mário Cesariny de Vasconcelos, pp. 51-70. <https://revistas.ufrj.br/index.php/metamorfoses/issue/view/2674/showToc..>
- Sousa, Rui, *Do Libertino*, Lisboa, Tinta-da-china, 2023.
- Sousa, Rui, "Surrealismo Português e Surrealismo Internacional a partir da correspondência de Mário Cesariny com Sérgio Lima, Laurens Vancrevel e Frida Vancrevel", *Cadernos de Literatura Comparada*, n. 49, 2023, pp. 11-31. <https://doi.org/10.21747/21832242/litcomp49a1>.
- Tchen, Adelaide Ginga, *A Aventura Surrealista*, Lisboa, Colibri, 2001.
- Ungureanu, Delia, *From Paris to Tlön: Surrealism as World Literature*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.
- Vancrevel, Laurens, "Preâmbulo", in Mário Cesariny (org.), *Textos de Afirmação e de Combate do Movimento Surrealista Mundial*, preâmbulo de Laurens Vancrevel e posfácio de Perfecto E. Cuadrado, Vila Nova de Famalicão/Lisboa, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda/Documenta, 2021, pp. 9-19.
- Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development. Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2015.

NOTES

1. Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development. Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2015, p. 123-124.
2. *Ibidem*, p. 13.
3. Marko Juvan, "Peripheral Modernism and the World-System: Slovenian Literature and Theory of the Nineteen-Sixties", in *Slavica Tergestina* 23 (2019/II), EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, Trieste, 2019, p. 178.
4. Eleni Kefala, *Peripheral (Post)Modernity. The Syncretist Aesthetics of Borges, Piglia, Kalokyris and Kyriakidis*, New York, Peter Lang, 2007, p. 34-35.
5. See Alys Moody and Stephen J. Ross, *Global Modernists on Modernism: An Anthology*, London, Bloomsbury, 2020, p. 1-24.
6. Maria Irene Ramalho, *Fernando Pessoa e outros Fingidores*, Lisboa, Tinta-da-china, p. 99-156. Following this point of view, Isabel Capelo Gil suggests that "To speak about a peripheral modernity, then, is a task that requires the imagination, indeed one that rethinks the modern from the perspective of creative renewal. One that blends the intimation of questioning with the imaginative possibility of doing otherwise, differently and yet in a way that is inclusive of this common humanity of ours". Moreover, using Pessoa as an example, Gil suggests "an understanding of the peripheral as a critical attitude – a peripheral consciousness [...] anchored in the possibility of critically questioning the language of art, in his case of literature, and continuously attempting to renovate it while searching

- for a new language, as the semi-heteronym Bernardo Soares does” – Isabel Capelo Gil, “From Peripheral to Alternative and Back: Contemporary Meanings of Modernity”, in Achim Hölter (ed.), *The Languages of World Literature* (Vol. 1), Berlin, De Gruyter, 2016, p. 90 and 97.
7. Delia Ungureanu, *From Paris to Tlön: Surrealism as World Literature*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018, p. 4.
 8. Mário Cesariny, *As Mãos na Água A Cabeça no Mar*, 3ª ed., Porto, Assírio & Alvim, 2015, p. 328-329. I am responsible for translating works by Portuguese surrealist authors throughout this text. In the original: Pelas próprias razões super-realistas que, tu e eu, pelo menos, adoptámos, é de toda a conveniência que haja inteira autonomia em relação ao movimento francês, isto é: não negando a evidente «filiação» no «surréalisme» (daqui eu preferir «super-realismo» para nós) não nos comprometermos para além dos princípios que *descobrimos* e adaptamos. Não acredito no nacionalismo literário (e por isso nego o valor tanto ao neo-realismo como ao S.P.N. como ao Realismo Socialista, sabendo, embora, que há boas intenções em dois deles (de boas intenções está o inferno...). E por não acreditar em nacionalismo literário, julgo impossível haver um super-realismo «português»: o que há, é claro, é – *por acidente* (acidente que não escapa ao condicionalismo mezológico...) – uns indivíduos portugueses que são super-realistas. Isso traz, evidentemente, um certo número de características nossas às nossas realizações super-realistas, mas é ainda um problema, afinal, de estilo. [...] Haverá, portanto, toda a conveniência em estabelecer ligações íntimas com o Breton, etc... mas, julgo eu, com a máxima cautela, pois pode ser que não sejam... surrealistas... Percebes? Até que ponto o conservadorismo do Breton, o saudosismo dele, é verdade? Os manifestos, que comprei, são muito lúcidos, principalmente o segundo, mas... «entre el decir y el hacer hay a veces una cuchara» (A. O'Neill)”.
 9. Perfecto E. Cuadrado, *A Única Real Tradição Viva. Antologia da Poesia Surrealista Portuguesa*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1998, p. 9-24.
 10. Adelaide Ginga Tchen, *A Aventura Surrealista*, Lisboa, Colibri, 2001, p. 89. In the original: “Em 1947, em relação directa com a reorganização do movimento surrealista a nível internacional e a par do clima de guerra fria no plano mundial, tem início em Portugal a aventura surrealista. Afirmando uma postura independente e contrariando a hegemonia neo-realista no campo cultural, a formação de um grupo surrealista em Lisboa seria o marco de uma aventura que entre o ético e o estético traria concomitantemente novos valores ao mundo das ideias, das mentalidades e da cultura”.
 11. António Cândido Franco, *Notas para a Compreensão do Surrealismo em Portugal*, Évora, Licorne, 2013, p. 244-245. In the original: “Ao invés do que se tem dito, a década de quarenta, não obstante o esvaziamento mediático, ou por causa dele, significou para o surrealismo um passo em frente e representou para o aparecimento do surrealismo em Portugal um húmus de excepcional favor. A segunda metade da década de quarenta foi um meio muito mais favorável à formação do surrealismo português do que teria sido a década anterior, marcada pelo esforço, e pelo cansaço, da adesão do surrealismo ao materialismo dialéctico, com o conseqüente esquecimento aqui e ali daquilo que era específico ao movimento.”
 12. Luiz Pacheco, *Figuras, Figurantes e Figurões*, Lisboa, O Independente, 2004, p. 86-87. In the original: “E eles, digo: o Cesariny, o Lisboa, o Seixas, o António Domingues, noutra banda o António Pedro, o França, o O'Neill, Moniz Pereira, tinham que lutar em duas frentes: a do regime e seus acólitos (PIDE, fachos) e a dos neo-realistas e seus próceres, já lançados na correria para o sucesso e as coroas, as massinhas. Por ora, nos primórdios, na área dos surrealistas (e o termo tinha, à época, um pesado ressaibo pejorativo: tanto dava para maluco, como para maricas, bêbado, pilha-galinhas, terrorista cultural) era tudo a brincar, gratuito, espontâneo, projectado do mais profundo de cada um. Mesmo os livros de Maurice Nadeau ou do Breton que traziam debaixo do braço como parangonas não eram bíblias para respeitar ou imitar cegamente, antes roteiros e armas de arremesso à pasma-ceira lisboeta”.
 13. Mário Cesariny, *As Mãos na Água A Cabeça no Mar*, 3ª ed., Porto, Assírio & Alvim, 2015, p. 318-325.
 14. *Ibidem*, p. 328-329. In the original: “Como vêem, estou cumprindo o meu dever de português em Portugal. Espero que «nos» enviem as vossas produções transportáveis e depois do dia 30 do corrente

- «me» as enviem. Farei o possível por ser aqui uma, não só televisão fiel do mundo «perenisado» mas também guarda das vossas, isto é: nossas artisticidades de Paris e Lisboa. Parece-me que neste campo fértil do surrealismo existe um «lugar onde» para «este substantivo próprio», uma vez que eu consiga lançar para o cesto dos papéis todas as pré posições, isto é: todas as atitudes pré concebidas e «por consequência» viciadas, viciadíssimas racionalizações”.
15. *Ibidem*, p. 346-347. In the original: “Não podem, sem mal de peito próprio e alheio, ser por mim encaradas como simples questão de pormenor ou de personalismo mas sim, e nalguns casos de facto, divergências fundamentais em relação ao comportamento surrealista tal como ele foi e vem sendo *vivido e teorizado* tanto por Breton como por Calas, entre muitos outros”.
 16. See Petrus, *Os Modernistas Portugueses, Volume III. Dos Independentes aos Surrealistas*, Porto, C. E.P., 1962, p. 82-86. In the original: Fernando Azevedo: “tendo eu a realidade por autêntica, válidas me são as minhas transformações por via dela, e válidas as suas por via de mim”; José-Augusto França: “o Surrealismo deixa-me uma porta aberta para todas as actividades-individuais-sociais em que me deseje, me encontre ou venha a desejar-me, a encontrar-me”; António Pedro: Vespeira: “o acto de libertação será exclusivamente individual para quem se queira nú e não aspire apenas à substituição dum modelo por outro modelo, duma regra por outra regra de vestir”.
 17. See José-Augusto França, *Balanço das Actividades Surrealistas em Portugal*, Lisboa, [s.n.], 1948, p. 3 and 8.
 18. A.S.O., “Pequeno escândalo no Chiado... A Arte não resolve problemas mas sugere problemas – dizem-nos três pintores surrealistas”, in *Colóquio/Artes*, nº 94, 2ª série, 1992, p. 8.
 19. Petrus, *op. cit.*, p. 160. In the original: “Perante eles e perante todos, para evitar mais tenebrosas confusões, declaramos ainda, de uma vez para sempre, que, a dentro do Movimento Surrealista mundial, a nossa posição é: | Anti-colectivista; | Anti-estábulo literário e respectivo cortejo de esperanças, crenças e sabores; | Anti-estética; | Anti-moral (religiosa e a outra)”.
 20. Mário Cesariny, *A Intervenção Surrealista*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1997, p. 157.
 21. *Ibidem*, p. 157. In the original: “[...] da obra colectiva de Segismund Freud, Mário de Sá-Carneiro, Arthur Rimbaud, Guillaume Apollinaire, Antonin Artaud, Heraclito, Hermes, Vladimir Ilitch, Novalis – a loucura, a sabedoria, a magia, a poesia; | das alucinações de Raul Brandão, Gomes Leal e Ângelo de Lima; | do assassino de Fernando Pessoa: Ricardo Reis”.
 22. *Ibidem*, p. 98-99. In the original: “É que o poeta é rebelde sem premeditação, demolidor de tudo e de si próprio, esforçadamente anti-caridade-encostada-às-esquinas-de-pistola-empunho ou caneta-na-mão-lágrima-de-jacaré. | Daí que resultem contraditórios os termos de poeta católico, marxista, surrealista, existencialista, anarquista ou socialista, quando não se desconhece que só ao poeta é dado compreender o poeta.”
 23. *Ibidem*, p. 134. In the original: “Vou agora tentar dar uma ideia da minha posição, pois considero-me um surrealista bastante anterior a qualquer aparecimento de grupos mais ou menos surrealistas, surrealizantes ou surrealistas mesmo.”
 24. António Maria Lisboa, *Poesia*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1995, pp. 36-37. In the original: “Dentro dos nomes genéricos, mais amplos e capazes de abrigar as personalidades mais díspares, foi até hoje o Surrealismo que me apareceu, pois os seus princípios e, portanto, denominadores comuns são poucos e indistintos – automatismo psíquico, Liberdade, o encontro dum determinado ponto do espírito sintético, o Amor, a transformação da realidade, a recuperação da nossa força psíquica, o Desejo, o Sonho, a POESIA. Mas, mesmo assim, depressa, posto a funcionar, se criaram as diversas cores Surrealistas (sem no entanto negar os seus princípios... claro!) e de tal forma, e tanto mais feroz, que o Movimento ou passa a ser a cauda dum Pontífice Inadmissível ou cai na ofensa e na querela inútil do EU SOU tu não és, a não ser que outro caminho se tenha adivinhado. E de facto assim foi: LIVRE, nem mesmo a um agrupamento de indivíduos Livres pode estar ligado Umbilicalmente.”
 25. *Ibidem*, p. 195. In the original: “Mas a Surrealidade não é só do Surrealismo que hoje tem incontestavelmente um limite na acção e um limite no conhecimento – o Surreal é do Poeta de todos os tempos, de todos os grandes Poetas quaisquer que sejam as suas decisivas experiências.”

26. For a more in-depth understanding of the approach to Abjectionism, see Rui Sousa, *A Presença do Abjecto no Surrealismo Português*, Lisboa, Esfera do Caos, 2016 and Rui Sousa, *Do Libertino*, Lisboa, Tinta-da-china, 2023, p. 146-158.
27. *Ibidem*, p. 34. In the original: “Uma mudança de rumo em TODOS e em TUDO não pode deixar de começar em nós individualmente. «Até que ponto pode chegar um homem desesperado quando o ar é um vômito e nós seres abjectos?» – frase que poderemos intitular de central. E esta posição de abjecção, de desespero irrisignável, leva-nos à única posição válida: – SOBREVIVER, mas Sobreviver LIVRES, pois não existe sobrevivência na escravatura, mas na não aceitação desta. «Ser Livre» é possuir-se a capacidade de lutar contra as forças que nos contrariam, é não colaborar com elas.”
28. Mário Cesariny, *Três Poetas do Surrealismo*, Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional, 1981, p. 151. In the original: “Em cada país a posição surrealista tem de se colocar conforme as suas próprias possibilidades e formas de actuação, condicionada pelo meio em que existe e é obrigada a ser e servindo-se da capacidade de revolucionar-destruir-criar que esse mesmo meio lhe proporciona. O surrealista não é um mártir da ciência ou de qualquer outro mito aceite pela sociedade dita organizada, nem um combatente pago (ou não-pago) para servir ordens emanadas de qualquer partido ou organização mais ou menos política ou filantrópica. O surrealista usa o seu próprio mito, venha ele das cavernas dos anões de sete olhos ou das máquinas de costura antiquíssimas, serve-se do seu mito particular para seguir pelos caminhos tenebrosos e ainda por descobrir onde existem pontes de velhos manequins, e usa-o conforme a sua necessidade e furor pessoais dentro do meio em que por acaso existe, sem procurar o martírio merdoso heróico-patriótico dos homens de partido. Por isso as actuações têm de se adaptar ao local em que se situam. Por isso a nossa afirmação de que, em Portugal, não é possível a existência de qualquer agrupamento ou movimento dito surrealista, mas de que apenas poderão existir indivíduos surrealistas agindo, por vezes, em conjunto.”
29. I delve deeper into the ramifications of Mário Cesariny’s correspondence with Sergio Lima and the Vancrevel couple in understanding their viewpoints on international Surrealism in the paper “Surrealismo Português e Surrealismo Internacional a partir da correspondência de Mário Cesariny com Sérgio Lima, Laurens Vancrevel e Frida Vancrevel”, *Cadernos de Literatura Comparada*, n. 49, 2023, p. 11-31.
30. Mário Cesariny, *Três Poetas do Surrealismo*, p. 164. In the original: “Cette publication ne fait que dater l’échec du groupe surréaliste que j’ai constitué, avec Alexandre O’Neill, Vespeira et quelques autres, a peu près un an auparavant: 1947. À cette époque, nous ne connaissions même pas le nommé José França. Ce «Balanço», cette publication, c’est le procès écrit d’une adésion tout a fait extérieure pour un surréalisme d’occasion, éloigné au possible de tout ce qui a toujours été l’activité surréaliste. Dans une lettre à André Breton, écrite en 48, je signifiai ma totale non solidarité envers França et envers le pitre état de confusion ou était tombé le dit groupe surréaliste. Je lui disais aussi que, face à une permanence de cette confusion, le moins que je pouvais faire ce serait de la combattre jusqu’à une salutaire disparition. Ce qui, en effet, a été fait.” [sic].
31. *Ibidem*, p. 164-165. In the original: “C’est fort injuste envers toute une opposition, morale, artistique et intellectuelle qui, depuis 1933, n’a jamais cessé d’exister, surréaliste ou non. On vous a fait oublier des noms aussi prestigieux et, au Portugal, plus connus que le votre. Si en effet, le surréalisme a groupé chez nous, de 1947 a 1953, ceux que je tiens pour les esprits les plus valables de la jeune génération issue de l’après-guerre, il est hors de toute analyse sérieuse la considération, dans un pareil plan, d’un zéro absolu antérieur. C’est vrai que nous avons connu au XIXe siècle, et même au XVIIIe. – malgré l’absence d’imagination qu’on vous a servi assez froide – quelques œuvres et quelques faits qu’on peut toujours rapprocher de la voie royale surréaliste. Pourtant, c’est dans les trois premières décades du XXe. Qu’un mouvement poétique s’annonce dans des voies qui *normalement*, devraient aboutir au surréalisme, tel que vous l’avez connu en France à l’époque du Premier Manifeste. De ces années 30 dont je vous parle vous pouvez connaître un peu son génie pluvieux: le poète Fernando Pessoa, dont Nora Mitrani a traduit et présenté quelques extraits dans un numéro de «Le Surréalisme, Même». Mais, il n’est pas le seul, ni, peut-être, le plus génial.” [sic].

32. Mário Cesariny, *A Intervenção Surrealista*, *op. cit.*, p. 58-59. In the original: “Matta e Brauner são expulsos do movimento surrealista. Mário Cesariny, António Maria Lisboa, Pedro Oom, Mário Henrique Leiria desolidarizar-se-iam destas exclusões considerando-as caso parapsicológico ou reminiscências dos anos 30-40 que conviria evitar. Pelo contrário, José Augusto-França, de passagem em França, assina a «acta de expulsão» dos dois pintores. Acompanhando, Breton risca a assinatura de J.A. França nesse documento.”
33. For a detailed overview on the conditions behind Mário Cesariny's international expansion and its impact on the poet's life and work, see António Cândido Franco, *O Triângulo Mágico. Uma biografia de Mário Cesariny*, Lisboa, Quetzal, 2019, p. 202-238.
34. Jean Schuster, “Le Quatrième Chant”, *Le Monde des Livres*, 4 Octobre 1969, p. IV. The translation is mine. In the original: “Surréalisme est un mot ambigu. Il désigne à la fois une composante ontologique de l'esprit humain, son contre-courant éternel échappant à l'histoire dans sa continuité latente pour s'y inscrire dans sa continuité manifeste et le mouvement, historiquement déterminé, qui a reconnu le contre-courant et s'est donné pour mission de l'exalter, de l'enrichir et de l'armer afin de préparer son triomphe. Entre ces deux Surréalismes fonctionne un rapport d'identité comme entre une constante et une variable. Il en résulte que le Surréalisme, qualifié d'«historique» par rapport au Surréalisme «éternel», est de nature double, c'est-à-dire qu'il se confond momentanément avec le Surréalisme «éternel» dont il est une manifestation particulière de l'inscription discontinue dans l'histoire.”
35. Mário Cesariny, *Um Rio à Beira do Rio: Cartas para Frida e Laurens Vancrevel*, edited by Maria Etelvina Santos e Perfecto E. Cuadrado, preface and comments by Laurens Vancrevel, Vila Nova de Famalicão/Lisboa, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda/Documenta, 2017, p. 65. In the original: “Porque acredito que, sobretudo em França, as únicas hipóteses actuais de ver renovado o assalto surrealista seria com uma crítica feroz, isto é, justa, aos surrealistas pelos próprios surrealistas. É preciso que se matem uns aos outros, não que se façam de amigos e bons alunos.”
36. Idem, *Sinal Respiratório: Cartas para Sergio Lima*, edited by Perfecto E. Cuadrado, apresentação de Sergio Lima, Vila Nova de Famalicão/Lisboa, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda/Documenta, 2019, p. 121.
37. Mário Cesariny, *As Mãos na Água A Cabeça no Mar*, *op. cit.*, p. 290-313.
38. Idem, *ibidem*, p. 228. In the original: “No entanto, é bem necessário que falemos e nos falemos. E o que em primeiro lugar me vem à cabeça é que não podemos de maneira nenhuma dispor do surrealismo, não podemos tentar escrever a história de um surrealismo futuro, chame-se ele surrealista ou não, tal como não podemos dispor do surrealismo que vem, se vem, de 1924 a hoje. NÃO NOS PERTENCE.”
39. *Ibidem*, p. 228-229. In the original: “Um dos motivos que levaram o surrealismo a um declínio foi, quanto a mim, o espírito de seita, de partido (expresso-me mal), de assembleia constituinte, com admissões, excomunhões, etc.: o Bureau. Bureau dos Mágicos! A ter sido verdade, realmente teríamos transformado a vida! Não apenas a *nossa vida*, por muito que a tivéssemos mudado: A VIDA! António Maria Lisboa, o nosso maior poeta surrealista, preferiu afastar-se, ante estes aspectos do surrealismo em França. E as perguntas que me fazeis constituem em muito aspecto o desenvolvimento lúcido do que nós aqui debatíamos em 1949. Sem, há que dizê-lo, termos encontrado nenhuma resposta conclusiva.”
40. Laurens Vancrevel, “Preâmbulo”, in Mário Cesariny (org.), *Textos de Afirmação e de Combate do Movimento Surrealista Mundial*, foreword by Laurens Vancrevel and afterword by Perfecto E. Cuadrado, Vila Nova de Famalicão/Lisboa, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda/Documenta, 2021, p. 16-17. In the original: “Cesariny decidiu concentrar-se na frequentemente árdua tarefa luta colectiva pela liberdade, deixando de fora as discussões e conflitos internos da comunidade surrealista.”
41. For a more in-depth approach to this problem, see my paper “A Crítica da Temporalidade Ocidental nas entrevistas de Mário Cesariny”, *Metamorfoses*, v. 19 n. 2, 2022, p. 51-70.
42. Mário Cesariny, *Uma Última Pergunta. Entrevistas com Mário Cesariny (1952-2006)*, organização, intro. e notas de Laura Mateus Fonseca, prefácio de Bernardo Pinto de Almeida e posfácio de Perfecto E. Cuadrado, Lisboa, Documenta, 2020, p. 259.