

“ALL VERSES HE READ ABOUT THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE”: POWER PERFORMANCE AND LITERARY AUDIENCES³⁹⁴

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*Era um flagello este tyranno mestre
Dos ouvidos e faces dos freguezes;
Todos os versos leu da Estatua Equestre
(Nicolau Tolentino de Almeida, “O Bilhar”)*

Countless poetic compositions were written during and after the inauguration of the Equestrian Statue of the King of Portugal D. José I on his birthday, June 6, 1775. The festivities lasted three days; however, they were extended throughout the kingdom for a lot longer. The celebration had the greatest impact and resonance in the Portuguese culture in the 18th century. A well-known satirical author, Nicolau Tolentino de Almeida, was part of the vast list of poets who glossed over the theme of the inauguration. In spite of that, he characterized the readers of this sort of poetry of circumstance as “minor”, like a “bad poet” who had followed the barber profession when young (he is certainly referring to the poet Domingos dos Reis Quita, his contemporary), compulsively attracted by these and other compositions of the genre, all of marginal taste and sold on the street:

This master tyrant was a scourge / From the ears and faces of the costumers; / All verses he read about the Equestrian Statue / And all the famous plays / Sold in the Arsenal to the vagrant wanderer / On a string / Of tired rancid poetry / Thick vol-

³⁹⁴ This text is part of the FCT-funded project “Literature and Borders of Knowledge - Inclusion Policies” of the Margarida Losa Institute for Comparative Literature (UID/ELT/00500/2013 | POCI-01-0145-FEDER-007339). It is also linked to performance studies developed in Group 4 of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (CEIS20). Finally, it is based on the article: “Performance and intelligentsia around the inauguration of an Equestrian Statue in the 18th century”, *Journal Performance and Spectacle in Early Modern Europe*, n.º 6: http://www.artidellospettacolo-performingarts.com/images/2020__1_Matos.pdf (publ. December 12, 2020).

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ume in the pocket walked; / At the sign of people, would soon run / And the fatal letterhead pushed him (translated)³⁹⁷.

How could the inauguration of a statue in the city of Lisbon activate the public imagination, the written and artistic production of an entire era, mobilizing poetry, theatre, music, opera, and the statuary itself, now elevated to an unprecedented scale? How did the torrent of printed and manuscript poems become the very image of the compulsive reader, member of a social class that normally remained on the fringes of literary circles?

This essay proposes a culturalist and openly performative reading of this singular inauguration as an *occurrence*, considering historical and literary studies, in addition to conducting a detailed analysis of the symbolic topography, the choreography of gestures and inscriptions that defined the staging of this major event of the 18th century.

One can claim that improvisation or spontaneity did not underlie the occasion. Sebastião de Carvalho e Melo, Marquis of Pombal since 1770, planned the event in detail and announced it “eight days later” to the King as a political operation of the utmost importance³⁹⁸. As a cultural *performance*, the inauguration of the statue is a *liminal* event of broad significance in the Portuguese culture. It was a moment of public consecration of enlightened power, not only that of King D. José I, but also of his plenipotentiary minister, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699-1782). After 1755, the minister of D. José had energetically reinforced the scope of his political action: “Pombal on the throne, the King on the lathe” was a saying that illustrated a situation of ambiguous governance, in which the King was distracted by his hobbies with wood, entrusting the erosion of power to his minister. With the reconstruction of Lisbon, Sebastião de Carvalho e Melo changed both the urban structure of the capital and the spaces for management and coexistence of civil society. The exemplary process of condemnation of the Távora family (1758-1759) had relegated the court nobility to an almost decorative role. The expulsion of the Jesuits (1759) had strengthened the principles of Regalism, which advocated greater State intervention in domains that until then had been under the authority of the Church. Almost until the death of the King in 1777, Pombal controlled the pretensions of high nobility,

³⁹⁷ “Era um flagello este tyranno mestre/ Dos ouvidos e faces dos freguezes;/ Todos os versos leu da Estatua Equestre/ E todos os famosos Entremezes/ Que no Arsenal ao vago caminhante/ Se vendem a cavallo n’um barbante./ De cançada rançosa poesia/ Grosso volume na algibeira andava;/ Em vendo gente, logo la corria/ E o fatal cartapácio lhe empurrava”. Nicolau Tolentino de Almeida, *Obras Completas*, with some unpublished and a biographical-critical essay by José de Torres, Lisboa, Ed. Castro Irmão e C.^a, 1861.

³⁹⁸ Marquês de Pombal, “Observações secretíssimas, na ocasião da inauguração da estátua equestre, no dia 6 de junho de 1775, e entregues por ele mesmo oito dias depois ao senhor rei D. José I”, in *Cartas e Outras Obras Selectas*, 5.^a ed., t. I, Lisboa, Tipografia de Costa Sanches, 1861, pp. 12-24: https://archive.org/stream/cartaseoutrasobr01pomb/cartaseoutrasobr01pomb_djvu.txt (consulted online on November 10, 2022).

centralized in the State the conquests of the missionaries in Brazil, reformed secular education, and promoted international trade.

In 1775, the year of the inauguration of the Equestrian Statue, curiously on the eve of his exile, Sebastião de Carvalho e Melo seems to exercise absolute political power. The statue is designed to occupy the center of the square, for which Sebastião Carvalho e Melo contributed in a decisive way, planning and building the ministerial offices on the rubble of the 1755 earthquake. It is located in the once called “Terreiro do Paço”, now referred to as “Praça do Comércio”, a name that is a “tribute to the new bourgeois class that supported the minister’s reformist policy”, producing, “in the French way”, a new royal square in Lisbon (translated)³⁹⁹. In one of the letters the Marquis of Pombal wrote to the King a week after the statue was inaugurated, Pombal explicitly mentions the plan to exhibit a new Enlightened society, open to commerce. The inauguration would show that the lack of basis of the contempt to which foreigners voted our internal and external trade, along with the suspicion of social insubordination or the rumors that the country was in extreme poverty after the earthquake⁴⁰⁰. The event exemplifies the care that the Marquis put into the staging of a “theatre” prepared, above all, to spectators/external observers: in fact, the profusion of jewels, tableware, dresses, carriages, tables, and cash disbursements would make the same foreigners publicly confess that they had never imagined that Portugal had accumulated so much wealth so shortly after the earthquake disaster⁴⁰¹.

The contiguity between the instrumental and the aesthetic dimension in the 1775 event is undeniable. Additionally, the analogy with the theatrical space can be observed in the very first paragraph of the letter, more specifically in one of its first words: “curtain”.

The great curtain which, in the most joyous 6th day of the current month of June 1775, uncovered the royal statue of my lord the King has come to reveal that, in the following days, to the clear knowledge of all those who, by going beyond the surface of the objects which are presented to them in sight, begin to investigate and understand the substance of things: that Your Majesty has not only entirely dispelled the darkness and repaired the ruins in which you have found your kingdoms buried; but also that you have brought out again, in Portugal, the blissful century of the lords D. Manuel and D. João III (our italics, translated)⁴⁰².

³⁹⁹ José Augusto França, in José Machado de Castro, *Descrição Analytica da Execução da Estatua Equestre Erigida em Lisboa á Gloria do Senhor Rei Fidelissimo D. José I*, afterword by José Augusto França, Lisboa, Academia Nacional de Belas Artes, 1975.

⁴⁰⁰ Marquês de Pombal, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 12-14.

⁴⁰¹ *Id.*, *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁰² *Id.*, *Ibid.*, p. 12. “A grande cortina, que no felicissimo dia 6 do corrente mez de junho de 1775, descobriu a régia estatua delrey meu senhor veio manifestar nos dias sucessivos, ao claro conhecimento de todos aquelles que não parando na superfície dos objectos que lhes apresentam á vista, passam a investigar e com-

If a “performance” is characterized by the coexistence of actors and spectators, the ephemeral character of acting, its status as an event, and the rhetorical intention of persuading through non-explicit meanings, the inauguration of the Equestrian Statue of D. José I embodies a performative act both from the point of view of reception and from that of production. Therefore, it seems pertinent to consider here Erika Fischer-Lichte’s discussion on “liminality”, which is manifested simultaneously in “social performance” and “aesthetic performance” – two complementary processes of transition and transformation in human communities:

When characterizing the particular “event-ness” of performances, we differentiated between the possibility of liminality in aesthetic and non-aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience makes the state of liminality its goal, while non-aesthetic liminal experience can be understood as a means to an end - be it to obtain a new social status or identity, to create or affirm communities, or to legitimate claims to power. There is no clear correlation between aesthetic experience and artistic performance, or non-aesthetic experience and nonartistic performance - both kinds of experiences mix in any given performance. In artistic performances, liminality can be experienced both as an end in itself and as a means to another end⁴⁰³.

It is a staging that requires the participation of “all those who, by going beyond the surface of the objects which are presented to them in sight, begin to investigate and understand the substance of things” (translated)⁴⁰⁴. Nonetheless, this meaning is not explicit for the general public, even though the Marquis of Pombal makes it explicit to the King. According to Sebastião de Carvalho e Melo, at the event, nine general observations are staged during the inauguration act, all related to the improvement of the state of mechanical crafts, liberal arts, philosophy and fine arts, exact sciences, internal and external trade, harmonious society and the growing opulence of vassals. From our point of view, considering the appreciation of the poems about the inauguration of the Equestrian Statue, it is important to point out that the first of these nine observations the Marquis of Pombal mentioned deals precisely with the growth of a new social group of new readers and new authors:

It is the first of the examples mentioned, the common nature of handwriting, because when, until the year 1750, it was rare for a person to write a letter with good

prender a substancia das cousas, que s.m. não só tem inteiramente dissipado as trévas, e reparado as ruínas em que achou sepultados os seus reinos; mas que além disso tem feito aparecer outra vez em Portugal o seculo feliz dos senhores D. Manuel e D. João III” (Marquês de Pombal, *Op. Cit.*, p. 12, nosso itálico).

⁴⁰³ Erika Fischer-Lichte, “Introduction”, in *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies*, London/New York, Routledge, 2014, p. 164.

⁴⁰⁴ Marquês de Pombal, *Op. Cit.*, p. 12.

handwriting. There is today, it seems, the same rarity of finding someone who writes badly in Lisbon so that every time you want to appoint a clerk to any of the accounts of the real treasury, the boards of the farm, the commerce, the general companies, and other public offices, almost entire reams of paper appear in memoirs and petitions for perfect letters (translated)⁴⁰⁵.

It is also a matter of presenting State officials as educated people, capable of reading, writing, and counting, given the previous lack of clerks or accountants. Significantly, 1750 works as pivotal year, that of D. José's new reign, but also that of the new minister. However, the inauguration also demonstrates, to believe the Marquis' words, a new literary society, which is immediately evaluated by the amount of prose and poetry submitted to the Royal Board of Censorship, implicitly referencing a Portuguese Golden Age (the 16th century, Discoveries) and a Dark Age (the 17th century, the Jesuit):

It is the fourth principle, that of the state of philosophy or of fine literature, which works as the basis for all sciences and for the multitude of prose and poetry that appear to the Board of Censorship, composed in Portuguese, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, with the purity of style and elegance of the centuries of Demosthenes, Homers, Tullios, Virgils, and Horacios, in Rome; and Teives, Andrades, Gouveias, Rezendes, Barros, Camões, and Bernardes in Portugal. They also demonstrated that these preparatory studies were no more flourishing at the time of the Jesuit invasion than they are today (translated)⁴⁰⁶.

Sebastião José indicates, right away, five very precise effects, which invariably seek the external effect of a wealth and power display. Once again, the first effect chosen refers to the one that intends to change the perception of Portugal by other nations. Therefore, the inauguration aimed to face the arrogance of the nations that considered us an “unable,

⁴⁰⁵ *Id., Ibid.*, pp. 12-13. “É o primeiro dos ditos exemplos, o caracter commum da letra de mão, pois quando até o anno de 1750, era rara a pessoa que escrevesse uma carta com boa letra, há hoje, parece, a mesma raridade de achar quem escreva mal em Lisboa, de sorte que de cada vez que se quer nomear um escriptorario para qualquer das contarias do real erário, das junctas da fazenda, da do commercio, das companhias geraes, e das outras repartições publicas aparecem quase resmas de papel inteiras em memoriães, e petições de letras perfeitissimas”.

⁴⁰⁶ *Id., Ibid.*, p. 14. “É o quarto princípio, o do estado da filosofia ou das bellas-lettras, que servem de base a todas as sciencias, e à multidão de prosas e de poesias que aparecem na Mesa Censória, compostas nas línguas portugueza, latina, grega, hebraica e arábica, com pureza de estylo e elegância dos séculos de Demóstenes, dos Homeros, dos Tullios, dos Virgílios, e dos Horacios, em Roma; e dos Teives, Andrades, Gouveias, Rezendes, Barros, Camões e Bernardes em Portugal. Também fizeram ver demonstrativamente que estes estudos preparatórios se não achavam mais florescentes no tempo da invasão dos jesuítas, do que hoje se acham”.

rude or inert” nation⁴⁰⁷ or “barbaric, fierce and unsociable”⁴⁰⁸. To do so, the strategy would be to show the vitality of a “mercantile body, which filled the royal square of commerce and the streets of Lisbon with radiance” (*ibidem*) and the harmony of a society in which different social classes coexisted without any interference:

[...] all those foreigners in line with this knowledge could not help but confess that we are much more sociable than they are, having seen, on the one hand, the different states, orders, classes, and superior associations of the capital of Lisbon in the most perfect harmony and reciprocal agreement, and in the smoothest consonance in the cabins and halls of assemblies and tables (translated)⁴⁰⁹.

As a liminal and festive event, the inauguration programmatically institutes its own almost utopian temporality and defines the transition of meanings and experiences that takes place between the court, subjects, social classes, spectators, and actors – “the liminal dimension is the precondition of the transformative dimension”⁴¹⁰. The festivities overflow the public space of the square and are prolonged in the convivial space of the Lisbon elite, in the aristocratic and bourgeois house or even on the secular stage of the theater. They involve the entire nation, bringing together, as in a theater – in the same square, from the various architectural and social levels, from the farmyard to the balconies – a euphoric crowd of more than 150.000 people, of both sexes and of all classes⁴¹¹. The dialogue between the various arts attested to the intention of the total and perfect work. The printing of a libretto by Gaetano Martinelli entitled *L'Eroe Coronato*⁴¹², still today gives an account of the musical activities linked to the poetic compositions⁴¹³. This symbolic dy-

⁴⁰⁷ *Id., Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁰⁸ *Id., Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁰⁹ *Id., Ibid.*, pp. 20-21. “[...] todos aqueles estrangeiros que se achavam neste conhecimento não puderam deixar de confessar que estamos muito mais sociáveis do que eles, tendo visto por uma parte os diferentes estados, ordens, classes, e grêmios de porte superior da capital de Lisboa na mais perfeita harmonia, e reciproco tracto, e na mais suave consonância nos camarotes, e salões das assembleias e das mezas”.

⁴¹⁰ Erika Fischer-Lichte, “Introduction”, in *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies*, London/New York, Routledge, 2014, p. 174.

⁴¹¹ Marquês de Pombal, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 20-21.

⁴¹² *L'Eroe Coronato. Serenata per Musica da Cantarsi in Ocasione delle Pubbliche Feste per la Inaugurazione della Statua Equestre di S. M. Fedelissima D. Giuseppe I*, Lisbon, 1775.

⁴¹³ This intention does not go unnoticed by many poets who sing of the inauguration of the Equestrian Statue, including several foreigners, especially Italians. Many poetic or poetic-dramatic compositions refer to the eye of the “Foreigner” or the Portuguese who emigrated after the earthquake. An example is the anonymous sonnet “To the fair and much esteemed craftsman of the Equestrian Statue of His Majesty” (Book Collection of The National Library of Portugal, L 567/ 3 A, translated), the sonnet by Domingos Maximiano Torres, that begins with “Oh Pilgrim, who looks respectfully” (BNP, L 567/ 17 A, translated), or the “Dialogues in which the Magnificent Festivity with which the Splendorous Inauguration of the Equestrian Statue was celebrated is described [...] A Traveller and a Courtier are interlocutors”

dynamic results from the performativity of the various actions and meanings that converge in the celebrations. Production in a compulsive regime, when writing is asserted as the dominant technology of public communication⁴¹⁴, it includes the proliferation of poetic compositions of all sorts, in classical and popular forms, for and against the statue and the excessive event of its inauguration. Yet, the poetics of praise dominates, from lyric to satire, from drama to hybrid compositions such as the aforementioned play *L'Eroe Coronato. Serenata per Musica da Cantarsi in Ocasione delle Pubbliche Feste per la Inaugurazione della Statua Equestre di S. M. Fedelissima D. Giuseppe I* (1775).

The inauguration party is not, therefore, a univocal festivity, like a ritualistic passage, structured in a linear way, being celebrated by many poets in this case and dedicated to various recipients more or less explicitly: the King, the Marquis of Pombal or his son, the Count of Oeiras, the author of the statue project, the sculptor Machado de Castro, or even the technician who cast the statue in bronze, Bartolomeu da Costa. There are certainly obvious indications of the financial dependence between protectors and protégés in these circumstantial relationships between the poets/artists and their patrons. Nonetheless, it is interesting to verify, even in this type of writing, the resurgence of a new type of actors and spectators. In fact, what concerns us in this reading is not so much the *archive* as heritage or the legacy of the written and artistic production of the time, but mostly the *repertoire* of texts, readings, and performative gestures practiced during the festivities⁴¹⁵.

José Daniel Rodrigues da Costa, author of many string booklets “that in the Arsenal to the vague walker/ Are sold on horseback on a string”, can be credited for a text that clearly identifies *Praça do Comércio* as a scenic space, in a “*mise-en-abîme*” structure, in which the real event is confused with the theatrical event. Rodrigues da Costa writes that “the scene in the Great *Praça do Comércio*” (translated)⁴¹⁶: indeed, includes a platform, balconies, cabins, arches, and curtains, and obviously the spectators, centered on that “ecstasy of the objects” they saw installed in the square or parading in front of them. A sensorial anticipation of the “atmosphere” is implicit – that to which G. Böhme refers in his essay on the aestheticization of the real⁴¹⁷. The spectacle invades the body

[by José Daniel Rodrigues da Costa] (BNL, L 1166// 16 A, translated). As a dramatic curiosity worthy of note is the publication of a five-act play in 1899, *A Inauguração da Estátua Equestre* [The Inauguration of the Equestrian Statue], by Joaquim da Costa Cascaes (BNP, L 3857// A).

⁴¹⁴ Fernando Matos Oliveira, *Poesia e Metromania. Inscrições Setecentistas (1750-1820)*, Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 2008.

⁴¹⁵ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Durham, Duke UP, 2003.

⁴¹⁶ José Daniel Rodrigues da Costa, *Diálogos em que se descreve o Magnífico Festejo com que se celebrou a Faustíssima Inauguração da Estátua Equestre [...] São Interlocutores hum Viajante e hum Cortesão* (BNL, L 1166 16 A), 1775, s.p.

⁴¹⁷ Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphäre. Essays zur neuen Ästhetik*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1995, pp. 49-66.

of those who observe and comment on the statue: “For we are in the theater / In the most pleasant scene” (translated)⁴¹⁸.

The event, therefore, encompasses a complexity that escapes the ritualist script from the outset, because the historical time of the end of the 18th century confronts us with a society undergoing a modernization and secularization process. In this context, signs of a public space emerge (the Public Promenade *Passeio Público* opens in 1760), along with a new civility that disputes the symbolic domain, in addition to the modes of representation and subjectivation.

Singing the inauguration of the colossal statue of the King in verse is also a sign of these extended relations between political power and “subjects”, a concept that is soon replaced with a broader one by revolutionary winds: that of “citizens”. Significantly, the modern style of statues, established from the renaissance imitation of this classic precept, became popular only in the 18th century with the affirmation of a bourgeois society. The range of spectators is ergo widened in the public square and so is that of the objects of public statuary. At the end of the Modern Age, the statue began to dignify not only soldiers or statesmen, but also scientists and artists. The moment of this generalization paradoxically coincides with the iconoclastic dispute over public statuary, as per some texts on the Equestrian Statue. As a well-known practice in Antiquity, the presence of the great ones in public spaces became common precisely in the second half of the 18th century, when the relationship between rulers and ruled was amplified.

To believe the words of the sculptor of the Equestrian Statue of D. José, Joaquim Machado de Castro (1732-1822), in the *Descrição Analytica da Execução da Estatua Equestre Erigida em Lisboa* [Analytic description of the execution of the Equestrian Statue erected in Lisbon], the public statue celebrates the present and not only the absent, as well as the art and the artist and not only its object. Indeed, the sculptor Machado de Castro begins by showing himself to be aware of the technical and philosophical usefulness of his own text: a technical and aesthetic description of the statue of D. José, unusual in Portugal, but not so rare in France or in other polite cultures⁴¹⁹. The enumerative rhetoric, common in the laudatory writing of the time, led him to include a final “Catalogue” in his description, in which he counts some of the statues placed in public squares in the Enlightened Europe. Machado de Castro collected the information in the treatise by the French architect Pierre Matte (1723- 1814), which he quotes profusely: *Monumens érigés en France à la Gloire de Louis XV, Précédés d’un Tableau du Progrès des Arts et des Sciences sous ce Règne, ainsi que d’une Description des Honneurs et des Monumens de Gloire Accordés aux Grands Hommes, tant chez les Anciens, que chez les Modernes*, Paris, 1765.

⁴¹⁸ José Daniel Rodrigues da Costa, *Op. Cit.*, s.p.

⁴¹⁹ José Machado de Castro, *Op. Cit.*, II.

In this *Analytic Description* from 1810⁴²⁰, Machado de Castro estimates that there are already 66 statues dedicated to great figures; however, he seems aware of the precariousness of the count, due to the iconoclastic impetus provoked by the Revolution of 1789 and by the “grudge” which marked the downfall of the many works that recalled Louis XIV and the Ancien Régime. One would not have to wait until the toppling of the statues that today, in the 21st century, celebrate colonial figures or heroes of dubious character. In fact, the politicization of statuary did not begin in the 18th century, but greatly increased throughout this period and seems to have generated a political movement of contestation, which is also manifested in toppling acts to the extent that it is not possible to discern how many and which ones persist: “All these Statues of France annihilated or extinguished by its Revolution; and, for this reason, it seems that one should speak of them in the past tense in an enumeration” (translated)⁴²¹.

Let us not think, however, that this politicization of art does not occur with equal intensity in the arts of poetry. The ambiguity of Dedications of poetic compositions is also an example of time disputes. In the poems that celebrate the inauguration of the Equestrian Statue of D. José I, it is often difficult to discern the main object of the poet’s veneration from a political point of view: whether it venerates the King or the Marquis. Such conflicts are, nonetheless, far from being strictly political, as the authorship of the statue itself is also discussed, concerning whether it belongs to the one who designed it or the one who forged it. In reality, some praising poems end up valuing different things in art: either the idea underlying the statue or the technical work that gives it shape. Therefore, from an artistic point of view, a silent quarrel between the greatness of the designer Machado de Castro and the skill of the technician Bartolomeu da Costa is perceptible.

From the artistic point of view, the dispute is, ergo, between patrons and artists, theorists and practitioners, authors of the project or technical assistants. An anonymous poet, in a sonnet dedicated to Brigadier Bartolomeu Costa, divides his praises between the represented King and the military engineering applied to art, for which Bartolomeu Costa would have been responsible: “each one in his own state,/ You without a second, Him the King first”⁴²². In turn, a poem by the sculptor Machado de Castro, who conceived and directed the foundry, contained some irony about the praise given to the technician Bar-

⁴²⁰ *Id.*, *Descrição Analytica da Execução da Estatua Equestre Erigida em Lisboa á Gloria do Senhor Rei Fidelissimo D. José I*, Lisboa, Impressão Régia, 1810.

⁴²¹ *Id.*, *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁴²² “Ao formoso e muito estimável artífice da Estatua Equestre de Sua Magestade” (Coleção da Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, L 567/ 3 A).

tolomeu da Costa: “[...] because I have more reasons to know the perfection with which the Foundry expresses everything that sculpture has done” (translated)⁴²³...

The Equestrian Statue of D. José I was the first in Portugal to be associated with this modern cult, a reason for the sculptor to congratulate himself on his personal achievement. His *Analytic Description* (1810) also tries to settle accounts with the process of the statue’s construction. The creator regrets the short time he had, the unprecedented and solitary nature of the undertaking, and even the physical absence of the King during the design of the statue – a circumstance that forces him to represent an absent body. He then regrets more explicitly the fact that, at the time, the person responsible for the *technical performance* of the foundry, Bartolomeu da Costa, deserved more recognition than his contribution as an artist in charge of the *aesthetic performance* of the work, for the movement of the horse, for the gesture of the rider, from the look to the bare hands that he ends up keeping. Indeed, the foundry act represented a technical challenge that led the Marquis of Pombal to personally attend the event at the Santa Clara Foundry. Machado de Castro disavows the literati who so wrongly assumed, in the thousands of encomiums written at the time of the celebration:

In the multitude of verses and some prose that will appear at the festive Inauguration of this Royal Statue, about this subject, many of their Authors will refer to our commendable Engineer, Statuary; thinking that this is the same as making it, and, therefore, praising him. I sympathize with the fact that those Literati were so solemnly mistaken; being led to this sorrow by the lack of knowledge of Arts and of drawing (translated)⁴²⁴.

Machado de Castro, when reporting the low quality of many of the statues in European cities, reaffirms the importance of ingenuity and art for the memorable dignity of the represented⁴²⁵. The statue he describes in successive chapters aspires to the status of

⁴²³ “[...] não devem os que eu proferir ter o menor lugar, porque tenho mais razões para conhecer o primor, com que a Fundação exprimio tudo quanto a escultura fez” (José Machado de Castro, *Op. Cit.*, 10n).

⁴²⁴ “Na multidão de versos, e algumas prosas que apparecêrão na festiva Inauguração desta Real Estatua sobre este assumpto, muitos de seus Authores chamarão Estatuario ao nosso recomendável Engenheiro; cuidando ser isto o mesmo que fazella, e que deste modo o elogiavam. Eu me compadeço de se haverem enganado tão solenemente aqueles Literatos; sendo conduzidos a este pesar pela falta de conhecimento das Artes e do desenho” (*Id.*, *Ibid.*, p. 231).

⁴²⁵ “This proves the care that must be taken by those who develop such gifts, regarding expenses and the choice of skillful Artists, so that monuments are acceptable; for if they are not, it results in contempt for the monuments themselves, and the forgetfulness (against what is intended) of the Heroes whom they represent” [In the original, “*Isto prova do cuidado que deve ter quem faz semelhantes obséquios, e despesas, em escolher Artistas hábeis, para que monumentos sejam atendíveis; pois que de não o serem, resulta o desprezo dos mesmos monumentos, e o esquecimento (contra o que se intenta) dos Heroes, que eles representam*”]. He also mentions that Alexandre Magno, “forbade, through an Edict, that anyone should portray him in Paint-

art. Therefore, ingenuity should triumph over matter so “that the bronze appears tender, and animated in a way that the imagination takes care of breathing, and moves both man and horse” (translated)⁴²⁶. Such praise for the art of drawing encompasses the casting technique itself, as it does other sciences and even other kinds of art. The encyclopedic character of Drawing (and of those who practice it) is immediately clear in the Prologue to the work that he published in 1788, *Discurso sobre as Utilidades do Desenho* [Discourse on the uses of Drawing], dedicated to Queen Maria. Before promoting Drawing as an art of the arts and sciences, useful for Anatomy, Medicine, Physics, Mathematics, Natural History, Civil or Military Architecture, Machado de Castro defends himself against the accusations of getting in someone else’s business, satirizing him, “saying that only material works or manuals are wanted from Artists, condemning me equally for loving the verses” (translated)⁴²⁷. However, he is proud of it all as his own, being all about Drawing and nothing about Eloquence.

The performative superiority of his artistic work shares the characteristics and different phases of what we now call the “creative process”. The sculptor Joaquim Machado studied, compared, sketched, and designed the several elements of his work. Over dozens of pages of the *Description*, he describes in detail how he got to the position of the horse, the outline of D. José’s body, the position of his bare hands, the direction of the gaze, even to the symbols to be included in the figures of its monumental base. Altogether, he intended to give his work the qualities of “Epic action”: “If Epic action must not only be great, but wonderful, useful, and interesting, for an Equestrian Statue, one must choose the ornate of these predicates that represents the most brilliant virtue of the Hero” (translated)⁴²⁸. The lexicon Machado de Castro used aspires to the “magic of Art” and to a “I don’t know what”, phrases that surely express the category of the “sublime” which, in this one and in other compositions on the subject, crosses the aesthetic thought of the 18th century. The ode Machado de Castro dedicated to the King in 1775 began precisely by stating that only enraptured was he allowed to deal with a “sublime subject” (translated)⁴²⁹.

ing, with the exception of Apelles; nor should anyone carve him in bronze other than Lysippo” [In the original, “*prohibio por hum Edicto, que ninguém o retratasse em Pintura, à excepção de Apelles; nem o esculpisse em bronze outro que não fosse Lysippo*”] (*Id., Ibid.*, p. 323).

⁴²⁶ “que o bronze pareça tenro, e de tal sorte animado, que a imaginação cuide ver-se respirar, e mover, tanto o homem, como o cavallo” (*Id., Ibid.*, p. 279).

⁴²⁷ “dizendo que dos Artistas unicamente se querem as obras materiaes ou manuaes, condenando-me igualmente por amar os versos”. Joaquim Machado de Castro, *Discurso sobre as Utilidades do Desenho*, Lisboa, Off. Antonio Rodrigues Galhardo, 1788, s.p.

⁴²⁸ “Se a ação Épica não só deve ser grande, porém maravilhosa, útil, e interessante, para huma Estatua Equestre, deve-se escolher a que ornada destes predicados represente a virtude mais brilhante do Heroe” (Castro, 1975: 8).

⁴²⁹ Joaquim Machado de Castro, *Op. Cit.*, 1775, p. 3. Longino is quoted in the analytic description, and Joaquim Machado de Castro reproduces the neoclassical treatise, adapted to the well-known simile at-

In fact, the poets of the Equestrian Statue wrote many times under the fascination of a happy age, in which politicians practice the great art of making humanity merry: they rejoice because they sing happiness and not war for the first time. The poet Cruz e Silva believes that the beautiful Fantasy led Portugal to a Golden Age. The compositions symbolically signed by Antonio Alberto Paradis are especially detailed when he describes the table sets for the festivities, with paradisiacal food and drinks, on national silver tableware⁴³⁰. The table abundance and variety evoke all sorts of wealth and paradisiacal opulence of a kingdom that does not know hunger or lack⁴³¹. Significantly, the rhetorical strategy of these practices was also explicitly mentioned by the Marquis of Pombal in his letter to the King. However, many poets saw the aesthetic issue of the inauguration as a manifestation of power/autonomy before foreign dominance. It is obvious, in the letter of the Marquis of Pombal to the King, this general rhetorical strategy: in a few pages, there are 38 references to the “foreigner”, to his superb and superior gaze, now avenged with the wealth display.

[These foreigners] who saw such an unprecedented costly colossus emerge in the center of that square. Who saw the Senate of the chamber give the public such costly and magnificent assemblies, in a hall so wide and so rich, and exquisitely garnished, the living had never seen before; but also an equally magnificent supper in another superb hall and decorated with exquisite taste and extraordinary cost, with ornaments made only for that function, without being of use for any other occasion one might intend: the table was served with great precision and delicacy of dishes for four hundred people, with copious national silver plate, without a single foreign piece entering; who saw the houses of the board of commerce also preciously decorated and in them another abundant silver plate and illuminated with a large number of candlesticks and serpentines of the same precious metal; who saw another respective superabundance of him in all the courts of the court

tributed to Simónides de Cós, presenting painting and sculpture as silent poetry (*Id., Ibid.*, 3n and *Id., Descrição Analytica da Execução da Estatua Equestre Erigida em Lisboa á Gloria do Senhor Rei Fidelissimo D. José I*, afterword by José Augusto França, Lisboa, Academia Nacional de Belas Artes, 1975, p. 7). On the philosophical and technical bases of Machado de Castro, cf. José Fernandes Pereira, “As leituras de Machado de Castro”, *Arte Teoria*, n.º 9, 2000, pp. 7-25: <http://hdl.handle.net/10451/10395> (consulted online on November 10, 2022).

⁴³⁰ Quotes from the anonymous ode that begins with “If until now you were” [1775], from the *Ode á Inauguração da Estatua Equestre* [Ode to the Inauguration of the Equestrian Statue], by António Dinis da Cruz e Silva [1775], and from the ode *Em louvor do grande dia da Inauguração da Estatua Equestre* [In Praise of the Great Day of the Inauguration of the Equestrian Statue], by Antonio Alberto Paradiz, three printed texts, included in the Portuguese National Library collection, respectively under the quota L 567//18 A, L 567//21 A e L 567//30 A.

⁴³¹ Cf. David A. Felismino, *Á mesa dos reis de Portugal. Ofícios, consumos, cerimónias e representações (Séculos XIII-XVIII)*, Lisboa, Temas e Debates/ Círculo dos Leitores, 2011.

in candlesticks, salvers, trays, and all the other pieces with which their respective refreshments were served; who saw the house of twenty-four, or the guilds of the manufacturing arts, make the same ostentatious expenditures in home ornaments, food, and silver services [...] (translated)⁴³².

We must, however, add these forgotten poems about the Equestrian Statue present reflections not only on this tension between national and international powers, but also on those between the King and the Marquis. They are immediately evident in Machado de Castro's drawing: the placement of a medallion alluding to the Marquis of Pombal is noted at the base of the Equestrian Statue representing D. José, and the boldness does not go unnoticed by some poets from 1775. An anonymous sonnet dedicated to the Marquis even leaves an explicit reference to the irony of the composition: in the statue of D. José, "[...] here I also see Your Memory/ Submitted to the Monarch, and this sounds,/ You hold his throne (oh notorious voice)". A few years later, in 1777, when the Marquis of Pombal fell into political disgrace, the opening of a sonnet that integrates the anti-Pombaline lyric (which circulates as profusely as that of the Equestrian Statue) calls for the removal of the medallion: "Sir, to exalt our blessed / Take off the Pedestal of the Augustan Statue / The ugly and robust image of the Marquis, / Which, when one sees it still at his feet, excites hatred" (translated)⁴³³. The dysphoric annotation is also verified in reports such as that of an "eyewitness", who responds to the official disposition of the *Narração dos appllauzos* [Applause narration] with the "true narration" that the preface of the 1938 edition⁴³⁴ mentions as a subtitle ("À Inauguração"). Here we can read, for instance, that the inauguration costs would be infinite: "How much this Representation costs, there are

⁴³² "[Esses estrangeiros] que viram erigir no centro da referida praça um tão custoso, e nunca até agora visto colosso. Que viram o senado da câmara dar ao publico umas tao custosas, e magnificas assembleias, em um salão tão amplo e tão rico, e primorosamente guarnecido, qual nunca tinham visto os viventes; mas também uma igualmente magnifica ceia em outro salão soberbo e decorado com exquisito gosto, e extraordinário custo, com ornamentos feitos somente para aquella função, sem que possam ser de uso para outra alguma que se intente fazer: sendo a meza servida com grande exactidão e delicadeza de pratos para quatrocentas pessoas, com copiosíssima baixella de prata nacional, sem entrar nem uma só peça de estrangeiros; que viram as casas da junta do commercio também preciosamente ornadas e nellas outra abundante baixella de prata e alumiada com grande numero de castiças e serpentinas do mesmo precioso metal; que viram outra respectiva superabundância delle em todos os tribunaes da corte em castiças, salvas, bandejas, e todas as mais peças com que foram servidos os seus respectivos refrescos; que viram a casa dos vinte e quatro, ou dos grêmios das artes fabris, fazer as mesmas aparatosas despezas em ornamento de casas, comidas, e serviços de prata [...]", Marquês de Pombal, *Op. Cit.*, p. 18.

⁴³³ "Senhor, para exaltar a nossa dita / Tirai do Pedestal da Estátua Augusta / A imagem do Marquês feia e robusta, / Que ao vê-la ainda a seus pés o ódio excita", Alberto Pimenta, *Musa Anti-Pombalina*, Lisbon, A Regra do Jogo, 1982, p. 54.

⁴³⁴ À Inauguração da Estátua Equestre de El-Rei D. José. Narração Verídica Feita por Um Jesuíta, Testemunha Ocular do Acontecimento, preface and notes Ângelo Pereira, Lisboa Editorial Labor, 1938.

no expressions that explain it well, nor numbers that enumerate it [...]. He took despotic money from wherever he was told he had it” (translated)⁴³⁵.

The construction of the Equestrian Statue was thus marked by a relevant set of political, material, and aesthetic tribulations: the structuring of the social and cultural event of its inauguration expanded the performativity of this historical episode in detail. One can get a better idea of the “staging process” of the festivities based on the reading of a document with a revealing title: a *Narração dos aplauzos com que o juiz do povo e casa dos vinte-quatro festeja a felicissima inauguração da Estatua Equestre. Onde também de Expoem as Alegorias dos Carros, Figuras, e tudo o mais concernente ás ditas Festas* [Narration of the applause with which the judge of Lisbon and the house of the twenty-four celebrate the most blissful inauguration of the Equestrian Statue. Where also the Allegories of the Floats, Figures, and everything else concerning the said Festivities are exhibited] (1775). In the opening chapter, the “seven majestic floats” that paraded in the festivities are described. The first four represented the four best-known parts of the Earth (Europe, Asia, Africa, and America), symbolizing the power of the Empire and the universal homage paid to the Portuguese King. The description of the car of Africa is a cultural compendium of possession and subjection, enunciated as an imperial performance:

The third Float represents Africa, where our King is known and respected in the most uncultured Regions, for the vast Domains he possesses there, and singular love, and justice, which under his Government those Barbarians experience [...]. On the bow sits a black Kaffir, hugged with an ivory tooth, as a sign of the productions and tributes of that continent, and there are ten instrumentalist musicians and ten masked dancers inside the float, dressed pompously in the African style. In the stern, there is an Elephant, symbol of Africa, and this one is seated on it in some Antilles, which is represented in a Black Lady, with wild hair, almost naked, with an Elephant’s head for a helmet, earrings in her ears (translated)⁴³⁶.

⁴³⁵ “Quanto custou esta Representação, nem há expressões que bem o expliquem, nem algarismo que o enumerem [...]. Sacou despótico dinheiro de toda a parte onde lhe constou que o havia” (*Id., Ibid.*, p. 18).

⁴³⁶ “O terceiro Carro representa a Africa, onde o nosso Reyhe conhecido, e respeitado nas mais incultas Regiões, pelos dilatados Dominios, que allipossue, e singular amor, e justiça, que debaixo do seu Governo experimentam aquelles Barbaros [...]. Sobre a prôa vai sentado hum Cafre negro, abraçado com um dente de marfim, em sinal das producção, e tributos daquele Continente, e dentro do Carro dez Musicos instrumentistas, e dez Dançarinos mascarados, vestidos pomposamente à Africana. Na popa se vê hum Elefante, symbolo da Africa, e esta esta sobre elle sentada em humas andilhas, a qual se representa em huma Dama de côr preta, cabelo revolto, quase nua, com huma cabeça de Elefante por capacete, arrecadas nas orelhas”, *Narração dos Aplauzos com que o Juiz do Povo e Casa dos Vinte-Quatro Festeja a Felicissima Inauguração da Estatua Equestre onde tambem se Expõem as Alegorias dos Carros, Figuras, e Tudo o mais Concernente ás Ditas Festas*, Lisboa, Royal Officina Typographica, [1775], pp. 9-10.

After the floats of Apollo and Oceanus, the parade ends significantly with a float representing a Triumphant Portugal. The description of each of the seven floats illustrates how they are presented in the *Praça do Comércio* as true stage machines, hosting an enormous number of figures, props, visual, and sound effects, and other technical devices. The parade of the four floats, with details on the fauna and flora of each part of the world, would resemble a small Universal Exhibition. As there is no place here for its exhaustive description, one can see the example of the float dedicated to Europe: “One sees a boisterous horse over the prow of the Float: ten instrumentalist Musicians and the same number of Dancers, all in costumes, richly dressed inside of it” (translated)⁴³⁷. The spectacularism of the allegories that saturate the seven floats is initially evident in the language. The one dedicated to the Ocean shows “a thirtyish of stout stature with half a man’s body and half a mermaid’s, and with two tails full of shells” (translated)⁴³⁸. In the float dedicated to Triumphant Portugal, on the other hand, “a furibund man with a terrible aspect represents the Furor” (translated)⁴³⁹. The vehicle is “golden, and its wheel spokes imitate flames”⁴⁴⁰. The same document presents a section dedicated to the “*Regulação das Danças Que acompanharam os Carros e seus vestuários*” [Regulation of Dances that accompanied the Floats and their costumes]⁴⁴¹, in which the movements, costumes, and colors of the different costumes are enumerated in detail. The text also includes the inauguration choreography in the section entitled “*Descrição da Ordem, em que hão de marchar os Carros, e Dançar para a Praça do Commercio*” [Description of the Order in which the Floats will march, and Dance to *Praça do Comércio*]⁴⁴². The parade of floats and other figures formally stops next to the statue for the spectacular production of a bow to King D. José, leaving after this gesture, under a “continued symphony” (translated)⁴⁴³. The feast and the many delicacies are the corollary of these actions, followed by dances and counter-dances, which only “end at dawn” – movements repeated for another 2 days. Immediately before the feast, at eight o’clock in the afternoon of the June 6, after listening to a sonata, the Judge of the People reads a “gratulatory prayer” (translated)⁴⁴⁴. The latte is proceeded by verse readings the clerk and two deputies from the House of Twenty-Four conduct. The verses heard at the moment of the inauguration constitute, however, a very small part of the written produc-

⁴³⁷ *Id. Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴³⁸ *Id. Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴³⁹ *Id. Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁴⁰ *Id. Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁴¹ *Id. Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁴² *Id. Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.

⁴⁴³ *Id. Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁴⁴ *Id. Ibid.*, p. 30.

tion and the reading of verses. It is enough to remember that, from the Float of Apollo, which carried poets and musicians, verses continually flowed:

In the lower part of the float there will be six openings, from which verses of every existent quality will be thrown down the Streets and Squares. And from each of the other floats, their respective Allegories and Explanations will be thrown in the same way (translated)⁴⁴⁵.

Therefore, there is a remarkable homology between the persuasion that Goffman attributes to social performance⁴⁴⁶ and the inauguration of the statue as a major device of self-representation, suggesting not only King D. José I, but a new urban conception for the city of Lisbon and the symbolic projection of its authoritarian rule. The compositions on the Equestrian Statue very often recorded the memorable impression of the event. The very absence of the King at the inauguration of his statue (today paradoxical) seems to stimulate the imagination of royal power⁴⁴⁷. Indeed, the fact that the statue was completely covered by a red curtain seems to have increased the emotion of seeing it finally discovered, as per a sonnet by Manuel Coelho de Carvalho entitled “*Sentimentos de hum espectador, que chega a admirar a estatua equestre*” [Feelings of a spectator, who comes to admire the Equestrian Statue]⁴⁴⁸. An anonymous print, *Carta ou Narração Conciza da festividade feita na Cidade de Lisboa na Collocação da Estatua Equestre* [Letter or Short Narration of the festivity held in the City of Lisbon at the Inauguration of the Equestrian Statue], also refers to the emotion of the first moments, when the Marquis of Pombal and the Count of Oeiras “will make the hearts flutter with excitement”, “[...] discovering that majestic

⁴⁴⁵ “Pela banda de baixo do carro haverá seis janelas, donde se irão deitando pellas Ruas e Praças toda a qualidade de versos que houver. E de cada hum de todos os outros carros se irão da mesma forma deitando as respectivas Allegorias, e Explicações”, *Id. Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁴⁶ “A performance may be defined by all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants”, Goffman, *apud* Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies*, New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 29).

⁴⁴⁷ Miguel Figueira de Faria, “A estátua equestre: In *Absentia Principis* e o Rei Escondido”, in *Do Terreiro do Paço à Praça do Comércio: História de Um Espaço Urbano*, Lisboa, INCM/UAL, 2012, pp. 157-227. As we do not wish to present an extensive bibliography on the specificity of representations of power in the Ancien Régime, we reckon the importance of referring here to some studies on the symbolization of power in the absence of the body. Among the abundant existing bibliography, the investigations of Sergio Bertelli are fundamental (*Il Corpo Del Re. Sacralità Del potere nell’Europa medievale e moderna*, Firenze, Ponte Alle Grazie, 1995) or Roger Chartier (*A História Cultural. Entre práticas e representações*, Lisboa, Difel, 1990); in addition to the primary studies of Marc Bloch (*Les Rois Thaumaturges. Étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale, particulièrement en France et en Angleterre*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1961), Norbert Elias (*A Sociedade de Corte. Uma sociologia da realeza*, Lisboa, Estampa, 1987) or Ernst Kantorowitz (*Les Deux Corps du Roi*, Paris, Gallimard, 1989, ed. pr. 1957).

⁴⁴⁸ Manuel Coelho de Carvalho, “*Sentimentos de hum espectador, que chega a admirar a estatua equestre*”, Lisboa: s.n., 1775.

artefact”, leaving the admiration for the “uniqueness of the object” suspended for a long time (translated)⁴⁴⁹.

An indelible *sensiblerie* takes care of many other compositions. The author of the *Letter* exemplifies the Applause, also describing the happy feeling left by the lamps that were turned on at night, the dances until dawn, the relaxed presence of the ladies at the windows, or the children who hugged each other in a continuous uproar. The information is confirmed by another description, that of Jacinto Saldanha: he, too, celebrates the unusual “greatness of the apparatus” and assures that the spontaneous acclamations of the spectators were often interrupted by sincere tears that well showed the happiness and pleasure of the crowd⁴⁵⁰.

Among the many compositions for the Equestrian Statue, it is our contend that this text by Jacinto Saldanha should be read more carefully, with a political venom barely disguised by the sweetness of the praise. Unlike the others, it dates to 1776, perhaps already from that time when the illness and near death of King José I foreshadowed the exile of the Marquis of Pombal and the partial destruction of his political project, when “things fell apart”, in the words of a courtesan (translated)⁴⁵¹. Jacinto Saldanha calls for a new reflection, which also considers the individual conscience and not only collective practices, to be used in conversations, classes, or academies⁴⁵². For their effectiveness, the poems of 1775 are useless and insufficient in 1776:

The public actions that have shown excessive pleasure in the acclamations of our Sovereign are now complete [...]. Poetry is no more capable, no more worthy of such lofty matters (translated)⁴⁵³.

It is now a question of preserving what the Pombaline period kept as memorable: the appreciation for manual work, the interest in commercial activity, the reform of education that goes beyond erudition, the usefulness of a standing army that could guarantee

⁴⁴⁹*Carta ou Narração Conciza da festividade feita na Cidade de Lisboa na Collocação da Estatua Equestre*, Lisboa, Off. Antonio Rodrigues Galhardo, 1775, p. 4, included in the Portuguese National Library collection, respectively under the quota L 3344//1 A.

⁴⁵⁰Jacinto Ignacio Rebello Saldanha, *Breve Discurso em que se Fez Huma Sucinta Reflexão nas Obrigacoens Imensas de que os Vassalos de Portugal São Devedores ao Seu Soberano e ao Excellentissimo Marquez de Pombal, Seu Primeiro Ministro, Dirigido aos Habitantes de Lisboa, na Occazião de lhe Haverem Levantado Huma Estatua Colossal Equestre em Testemunho de Reconhecimento e Gratidão*, Lisboa, Off. Jorge de Aquino Bulhoens, 1776, p. 25.

⁴⁵¹M. Luísa Malato Borralho, “*Por Acazo Hum Viajante...*”: *A Vida e a Obra de Catarina de Lencastre. 1.^a Viscondessa de Balsemão*, Lisboa, INCM, 2008, p. 74.

⁴⁵²Jacinto Ignacio Rebello Saldanha, *Op. Cit.*, p. 5.

⁴⁵³“Estão já completas as acçoens publicas que tem demonstrado o vosso excessivo prazer nas aclamações do nosso Soberano [...]. Não he a Poezia mais capaz, não he mais digna de assumptos tão elevados” (*Id., Ibid.*).

peace to a new civility. These are the pillars for a fairer world. It reminds him of some of the legislation that remained, still incomplete in terms of design, such as the Decree of December 19, 1761, which abolished slaves in mainland Portugal. It was then discovered that perpetual slavery is a punishment for the innocent worse than death that can only be instituted by the law of Force and never that of Reason.

I am confused, I am frightened by the little I have said and how much I have left to say [...] In this happy time, it is known that Vassals must not be slaves (translated)⁴⁵⁴.

Saldanha ends up praying for the health of the King, whose sick body was evidence that the actions of the Marquis of Pombal could have no sequel: consequently, he considers the circumstantial poems of 1775 as an illusion that blinds the spectator. And when we read them in this way, listening to a swan song in them, we cannot help but consider them very little circumstantial.

⁴⁵⁴ “Confundo-me, atemorizo-me vendo o pouco que tenho dito, e o muito que me falta que dizer [...] Neste feliz tempo se conhece que os Vassallos não devem ser escravos” (*Id., Ibid.*, pp. 14-15).