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Sextualities: The Female body and Sexuality in Contemporary Portuguese Women's Writing

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Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Literary, Cultural and Interarts Studies, Comparative Literature branch, at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Porto, under the supervision of Dr. Joana Matos Frias and Dr. Marinela Feitas.

Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos Literários, Culturais e Interartes, Ramo de Estudos Comparatistas e Relações interculturais, orientada pela Professora Doutora Joana Matos Frias e coorientada pela Professora Doutora Marinela Freitas.

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Sextualities: The Female Body and Sexuality in Contemporary Portuguese Women's Writing

Abstract

This thesis aims at studying the portrayal of the female body and sexuality in the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta, and in the book *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, collectively written by Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa (the Three Marias). Using a comparative approach, this study focusses primarily on the relationship between sex, the body, language, and discourse in order to understand the political and social forces working against the free expression of body and sexuality (particularly during the 1960s and 1970s) as well as to analyse the literary strategies used by the Three Marias, Neto Jorge and Teresa Horta in order to subvert dominant patriarchal and phallocentric discourse in representation, knowledge, and politics.

Key words: body; sexuality; eroticism; representation; *écriture féminine*; Portuguese women's writing.

Resumo

Esta tese pretende estudar a representação do corpo e da sexualidade a partir do "feminino" na poesia de Luiza Neto Jorge e de Maria Teresa Horta, bem como no livro *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, escrito conjuntamente por Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta e Maria Velho da Costa (Três Marias). Através de uma abordagem comparatista, este estudo chama a atenção para a relação entre sexo, corpo, linguagem e discurso, procurando, por um lado, analisar os mecanismos políticos e sociais que coarctam a livre expressão do corpo e da sexualidade sobretudo nos anos 60 e 70, e, por outro, compreender as estratégias literárias utilizadas pelas Três Marias, por Neto Jorge e por Teresa Horta de modo a subverter os discursos patriarcais e falocêntricos dominantes no que diz respeito a questões como representação, conhecimento e o político.

Palavras-chave: corpo; sexualidade; erotismo; representação; *écriture féminine*; escrita das mulheres portuguesas.

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Contents

Introduction

Voamos a lua
menstruadas

Os homens gritam:
– são as bruxas

As mulheres pensam:
– são os anjos

As crianças dizem:
– são as fadas

Maria Teresa Horta

The plight of Portuguese women, oppressed by a strict moral and legal code for much of the twentieth-century under the 1933-1974 dictatorial regime of the *Estado Novo*, is unique not only in the way in which their lives had been controlled to such a large extent and until so recently, but also in the way in which women expressed their opposition to the regime and need for liberation. On the one hand, the politics of female liberation were linked to a large extent with the counter-regime struggle, with women playing a key role in opposition to the *Estado Novo*. On this side of the fight for women's liberation, women's social and political emancipation was inextricably linked with the opposition groups who fought against the dictatorial regime, often focussing on censorship, the colonial wars, education and workers' rights.[1]

Although there were some groups created specifically with female emancipation in mind, such as the *Conselho Nacional das Mulheres Portuguesas* [The National Council of Portuguese Women] (1914-1947) and the *Associação Feminina Portuguesa para a Paz* [Portuguese Feminine Association for Peace] (1935-1952), they were dissolved by the *Estado Novo* regime and never managed to recover any large underground participation, thus the political participation of women against the dictatorship became integrated into the more successful movements of the political left such as the *Movimento de Unidade Democrática* [Movement for Democratic Unity] (1945-1948) (MUD) and the *Partido Comunista Português* [Portuguese

[1] Vanda Gorjão's 2002 study *Mulheres em Tempos Sombrios* provides a complete study of feminine opposition to the *Estado Novo* regime and emphasises the large role of women in oppositional politics coming from a vast number of backgrounds including liberal, republican, socialist, communist, anarcho-syndicalist, feminist and pacifist.

Communist Party] (1921-) (PCP).[2] The principal exception to this trend, the *Movimento democrático de mulheres* [Women's Democratic Movement] (1968-) (MDM), was created with heavy participation from the PCP (although without official affiliation). What is particularly interesting about the MDM is that they identify themselves principally as a political entity rather than a 'feminist group' as such[3] and, unlike the earlier women's groups that were dissolved, the issues that MDM engaged with were not exclusively 'women's issues' – for example, the MDM launched a protest against the colonial wars in the early 1970s. This means that on the political side of Portuguese feminism, there were no successful feminist groups to foreground feminist issues as such, but that women's presence in politics was more of a women's voice on current affairs and some women's issues with very little emphasis on a specific feminist politic.

On the other hand, women were also fighting their own ideological battle for freedom of sexuality and of sexual expression that lay outside of the political manifestos of left-wing political groups. It is this second struggle that renders the Portuguese women's cause so unique in the context of global women's liberation. Although feminist movements from other national backgrounds, in particular French and Anglo-American, were also concerned with achieving sexual liberation, the expression of Portuguese sexual liberation was articulated on very different terms. Ex-Prime Minister Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo explained the perspectives of Portuguese women regarding their own liberation in an essay entitled "Portugal: Daring to be different" for the Women's Liberation Movement's anthology *Sisterhood is Global* (1984), emphasising the reticence of Portuguese women to accept foreign models of feminism as their own, rendering the Portuguese woman's view of sexual freedom different to the drives for 'sexual liberation' in other countries:

> (…) Portuguese women strongly resent the path of 'sexual liberation' which has been prevailing. They feel oppressed by the masculine mode of expressing sexuality as well as by values coming from alien and dominant cultures. Because they want to reinforce the cultural identity of the people to which they belong, they cannot accept a path of sexual liberation through which, in their view, foreign domination is imposed upon local lifestyles and choices. (Pintasilgo, 1984: 574)[4]

[2] Unfortunately, this led to some disappointment after the revolution when 'women's issues' were somewhat side-lined in favour of what the left-wing political parties considered to be more important to the success of the revolution.

[3] Manuela Tavares explains the standpoint and the creation of MDM in her doctoral thesis *Feminismos em Portugal (1947-2007)* (Tavares, 2011: 264-266).

[4] Published in 1984, Pintasilgo's article discusses the opinions of 'several groups of adult women and young women in their late teens' as a result of her research into Portuguese women's opinions on women's liberation. The opinions I have cited in this introduction are from the older group of women who will have lived through and who are able to recall at least the final decade of the dictatorship. Thus, even though this article has been published

Despite this resistance to foreign models of sexual liberation, however, there was a keen understanding of the role of sexuality as the last bastion of liberation. Pintasilgo explains how there is an awareness of woman's ultimate subjugation to man in sexual relations and of how this subjugation and the sexual economy that necessitates subjugation is preventing them from feeling truly liberated.

> These women say that they still are viewed and treated primarily as objects of men's sexual lives, that violence is exercised on them, that they are required to behave according to men's modes and desires. They say that even when there is full equality between man and woman, the demands of sex according to the man's rule defines them as slaves – a feeling that cuts across all social classes and all distinctions between urban and rural women. (*ibidem*)

The combination of Portuguese women's suspicion of other 'dominant' voices – whether these voices be from the patriarchy or from 'alien and dominant cultures' – and their understanding of the importance of sexual relations when it comes to women's liberation, reveals not only a need to escape a male-dominated sexual economy, but also a need to assert, and indeed discover, their own sexual identity and discourse in order to counteract the identities and discourses previously conferred upon them. We can see that the way sexuality is expressed and the modes used for its expression are crucial to the question of Portuguese women's liberation – in other words, the discourse within which Portuguese women's liberation is expressed matters to Portuguese women. It is not only what is being said that matters, but how it is said and who is saying it. Having already played victim to an oppressive national discourse under the *Estado Novo,* other strong discourses or modes of feminism coming from abroad and trying to impose new and radical ideas upon Portuguese women would have seemed daunting and, indeed, suspicious. Yes, the principal 'enemy' was the patriarchal discursive voice, but what was important for Portuguese women was to find their own voices with which to assert their presence, especially given the stark differences between Portuguese women experiencing the reality of dictatorial oppression, and the comparatively free and privileged writers of international feminist theory.

Thus, although many feminisms, especially French, have referred to, explored and deconstructed the overriding 'patriarchal discourse' of the Western world, for Portuguese women this battle is even more formidable. This does not mean that a study of Portuguese women's writing using French discursive feminist theory will not be useful. In fact, the strength

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after the time-frame of my own study, it is still relevant and helps us to understand the Portuguese woman's definition of women's liberation and of her understanding of her own sexuality and how this fitted into not only women's sexual liberation, but also into the wider political question of creating a national identity that rejects the one written for them by the dictatorial discourse.

and tangibility of patriarchal discourse in Salazarist Portugal renders the study of discourse even more crucial to understanding the situation of Portuguese women and the literary reactions to this reality. What it does mean, however, is that whereas the patriarchal discourse studied by the French post-structuralist feminists[5] is studied as a dominant yet long-existing force that is almost passively maintained by Western society, the discourse controlling the lives of Portuguese women was very much an active, tangible voice, clearly heard and identifiable through Portugal's formidable dictator, Salazar, the national propaganda, and the visible presence of representatives from the state and the Catholic church who penetrated each community.

Indeed, restricting the roles available to women in society, silencing their voices, and alienating them in almost all aspects of life was a concerted effort on behalf of the *Estado Novo* that was not only present from the very beginnings of the regime but was enforced and emphasised on many fronts by creating a specific image of what women should be. The founding document of the *Estado Novo* – the 1933 Constitution – contains an alteration to the definition of equality that immediately blurred women's constitutional right to equality before the law, thus constitutionally limiting their freedom, and also implying that their status as women (the term almost seems synonymous with wife/ mother in *Estado Novo* rhetoric) renders them less human, and less deserving of one of the most basic human rights. This change takes place in article 3 of the 1933 Constitution:

> A igualdade perante a lei envolve o direito de ser provido nos cargos públicos, conforme a capacidade ou serviços prestados, e a negação de qualquer pivilégio de nascimento, nobreza, título nobiliárquico, sexo, ou condição social, salvas, *quanto à mulher, as diferenças resultantes da sua natureza e do bem da família*, e, quanto aos encargos ou vantagens dos cidadãos, as impostas pela diversidade das circunstâncias ou pela natureza das coisas. (Constituição, 1935: 445; my italics)

[5] When I say 'the French post-structuralist feminists' I refer primarily to Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, who are three of a number of writers and theorists of the group most often called 'The New French Feminists'. This group of feminist writers from France began to publish works in the 1960s and their works grew in popularity throughout the following two decades in France. Many were linked to the Feminist journal *Tel Quel*, the group "Psych. et Po." ("Psychanalyse et Politique") and the publishing house "Des Femmes" (owned by Psych. et Po.). The New French Feminists and their theories began to spread and influence Anglo-American spheres in 1980, when Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron published *New French Feminisms* (1980), an anthology of texts from Cixous, Irigaray, Kristeva and others including Monique Wittig and Simone de Beauvoir. Often, however, despite the fact that they weren't the only feminist theorists publishing in France in the 1960s and 1970s, it is Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva who are referred to as New French Feminists in group form. In the chapter "Feminisms" from *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide* (2006), Fiona Tolan explains that "Other, quite different schools of feminist thought were coming out of France, but by their combined appearance in *New French Feminisms*, the synchronicity of their ideas, and their near-immediate influence on Anglophone feminism, these three thinkers have come to predominate" (Tolan, 2006: 332).

In this alteration to the constitution, Salazar marked women's role as solely for the good of the family. The term "da sua natureza" [of her nature] also suggests that woman's nature is essentially different to that of a man and, indeed, inferior. The suggestion that women is naturally inferior to man is not, of course, new. The inferiority of women has been widely claimed and philosophised since the very beginnings of Western civilisation, as has been commented on by many feminist critics, but most famously in Luce Irigaray's *Speculum. De l'autre femme* [*Speculum of the Other Woman*] (1974) – a damning exposure of how philosophy and psychoanalysis have alienated woman throughout Western civilisation. The *Estado Novo,* in the more extreme situation of dictatorship, emphasised the notion of female inferiority not only through state discourse and constitutional law, but also by tapping into the existing Catholic beliefs which were (and still are, but to a lesser extent) prevalent in Portugal. In later speeches, Salazar justified his limitation of the role of woman to wife, mother, and care-giver by citing Catholic morality, often calling upon encyclicals to support his arguments; for example, in one speech Salazar refered to the encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii*, stating: "O homem e a mulher como indivíduos mas inseridos na família, núcleo primário orgânico do Estado Novo corporativo, uma ideia compartilhada pela Igreja Católica, nomeadamente pelas Encíclicas de Pio XI – Casti Connubii e Quadragesimo Anno (1931)" (*apud* Campina, 2013: 251-252). The encyclical refered to by Salazer here glorifies woman's subjugation to man using the symbol of family:

> 'Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ is the head of the church.' This subjection, however, does not deny or take away the liberty which fully belongs to the woman both in view of her dignity as a human person, and in view of her most noble office as wife and mother and companion (…). (Pope Pius XI in Aledo, 2013: 352)

If we compare certain Catholic discourse on the subject of the role of women[6] with Salazarist state discourse, we can see very little difference and, when combined, these two strict discourses created an oppressive model of womanhood whereby women were expected to resemble a cross between the Virgin Mary and that infamous adversary of women writers, the 'Angel of the House'.[7] This alienated and silent mother-figure is glorified by Salazar and state propaganda not only by incorporating the image into religious ideology, but also by making

[6] I would like to make the distinction here that I am only referring to the specific 'Catholic' messages chosen by the *Estado Novo* in order to support their regime. Often these messages were picked and distorted or emphasised for the purpose of nationalist propaganda. For example, even though Salazar quoted part of the encyclical cited above, Casti Connubii, there was no reference to the part of the encyclical that encouraged marital sexual relations for the purpose of marital unity instead of solely for procreation.

[7] The 'Angel in the House', a reference to the poem of the same name by Coventry Patmore, was described by Virginia Woolf as the image of the ideal woman and homemaker (Woolf, 1972: 235-240).

this model for woman a key part of nationalist ideology, as is made clear in his 1932 interview on the subject:

> (…) a mulher casada, como o homem casado, é uma coluna da família, base indispensável de uma obra de reconstrução moral. Dentro do lar, a mulher não é escrava, deve ser acarinhada, amada e respeitada, porque a sua função de mãe, de educadora dos seus filhos, não é inferior à do homem. Nos países ou nos lugares onde a mulher casada concorre com o trabalho do homem (…), a instituição da família, pela qual nos batemos como pedra fundamental de uma sociedade bem organizada, ameaça ruim (…). Deixamos, portanto, o homem a lutar com a vida no exterior, na rua… E a mulher a defendê-la, a trazê-la nos seus braços, no interior da casa (…). Não sei, afinal, qual dos dois terá o papel mais belo, mais alto e útil. (*apud* Campina, 2013: 252)

It is thus clear that the combination of two powerful discourses created an ultra-oppressive condition for the lives of Portuguese women, where failing to fulfil their role as mother or wife – a silenced, alienated, and enclosed mother or wife – was perceived as dangerous for the family and for the nation. The all-encompassing power of this discourse in Portugal takes the French post-structuralist feminist definition of 'oppressive patriarchal discourse' to a whole new level, and has resulted in a lasting suspicion in Portuguese women of any language other than their own that may try to impose a belief upon them. The strength and tangibility of the dominant patriarchal voice in Portugal has therefore resulted in a keen understanding in Portuguese women of the importance of language and discourse when considering their liberation. It is perhaps for this reason that foreign models of female liberation do not seem adequate to the women studied by Pintasilgo.

In terms of sexual oppression, the 'state-approved' woman is an asexual one, who is defined by her function rather than by her voice or desires. It is worth noting that in Portugal (and indeed many other Catholic countries) the cult of the Virgin Mary is extremely popular and was even more so during Salazar and Caetano's regime[8] when state and church both encouraged devoted worship to *a nossa senhora.* The prevalence of the image of the Virgin Mary as the purest and most correct woman is a significant factor in the de-sexualisation of woman, and also in the emphasis on and, indeed, glorification of child-bearing. At the other end of the scale of religious iconography, but with similar consequences, the Catholic Church exploits the image of Eve the temptress responsible for the degradation of man – an image that has grown in popular culture into the modern-day femme fatale responsible for using sexuality and temptation to lead men astray. Eve, responsible for the original sin, has been used for

[8] António de Oliveira Salazar was in power during the *Estado Novo* dictatorship as Prime Minister from its beginning in 1932 until 1968 when he was replaced by Marcelo Caetano who remained in power until the revolution of 1974.

centuries as justification for the relegation of women to a lower status and, alongside the Virgin Mary, forms the other side of the 'Eternal Feminine'. In "O corpo das mulheres na história, corpo desapropriado", from the anthology *O Longo Caminho das Mulheres* (2007), Helena Neves describes how the two sides of the Eternal Feminine are defined by two different female bodies:

> É pelo escutar, gozar o corpo que se distingue um dos lados desta dualidade, simbolizada por *Eva*, a responsável pelo pecado original. (…) A este lado do *Eterno Feminino*, marcado pela culpabilização opõe-se o lado que transporta a possibilidade da redenção, simbolizada por *Maria*, a de corpo imaculado (…) sem sexualidade, sem pecado. (Neves, 2007: 310-311)

In Catholic ideology, therefore, the *Eternal Feminine* works to discourage free sexual pleasure for women by emphasising the dangers of 'giving into temptation' and simultaneously by holding up an unsexed virgin mother as the ideal for women. When, eventually, Portuguese women began to talk about or (God forbid) write about their experiences of or need for sexual pleasure and describe their bodies as anything other than their child-bearing functionality, they were punished, censored or even faced the wrath of the indoctrinated public.[9] The women writers who faced this fate were therefore hugely important figures in the drive for women's liberation in Portugal given their instrumental role in challenging and attempting to alter the discourse that negates female sexuality.

So, for Portuguese women, sex and discourse go hand-in-hand when considering their liberation. The language used to express their sexuality therefore plays an important part in their understanding of liberation and in the models of women's liberation that they accept. Pintasilgo explains Portuguese women's reaction to certain Anglo-American feminist slogans:

> Portuguese women feel that what is at stake is the introjection of a patriarchal model imposed on women under the label of 'sexual liberation.' They say that such a model is shaped by the competitive style of society and is charged with individualistic overtones which manipulate and employ the satisfaction of the 'ego' in order to make the machinery of society run smoothly. (…) For these women, such widespread slogans as 'Women must be owners of their own bodies' are an ambiguous cry of freedom, since such ideas convey the concept of a society geared by 'ownership of property' as the supreme value and sign of status. (Pintasilgo, 1984: 574)

[9] In "Marcadas para sempre…", from *A Censura de Salazar e Marcelo Caetano*, Maria Teresa Horta describes the persecution she suffered at the hands of the censors not only during the Three Marias' trial, but also during her time as a journalist where a member of the national censor, Moreira Baptista, repeatedly targeted Horta. Horta also goes on to describe the threat of violence against her after the publication of *Minha Senhora de Mim:* "Também ele foi proibido por «imoralidade» e «pornografia», o que provocou muito burburinho, a ponto de me fazerem inúmeros telefonemas anónimos ameaçando-me (…) para além de cartas e outras ameaças" (Horta, 1999: 141).

Despite the fact that Portuguese women's concept of liberation in everyday life had at the time a tendency to question foreign models of feminism (as exemplified by Pintasilgo using the Anglo-American women's liberation slogan above), in Portuguese women's writing and in Portuguese feminist literary criticism there are a number of examples of writers entering into a dialogue with these foreign strands of feminism. One prime example is the contact between the Three Marias and French feminists in the creation of the keystone text for Portuguese feminism, *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (1972). In this case the Three Marias sent their book to a number of well-known French feminists including Christiane Rochefort and Simone de Beauvoir before publication.[10] Furthermore, in *Antigones' Daughters? Gender, Genealogy, and the Politics of Authorship in 20th Century Portuguese Women's Writing* by Hilary Own and Cláudia Pazos Alonso (2011), Owen and Pazos Alonso highlight the place of both Anglo-American feminism and French feminism in Portuguese feminist criticism, stating that:

> The move to disseminate Anglo-American, and to a lesser extent, French poststructuralist feminist theory in Portugal constitutes a very significant step undertaken by Ana Gabriela Macedo and Ana Luísa Amaral in their *Dicionário da crítica feminist*, and by the former in her collection of key Anglo-American and French feminist essays translated into Portuguese in *Género, Identidade e Desejo: Antologia Crítica do Feminismo Contemporâneo.* (Owen/ Pazos Alonso, 2011: 16)

The new emphasis on foreign feminist theory in Portugal after the 1974 revolution has subsequently led to an intense dialogue on the suitability of foreign feminist theory to Portuguese literature. The example cited by Owen and Pazos Alonso is the growing debate on the application of the term *écriture féminine* to women's writing which was initiated by two studies by Isabel Allegro de Magalhães – *O Tempo das Mulheres* (1987) and *O Sexo dos Textos* (1995) – in which the author identified a feminine construction of temporality and a specific style of prose characterised by certain linguistic, thematic and aesthetic aspects that are identifiably feminine in Portuguese women's writing. These two studies provoked a significant response from Maria Irene Ramalho de Sousa Santos and Ana Luísa Amaral, who in *Sobre a "Escrita Feminina"* (1997) chose to alter the phrase 'feminine writing' by adding their own quotation marks due to the fluidity of the subject and the difficulty of so strictly defining a text as masculine or feminine. According to Owen and Pazos Alonso, this ground-breaking essay "paved the way for Portuguese feminist criticism to go beyond both humanist

[10] For further information on the interaction between the Three Marias and French feminists, and on the reception of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* in France, see the chapter "*Novas Cartas Portuguesas* em França: Paradoxos de uma recepção atribulada" (Carvalho *et al.*, 2014: 107-182).

sexual identity politics (the gynocritical sexing of the writer) and "escrita feminina" (the sexing of the text)" (*ibidem*).

Thus, in Portuguese feminism and in Portuguese women's writing we do encounter a certain influence from foreign models of feminism, yet this influence is not a blind following of dominant cultures, but rather a questioning and testing of these external feminist theories so as not to endanger the creation of a unique identity for Portuguese women. As has been shown by Pintasilgo and by Amaral and Sousa Santos' rephrasing and recalibration of "*écriture féminine"*, this questioning often concerns and demonstrates a will for a specific language and voice for Portuguese women where simply accepting foreign slogans and theoretical terms is not enough, but they must instead be altered to better represent the voice and the outlook of Portuguese women and of Portuguese women writers.

The dual understanding of language and sexuality as crucial elements of women's liberation means that a particularly interesting aspect of Portuguese feminism is the literature published by women during and immediately following the period of dictatorship in Portugal. It is for this reason that I have chosen to study the way in which language has been used as a tool by Portuguese women writers to alter the way that female sexuality is perceived and to start expressing themselves as sexual beings, deviating from the model of woman created by the *Estado Novo.*

The integral nature of language in determining and expressing one's body and sexuality also informed my choice of title where the term "*sextualities*" is intended as a demonstration of the way in which text and sexuality are intertwined in the elaboration of corporeal and sexual identities. "*Sextualities*" relates to the intrinsically sexual nature of language and discourse where patriarchal dominance has long been ensured by a specifically phallic sexual code that determines the way that texts are created, the way that sexuality is organised and codified and the way that systems of language, knowledge and being are structured in Western culture. It is this inextricable relationship between sex and text, desire and discourse, gender and language that is crucial to understanding some of the most subversive writings against patriarchal dominance and phallocentric organisation in Western literature and it is thus this relationship that will play a central role in the analysis of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta in this study.

The works that I have selected for my study – the poetic works of Maria Teresa Horta and Luiza Neto Jorge, alongside the book *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* by 'The Three Marias'

(Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa) – are all widely recognised as part of the newly emerging female canon and female Portuguese literary symbolic. Maria Teresa Horta and Luiza Neto Jorge both emerged as poets as part of the ground-breaking publication *Poesia 61* (1961), which contained five plaquettes by five poets with the aim of questioning and re-assessing the existing format of poetry and language. The publication itself was extremely important as it was the first experimental collection of literary works in Portugal to boast a majority female participation with Horta and Neto Jorge writing alongside the likes of Fiama Hasse Pais Brandão, Gastão Cruz and Casimiro de Brito.

The works of Luiza Neto Jorge (1939-1989), although less prolific than Barreno, Horta, and Velho da Costa, are often seen as the most innovative examples of Portuguese women's writing given the way that Neto Jorge interrogates and alters the systems of language and knowledge that have developed in Western culture and which contribute to modern understandings of gender and the feminine. Neto Jorge's first published work was the collection *A Noite Vertebrada* in 1960, shortly before she rose to fame in 1961 with the publication of *Quarta Dimensão* as part of *Poesia 61*. From 1962 onwards, Luiza Neto Jorge lived and published mostly from Paris, publishing fewer poems towards the end of her life. Neto Jorge died in 1989, leaving her final book, *A Lume*, to be published posthumously in the same year.

During her life, Luiza Neto Jorge distanced herself publically from feminist groups which has, to an extent, helped to maintain the impersonal tone of her poetic works. Marinela Freitas, in *Emily Dickinson and Luiza Neto Jorge: Quantas Faces?* (2014), exemplifies Luiza Neto Jorge's refusal of labels based on gender or gender politics by describing her reaction to being included in the anthology *Antologia da Poesia Feminina Portuguesa*, edited by António Salvado in 1973: "Neto Jorge protesta, juntamente com Fiama, contra a inclusão, não autorizada, por parte de Salvado de poemas seus numa antologia dedicada à poesia «feminina» - uma «qualificação» de que a autora sempre procurou distanciar-se" (Freitas, 2014: 147). Freitas attributes Neto Jorge's dislike of gender labels (including the terms "feminine" and "poetisa") to an experiment with modernist techniques of "despersonalização ou apagamento da figura do autor" (*ibidem).*

Despite Neto Jorge's rejection of political or gender labels that would result in the categorisation of herself or of her work, however, her poetry is constantly in revolt against the structures of language and thought and the laws of reason of Western culture that have worked

to alienate the feminine body and female sexuality. In one of her French poems, "Théâtre de la désobéissance", Luiza Neto Jorge boldly states "Jamais je n'obéirai/ Je répète: jamais." – these two small lines encapsulate Neto Jorge's innovation of language and poetic structure, but also the way in which she uses the erotic in her poetry as a form of transgression and excess. Thus, the work of Luiza Neto Jorge is particularly interesting as part of a study on sexuality and the female body because of the way that eroticism and the body permeates her innovative works of poetry and are so crucial to her reconstruction of the poetic form.

Maria Teresa Horta (1937-), although not credited with the same level of innovation, is considered a revolutionary poet for her bold use of loaded language to describe sexual encounters in which female protagonists are given a central role. Before publishing poetry, Horta was already working in journalism, was director of the ABC Cine-Clube in Lisbon and dedicated herself to feminist politics as part of the Portuguese feminist movement. Maria Teresa Horta's first collection of poetry, *Espelho Inicial,* was published in 1960 and a year later she published *Tatuagem* as part of *Poesia 61*. Horta famously encountered a huge backlash from the censorship and from the Portuguese people after the publication of the provocative collection of poetry *Minha Senhora de Mim* (1971], which is a revisionist work in which Horta has rewritten traditional Portuguese Troubadour poetry so as to highlight female sexuality, sexual pleasure and female dominance in sexual relationships as opposed to poetry on male desire for a female object. Maria Teresa Horta's poetry constitutes a particularly fierce and openly feminist vindication of women's right to be sexually desiring as well as an object of desire, and demonstrates insubordination towards the *Estado Novo* ideology of God, Homeland and Family ["Deus, Pátria e Família"]. Like Luiza Neto Jorge, however, Horta shows a clear link between sexuality, being, and language, quoting Simone de Beauvoir at the beginning of *Espelho Inicial*: *"*Toute ma présence est parole" [My whole presence is speech] (Horta, 2009: 28).

Novas Cartas Portuguesas (1972) was written collectively by Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta, and Maria Velho da Costa. The three co-authors were each active in oppositional politics against the Salazar and Caetano regime and collectively rose to internation fame as the "Three Marias" upon their arrest following the publication of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas.* Sometimes classed as a novel, *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* is difficult to categorise as it is a hybrid work comprised of a series of texts including letters, poetry and prose. It has since been heralded as ground-breaking not only because of its audacious feminist and political criticism of the Salazar and Caetano regime, but also in terms of its revolutionary

literary form that calls into question patriarchal models of literary form and production. This "epistolary novel", which stems from the myth of Mariana Alcoforado, the Portuguese Nun of *Cartas Portuguesas,* originally published in French as *Les Lettres Portuguaises* (1669),[11] presents the reader with a series of 'letters' (in both prose and poetry) that reflect on the material and ideological oppression of women in Portugal over several centuries. The choice to include *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, despite the formal difference to the poetic works of Maria Teresa Horta and Luiza Neto Jorge, is down to its importance as an exploration of the history of female sexuality in Portugal and also to its suitability as a theoretical text and as a reference to the political reality of women in the *Estado Novo* and previously under the rule of the Catholic Church and a strict social structure. Furthermore, as a collaborative text with a proliferation of distinct female characters spanning such a long time period, *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* constitutes a strong feminist symbol of women's solidarity and the creation of a 'herstory'.

There have already been a number of prominent studies concerned with identifying and exploring a female literary history or genealogy that have included at least one, if not all, of the writers I have chosen for my own study (Klobucka, 2009; Owen, 2000; Santos, 1998 and Santos/ Amaral, 1997). However, whereas these existing studies focus primarily upon the issue of female authorship and subjectivity, I will focus instead on the role of sexuality in subverting, destabilising, and challenging the values of a society whose success relied partially on suppressing the feminine voice and rendering women invisible under the cloak of motherhood and Catholic morality. With the exception of a few chapters in the above-referenced works dedicated to single authors and a chapter in *Lusosex* (Quinlan, 2002) there is very little existing work that deals exclusively with the issue of female sexuality in Portuguese women's writing. I have chosen sexuality and the female body as the focus of my study in order to fill this gap in the existing scholarship on Portuguese women's writing and to highlight what I believe to be a crucial element of the new national literary symbolic created by Portuguese women writers as a means of rewriting, subverting and replacing the traditionalist and nationalist literary symbolic created and promoted under the *Estado Novo.*

[11] First published anonymously in 1669, *Les Lettres Portuguaises,* there is a significant debate over the provenance of the original letters. Some (the "marianistas") believe that they were, in fact, written by the Portuguese nun, Mariana Alcoforado, and later simply translated into French, whilst others (the "antimarianistas") believe that the letters were simply a work of epistolary fiction written by the French nobleman Gabriel-Joseph de la Vergne. The Three Marias were of the opinion that Mariana was, in fact, the original author of the letter, and that she wrote them directly into French. For further information on the debate over the authorship of *Les Lettres Portuguaises,* see the annotated edition of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* edited by Ana Luísa Amaral (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 326-327, n60).

For my study on the female body and female sexuality in Portuguese women's writing, I will use a range of theoretical approaches from the field of feminist studies and from other fields such as philosophy and sociology. Due to the importance of discourse and its importance when considering the different sexual economies that unavoidably alter one's perspective of the world, the primary feminist theoretical texts will be those of the French post-structuralist feminists. As I have demonstrated above, the extreme nature and the power of patriarchal discourse employed in the situation of a dictatorship means that the French feminist approach that focusses so intently on the role of discourse will be particularly fruitful.

In fact, just as the French feminist theory is apt for the study of Portuguese women's writing, the condition of Portuguese women under the *Estado Novo* is also apt as a justification of French post-structuralist feminism. Often viewed as essentialist, intellectualist and elitist, French post-structuralist feminism is criticised for being removed from the reality of oppressed or subaltern groups of women and as homogenising women by presenting a supposedly universal view from a distinctly white, middle class, heterosexual perspective.[12] Using French feminist theory in a consideration of Portuguese women's writing removes it from the realm of the intellectualist abstract, and provides a real-world, material application where discourse not only matters but is also present in a more tangible and visible form. We must remember, however, that the lives of French women and the system that controlled their lives was a lot freer than the Portuguese dictatorial system. In my study of Portuguese women's writing I will not neglect this fact, but I will use French theories of discourse to better understand the literary reactions to an extreme case of oppressive, patriarchal discourse, and the ways in which Portuguese women writers have created a new discursive space to express their own sexuality and foreground questions of the female body that were so brutally silenced under the *Estado Novo.*

In terms of feminist views and their complicated relationship with international feminism, the French post-structuralist "feminists" are also useful in considering the less political and more literary or linguistic aspects of the works I have chosen to analyse. Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray both withdraw themselves somewhat from the political realm of feminism. Kristeva never referred to her work as feminist, but rather as linguistic and psychoanalytical. It is only later that her work has been placed under the heading of 'feminist theory' in a more Anglo-

[12] For an in-depth consideration of the differences and debates between Anglo-American and French feminisms see Gambaudo, 2007.

American context. Irigaray, on the other hand, during the period in which she was most prolific, did not align herself with any single feminist group.[13]

The aspect of separation between feminist politics and the theories published by the French feminists is particularly useful when studying the works of Luiza Neto Jorge, Maria Teresa Horta and the Three Marias. Luiza Neto Jorge, like Kristeva and Irigaray, also resisted the label of 'feminist' and remained politically removed from specific feminist groups. A specific point of contention between Neto Jorge and the feminist theories that she chose to distance herself from is sexual difference and the way that some feminist writers use sexual difference to define specific states of mind and styles of writing according to gender. It will become clear in Chapter One and Chapter Two of this study that defining a person or poetic writing in this way is completely at odds with theories of sexual difference[14].

Contrary to Neto Jorge's approach to sexuality, the Three Marias and to some extent the autonomous work of Maria Teresa Horta are famous predominantly for their political nature, especially *Novas Cartas Portuguesas.* Much of the work published on this text in particular focusses to a large extent on the politics of its publication and treat the work as a political symbol. In my study, however, I intend to deviate from this academic trend by treating the novel less as a political symbol, and more as the important literary and, at times, theoretical piece that it is. By studying this work comparatively along-side the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta, I will be able to more closely analyse individual 'letters' from a more strictly literary perspective, an approach significantly facilitated by the nature of French post-structuralist feminism.

French post-structuralist feminism will not, however, be the only theoretical approach. I will also take into account important sociological theories and works by philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Herbert Marcuse, and Georges Bataille, which will help to explain the construction of Western definitions of the body, the erotic and taboo. Gaze theory, such as those elaborated by Laura Mulvey, Ann E. Kaplan and Mary Ann Doane also prove useful, in

[13] Later in her career, however, Irigaray became heavily involved in the Italian women's movement. Although some may see this as becoming involved in 'group-politics', most of her work consisted of educating Italian women about her own feminist ideals, collaborating with the Commission for Equal Opportunities and writing reports for the European Union.

[14] It is this same disagreement over the usefulness of theories of sexual difference that separates Kristeva from the other French poststructuralist feminists, Irigaray and Cixous to the extent that there is at time a question of whether it is correct for Kristeva to be categorised as a 'New French Feminist' alongside Irigaray and Cixous. Whereas Irigaray and Cixous seem to rely on sexual difference in their elaborations of feminine writing and the role of the female body in defining a woman's sexuality and perspective, Kristeva seems more determined in her work to separate the term 'feminine' from the term 'woman'.

the context of this thesis, to explore systems of representation and the construction of feminist texts that provide alternative images of the feminine body for a female spectatorship. Finally, I will also make reference to other international and revolutionary feminist theory on sexuality, such as those of Kate Millett and Judith Butler, to allow for a better understanding of the politicisation and construction of gender and sexuality both socially and textually. These diverse approaches, combined with French post-structuralist feminist theories, will help to explain the way in which patriarchal discursive forces have alienated female sexuality and the female body in their definitions of sexuality and will be useful to analyse Portuguese women writers' responses to, challenges to, and revisions of these definitions. Understanding the ways in which Portuguese writers have used literature in order to (re)define female sexuality and the female body will form a key part of my study.

My study is one of two halves, with the first part focussing on the body, and the second on sexuality. As a comparative study of Portuguese women's writing, each chapter will deal with each of my chosen writers, comparing and contrasting them according to the appropriate themes. Chapter One, "Deconstructing Dichotomies", looks at the way in which dichotomies have been used as a tool for the oppression of the female body in Western Culture. Beginning with the mind/ body dichotomy, I will explore the oppression of women via the devaluation of the feminine body and the literary responses of Luiza Neto Jorge, Maria Teresa Horta and the Three Marias in which they reveal, condemn and deconstruct the patriarchal, binary organisation of knowledge, language and being. Chapter Two, "Representations", will consist of an examination of the ways in which Luiza Neto Jorge, Maria Teresa Horta and The Three Marias have represented the female body in their works and how these differ to the pre-existing and predominant representations of the female body in Western culture. Chapter Three, "*Jouissance* and Sexual Pleasure", will look at the way in which sexuality has been historically organised by patriarchal forces in a way that alienates and discounts female sexuality. In this chapter I will explore the creation of a space for female sexual pleasure in Portuguese women's writing, and in particular according to definitions of feminine *jouissance* as described by the French poststructuralist feminists. My final chapter, "Taboo", is an examination of the way in which taboo has been created and used as a structuring and oppressing force in society. Here, I will analyse the use of sexualities deemed by the *Estado Novo* – and often Western culture as a whole – as 'taboo' or 'perverse', in order to confront the structures of sexuality that more often than not oppress women in order to fulfil a masculine desire.

In sum, this thesis aims to explore in further detail the link between discourse and the alienation of women in Western culture as a whole, but more specifically in the social context of Portugal that women writers such as Luiza Neto Jorge, Maria Teresa Horta and the Three Marias had to face. Understanding the role of language and discourse in the oppression of women, especially in a country ruled not only by political codes under the *Estado Novo* dictatorship, but also under a severely conservative and religious social system, will help to understand the mechanisms employed by women writers in their plight for a more liberal understanding of the female body and feminine sexuality. Considering a multiplicity of political and discursive forces that systematically work to define and restrict women, my reading of these texts will bridge the gap between theoretical questions of authorship, and socio-political questions of real-world liberation

Part I: The Body

> *Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write yourself. Your body must be heard.*
>
> Hélène Cixous

The body has been widely theorised in numerous disciplines including sociology, anthropology, philosophy, feminist and women's studies, and literary theory. Roughly speaking, we can identify two ways of addressing the 'body' in the ensuing works, both of which are relevant to this study and to the literary texts that are here considered. The docile, regulated body that has adapted to and is habituated to the rules of cultural life, as theorised by Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault (amongst others), has been understood as the site of social control and part of the body's integration into social structures. The instinctual, physical body, on the other hand, is governed by senses and desires, more affected by individual cravings and intuition than by societal codes. This more instinctual body – mentioned in the works of Plato and Freud, for example – has been adopted (and adapted) by a number of women writers and feminist scholars as a tool for the subversion of the patriarchal regulation and oppression of the female body as docile body.

Let us first consider the 'docile body'. The term itself was first used by French sociologist and philosopher Michel Foucault who, in *Surveiller et Punir* [*Discipline and Punish*] (1975), explored the role of the body in the exercise of power through discipline in modern society. What Foucault describes as "disciplinary practices" are those practices that subject bodily activities to a process of constant surveillance and examination, enabling a continuous and pervasive control of individual conduct with the aim of optimising the body's usefulness and ensuring its docility:

> a policy of coercions that act on the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it (…). Thus, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. (Foucault, 1995: 138)

Foucault's identification of the body as a key tool for control as exerted by societal powers has found particular resonance with many feminist theorists, who also see the body as the historical site of patriarchal oppression. Foucault himself does not make any specific claims

as regards the particular 'docility' of the female body, yet in *La Volonté de Savoir* [*The Will to Knowledge*] (1976), the first volume of *Histoire de Sexualité* [*History of Sexuality*], Foucault identifies the 'hysterization of the female body'[15] as one of the "four strategic unities which, beginning in the eighteenth century, formed specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex" (Foucault, 1978: 103). Here, Foucault is referring to the fact that female sexuality is controlled, analysed and observed because of their role as mothers, where their 'function' of child-bearer becomes of public interest in order to ensure the 'healthy' or 'structured' continuation of society. The use of the female body in this manner, with the amplification of motherhood to a matter of public and, indeed, national interest was a fundamental aspect of *Estado Novo* ideology, where mothers were controlled via their duties as set out for them in national propaganda and women's organizations, through the spaces in which they were to move, and the activities in which they were encouraged to participate. Thus, through the spatial and ideological control over women's 'docile' bodies, the *Estado Novo* could exercise and consolidate its power over the masses.

'Docile bodies' are an important aspect of Foucault's work on power, of which his three-volumed *History of Sexuality* is a complex study. His theories on power and the role of sex and the body in the exercise and reproduction of power in modern (post-eighteenth-century) society have been widely appropriated and critiqued by feminist scholars in their considerations of the link between power and gender. Susan Bordo (1989) and Sandra Bartky (1988), for example, have both used Foucauldian theories on the body and power to explain women's collusion with patriarchal standards of femininity. They analyse the role of norms and normalised practices or habits as they relate to a woman's identitification as feminine. Bartky explains how the disciplinary practices that affect the female docile body subjugate women by creating a catalogue of skills and competencies that depend on the continuation of a generalised form or model of feminine identity (and *vice versa*). The role of identity in this exercise of power means that challenging "the patriarchal construction of the female body (…) may call into question that aspect of personal identity that is tied to the development of a sense of competence" (Bartky, 1988: 77).

[15] Michel Foucault defines the 'hysterization of the female body' as "a threefold process whereby the feminine body was analysed (…) as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality; whereby it was integrated into the sphere of medical practices, by reason of a pathology intrinsic to it; whereby, finally, it was placed in organic communication with the social body (…), the family space (…), and the life of children (…): the Mother, with her negative image of 'nervous woman,' constituted the most visible form of this hysterization" (Foucault, 1978: 104).

The ability of power to create discourse, norms, desires, and practices, such as those models of femininity described by Bartky and Bordo, is the focus of Foucault's *History of Sexuality.* Rejecting the universality of the 'repressive hypothesis' that sees power as solely a negative force with only the effect of constraining or denying the dominated through law, Foucault enquires into other effects and mechanisms of power that are positive, and have the power to create:

> Why is this juridical notion of power, involving as it does the neglect of everything that makes for its productive effectiveness, its strategic resourcefulness, its positivity, so readily accepted? In a society such as ours, where the devices of power are so numerous, its rituals visible, and its instruments ultimately so reliable, in this society that has been more imaginative, probably, than any other in creating devious and supple mechanisms of power, what explains this tendency not to recognise the latter except in the negative and emaciated form of prohibition? Why are the deployments of power reduced simply to the procedure of the law of interdiction? (Foucault, 1978: 86)

The *Estado Novo's* exertion of power over women therefore covers both the negative and the positive models of power described by Foucault. In terms of the juridico-discursive power that represses, we have seen the amendments to the constitution, the banning of feminist groups, and the censorship of women's writing on expressions of sexuality that differ to the 'state-approved' model of femininity – for example, the works of Judith Teixeira[16], Natália Correia[17], and more pertinently to this study, the Three Marias' *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta. Luiza Neto Jorge, on the other hand, did not become such a victim of the state censorship, but much of her poetry can be read as a criticism of the *Estado Novo* and of the dictatorship's ability to restrict and silence sexual expression. The eroticism and criticism in the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge, however, is often veiled by her surrealist style and complex images, making it harder to censor.

[16] Judith Teixeira published her first book, *Decadência* [*Decadence*] in 1923, but it was soon censured and all copies were burnt alongside the works of two other homoerotic writers, *Sodoma Divinizada* [Deified Sodomy] (1923) by Raul Leal and *Canções* [Songs] (1921) by António Botto. Even though other male writers were also censored, it is important to note that the backlash against the state censors in support of Leal and Botto was significant, with Fernando Pessoa in particular expressing his public support for them, yet despite often being accredited as part of the same literary group – "a literatura de sodoma" [literature of sodomy] – there was no such support at all for the works of Judith Teixeira. Monica de Sant'Anna explains and explores the censorship of women's writing in Portugal further in her article "A censura à escrita feminina em Portugal, à maneira de ilustração: Judith Teixeira, Natália Correia e Maria Teresa Horta" (Sant'Anna, M, 2009).

[17] Natália Correia was a prolific novelist, poet, essayist, dramaturge and editor who faced much persecution under the *Estado Novo*. Not only were many of her works censored and removed from circulation, but she was also sentenced to three years in prison for the publication of the *Anthology of Erotic and Satiric Portuguese Poetry* [*Antologia da Poesia Portuguesa Erótica e Satírica*] (1966) and was tried for editorial responsibility with the publication of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas.* For further information on the censorship of women's writing in Portugal, see the essay "A censura à escrita feminina em Portugal" by Mónica Sant'Anna (2009).

On the other hand, the all-encompassing power of the *Estado Novo* created a specific discourse that permeated Portuguese society and the everyday reality of Portuguese women. This discourse detailed the model of femininity that women were expected to adhere to via the norms, rituals and practices of the feminine body and also created a definition for the 'perverse'. In his study of power, Foucault explains how defining the 'perverse' is an act of creation, whereby defining something as perverse renders it more visible in society as it is condemned in law, confessed in churches, and gossiped about in the streets. The so-called 'perverse' becomes conspicuous in its perversion[18].

So, we can clearly identify the female body in Western society as a 'docile body'. This alone does not help us to find a solution. In fact, Foucault has often been criticised by feminist scholars for offering no possibilities of resistance and, actually, claiming that resistance itself only acts to further or reproduce the discourse that it supposedly resists:

> Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. (…) Their [power relationships'] existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. (Foucault, 1978: 95)

Foucault's identification of the body as the principle site of control in society, and the parallel feminist understanding of the female body's role in patriarchal mechanisms of power, have, however, created a new kind of body – one that has played a particularly prominent role in French poststructuralist feminism. This new kind of body is one that speaks, that writes, that rebels, and that defines its own femininity. This body is one that is not docile, but one which, through the medium of language, seeks to transform itself from the site of the exertion of power, to a source of its own power and of its own discourse. If the docile body is the object of the dominant discourse of Western culture then in Hélène Cixous' utopian discourse, *l'écriture féminine* (feminine writing), the female body is the subject.

For Hélène Cixous, it is the female body and her libido that differentiates women's unconscious from that of a man, and it is through this libido and sexual body that women can find a true feminine form of expression and discourse – *l'écriture féminine.* Cixous has herself created texts to act as demonstrations of what a specifically feminine discourse might appear

[18] Foucault writes: "At issue is not a movement bent on pushing rude sex back into some obscure and inaccessible region, but on the contrary, a process that spreads it over the surface of things and bodies, arouses it, draws it out and bids it to speak, implants it in reality and enjoins it to tell the truth: an entire glittering sexual array, reflected in a myriad of discourses, the obstination of powers, and the interplay of knowledge and pleasure" (Foucault, 1978: 72).

as in texts such as *La* (1976) and *Ananké* (1979), and marked the works of Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector as prime examples of *l'écriture féminine* in *Vivre L'orange* [*To Live the Orange*] (1979) and *L'Heure de Clarice Lispector* [*The Hour of Clarice Lispector*] (1989). In *La Rire de la Méduse* [*The Laugh of the Medusa*] (1975), Cixous elaborates on the link between libido and language and the uniqueness of the feminine psychosexual unconscious:

> Her libido is cosmic, just as her unconscious is worldwide. Her writing can only keep going, without ever inscribing or discerning contours, daring to make these vertiginous crossings of the other(s) ephemeral and passionate sojourns in him, her, them, whom she inhabits long enough to look at from the point closest to their unconscious from the moment they awaken, to love them at the point closest to their drives; and then further, impregnated through and through with these brief, identificatory embraces, she goes and passes into infinity. She alone dares and wishes to know from within, where she, the outcast, has never ceased to hear the resonance of fore-language. She lets the other language speak – the language of 1,000 tongues, which knows neither enclosure nor death. To life she refuses nothing. Her language does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back, it makes possible. (Cixous, 1976: 889)

Not only does this passage reveal the link between the female libido and language, it also reveals the primacy of 'alterity' and the ease with which the female unconscious can relate to and flow into the Other.

Both Luce Irigaray and Cixous see the multiplicity of female sexual impulses and sensuality as the root of this more fluid sense of alterity. According to Irigaray, the nature of a woman's body means that she is already more in touch with the 'other' as she is inherently plural, whereas the male body is one and requires a separate other to fully realise his libidinal economy. In the essay "Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un*"* ["This Sex Which is Not One"] (1977) from the book of the same title, Irigaray states that:

> In order to touch himself, man needs an instrument: his hand, a woman's body, language . . . And this self-caressing requires at least a minimum of activity. As for woman, she touches herself in and of herself without any need for mediation, and before there is any way to distinguish activity from passivity. Woman "touches herself" all the time, and moreover no one can forbid her to do so, for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contct. Thus, within herself, she is already two– but not divisible into one(s) – that caress each other. (Irigaray, 1985b: 24)

The most important difference between the feminine relationship with the Other and the masculine phallocentric relationship with the other, however, is that the feminine subject does not seek to dominate the Other but to, in Cixous' words, "inhabit" them, "love them" and "let the other language speak". Having found themselves in a position of alterity in a masculine-dominated discourse means that woman's marginal position as 'Other', alongside her multiple erogeneity, facilitate a more equal relationship with the 'Other'. So, whilst Foucault's description of patriarchal discourse on sex and the body highlights the role of power and

domination, these French poststructuralist feminists yearn for a discourse that relies on a completely different structure based on equality with the Other rather than the (male) subject's domination of the (female) Other.

Julia Kristeva also deals with alterity in her work, but rather uses the relationship with the Other as a basis for the conception of a new 'ethics' with a less oppressive sense of alterity than that which dominates phallocentric ethics. Kello Oliver, in *Ethics, Politics, and Difference in Julia Kristeva's Writing* (1993), explains that:

> Kristeva attempts to break down the identity of the autonomous subject in order to link negativity with ethics by reconceiving of a relationship between subject and other. She uses the models of poetic language, maternity, and psychoanalysis to construct a new model of otherness within the subject. In each of these three models, Kristeva imagines an otherness at the very core of the subject. Each of these models suggests a "subject-in-process/ on-trial." Kristeva proposes that these models of alterity can inform a new way to conceive of the structure of the relation to others and thereby inform a new way to conceive of ethics. (Oliver, 1993: 1-2)

However, unlike Irigaray and Cixous, Kristeva cites specifically the body of the mother as the site of interaction with the 'other' where the 'other' with which one comes into contact is the mother. The mother, to Kristeva, is the source of a specific kind of knowledge that pre-exists patriarchal language and this knowledge, unlike patriarchal or phallocentric knowledge-systems, is not limited by the symbolic. Kristeva believed that this mother-knowledge is accessed in moments of true contact with the mother, such as in childbirth, as she explains in "Motherhood According to Bellini" in *Sèméiotikè: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* [*Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*] (1969):

> Such an excursion to the limits of primal regression can be phatasmatically experienced as the reunion of a woman-mother with the body of *her* mother. (…) By giving birth, the woman enters into contact with her mother; she becomes, she is her own mother; they are the same continuity differentiating itself. She thus actualizes the homosexual facet of motherhood, through which a woman is simultaneousl closer to her instinctual memory, more open to her own psychosis, and consequently, more negatory of the social, symbolic bond. (Kristeva, 1980: 239)

Although Kristeva never encouraged, *per se*, the theorisation of an *écriture féminine*, her views on the Other and proposed model of ethics that rethink the subject/ other relationship ties in with Cixous' and Irigaray's description of a feminine language that does just that. At their roots, despite different stances on sexual difference, Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva all, to a certain extent, posit female corporeal experience against phallocentric concepts of knowledge, being and language. They also all see discourse and language as the principal centres of the oppression of women in Western culture and believe that the creation of a new discourse and language (written or spoken) should be at the centre of feminist resistance

against patriarchal rule. So, whilst Foucault's description of patriarchal discourse on sex and the body highlights the role of power and domination, these French poststructuralist feminists yearn for a discourse that relies on a completely different structure based on equality with the Other rather than the (male) subject's domination of the (female) Other, and the primary site of the creation of this discourse, is the female body.

As we have already seen, like Foucault, the French poststructuralist feminists foreground discourse in their works. The works of Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva demonstrate that the discourse of Western knowledge is preconditioned by a number of binarisms or dichotomies that alienate woman and the other qualities that fall on the 'feminine side' of the dualist system. In "The Politics of Writing (The) Body: Écriture Féminine", Arleen Dallery says:

> Indeed, the logical ordering of reality into hierarchies, dualisms, and binary systems presupposes a prior gender dichotomy of man/ woman. Not only has women's voice or experience been excluded from the subject matter of western knowledge, but even when the discourse is 'about' women, or women are the speaking subjects, (it) they still speak(s) according to phallocratic codes. (Dallery, 1989: 53)

In the dichotomies that have, since time immemorial, acted as a structure for the development of Western knowledge and culture, the bodily and the feminine have both been relegated to the secondary position of the binarism and have become inextricably linked. This is clear, for example, in the hysterisation of the female body, that Foucault identified as an instance of power being exerted upon a docile body. Thus the female body, claiming the double secondary position of being both female and bodily (as opposed to the male and the rational), has ultimately been suppressed, silenced, and discounted in Western knowledge. The materiality of the docile body and of the effects of discourse upon the docile body, as seen in the works of Foucault, have inextricably affected the reality of the female body, as Dallery has pointed out:

> Through discourse the human body is territorialised into a male or female body. The meanings of the body in discourse actually shape the materiality of the real body and its complementary desires. (*idem*: 59)

Thus, in order for women to resist their subordinate position in Western culture, they must first unveil the female body and undo the discourse that has subordinated them through dichotomies. The need to create a new discourse that does not define via binarisms is the ultimate goal of '*l'écriture féminine'. L'écriture féminine,* tellingly often referred to as 'writing the body', is a way of writing or speaking from a point of feminine subjectivity; undoing the relegation of women and the female body to the position of other, or object, and turning the woman and the female body instead into a speaking subject from which one can

reliably and accurately describe woman's experience. It is the act of recovering the lost female subject, of doing, in Hélène Cixous' words, "the work of un-forgetting, of un-silencing, of unearthing, of un-binding oneself, and of un-deafening oneself" (Cixous, 1979: 78). Luce Irigaray, in "This Sex Which is Not One", epitomised the primacy of the work of undoing dichotomies in order to achieve this feminine writing:

> How, then, are we to try to redefine this language work that would leave space for the feminine? Let us say that every dichotomizing – and at the same time redoubling – break, including the one between enunciation and utterance, has to be disrupted. Nothing is ever to be *posited* that is not also reversed and caught up again in the *supplementary of this reversal.* To put it another way: there would no longer be either a right side or a wrong side of discourse, or even of texts (…). (Irigaray, 1985b: 79-80; original italics)

Dichotomies and the task of deconstructing them, followed by the reconstruction of the image of the female body will, therefore, be the subject of the first two chapters of this study. I will consider and compare the means and methods employed by the Three Marias, Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta to destabilise patriarchal definitions of the female body and the dichotomies used in these subjugating definitions. The second chapter will then analyse the new representations of the female body that these Portuguese women writers have created to replace those prevalent in the patriarchal discourse of Western culture and knowledge.

Chapter One: Deconstructing Dichotomies

> *The point is not for women simply to take power out of men's hands, since that wouldn't change anything about the world. It's a question precisely of destroying that notion of power.*
>
> Simone de Beauvoir

Dichotomous thinking has, particularly in the past four centuries, developed as a key element of the Western knowledge basis. The mind/ body split, visible in works from as far back as Descartes and Kant,[19] has been the source or starting-point from which a whole series of dichotomies have sprung, resulting in an extremely binary system of knowledge that is based on the exclusion of what is essentially half of human existence. Dichotomy has been, more than anything, the defining element of the structure of Western society that is structured by a hierarchy that has subsequently alienated anything that is identified with the 'body' side of the mind/ body split. It is this system of hierarchisation and dichotomy that has been found problematic by feminists, and has been identified by many as the key-stone of the patriarchal Western discourse that oppresses woman and relegates her to a position of alterity and inferiority. The inferiority attributed to the 'female' in society is due to a whole series of binarisms that have stemmed from the original mind/ body opposition and that have come to be considered interchangeable, as explained by Elizabeth Grosz in *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*:

> Lateral associations link the mind/ body opposition to a whole series of other oppositional (or binarized) terms, enabling them to function interchangeably (…). The mind/ body relation is frequently correlated with the distinctions between reason and passion, sense and sensibility, outside and inside, self and other, depth and surface, reality and appearance, mechanism and vitalism, transcendence and immanence, temporality and spatiality, psychology and physiology, form and matter, and so on. (Grosz, 1994: 3)

Most relevant to the work of feminists and to the literary works considered in this study, has been the equation of the male/ female dichotomy with the mind/ body opposition. Indeed, this

[19] Whereas many trace the origins of this identification to the works of Descartes and Kant, some (including Luce Irigaray) have successfully traced the discourse/ system of thought that alienates woman further back to the beginnings of Western knowledge in ancient Greece (See Irigaray's mimetic writings on the work of Plato in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 1985a [1974]). Indeed, it was the Greek Goddess *Metis* – whose name loosely translates as wisdom, prudence or craft, with no exact modern translation – who was swallowed by Zeus and has been largely forgotten in place of *Logos*, the knowledge most equated with books and language.

aspect of the role of dichotomy in Western knowledge has probably been the most exploited aspect, used widely to exclude women from the 'higher realms of knowledge' and to identify them instead with the natural, primal, and animalistic qualities associated with the body. Val Plumwood furthered feminist understanding of the role of dichotomy in oppressing women by making the link between the repercussions of the mind/ body dichotomy and the dehumanisation of women:

> In all the senses of rationality, the 'rational' side of the contrasts is more highly regarded and is part of the ideal human character, so that women, to the extent that they are faithful to the divergent ideals of womanhood, emerge as inferior, impoverished or imperfect human beings. (…) The ideals of the masculine sphere and those of humanity are identical or are convergent. Those of femininity and humanity are divergent. (Plumwood, 1990: 214)

Whereas the study of discourse in the past has, at times, seemed rather removed from reality, feminist studies and feminist understandings of the dichotomy have provided a link between the discursive and the real.[20] The feminist interest in dichotomy is tied to the political feminist aim of achieving concrete social change, as there are clear links between political conservatism and dichotomous thinking. Plumwood, for example, describes the concept of nature being equated with woman as "a major tool in the armoury of conservatives intent on keeping women in their place and supporting a rigid division of sexual spheres" (*ibidem*). It is here, then, that the link between the social reality of Portuguese women and the role of dichotomies in perpetuating the systematic subordination of women and the 'docile', female body becomes clear. Furthermore, we can link the projects of women writers, such as the poetic work of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta and the collective work of the Three Marias to the growing need to rewrite dichotomous Western discourse.

First, in order to counteract the effect of dichotomy in Western discourse on the body, our writers must establish and call out, through their work, the systems of oppression such as dichotomous thinking, the use of the female body as a site of control, and the prescriptive and oppressive models of femininity enforced upon women. In particular, demonstrating that the body is a socially defined entity, and thus something that has been created, would act to destabilise the social structures that justify oppressive sexual difference and the division of

[20] Much of the feminist theory used in this thesis is classified as poststructuralist as it builds on structuralist notions of understanding culture and society according to the structures that underlie them. Poststructuralism takes structuralist concepts, such as those of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Ferdinand de Saussure, and some Lacanian and Foucauldian concepts, and builds on them so as to bring the abstract ideas of structuralism closer to concrete reality. A significant part of poststructuralist theory – most notably (from a feminist standpoint) in the works of the New French Feminists and Judith Butler (in her book *Gender Trouble*, published in 1990, for example) – consists of an interrogation of the binary concepts that govern structuralism.

male and female according to dichotomies. Thus, highlighting the social structures that artificially separate and rigidly define the body, would act to question and invalidate the powers and discourses that have created the social structures.

For the Three Marias, Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta, the system that they need to break down and challenge in their works is the rigidly Portuguese patriarchal hierarchy. Many of the works analysed here were actually written under the *Estado Novo,* but even after the fall of Salazar and Caetano's dictatorship, there remained a fiercely patriarchal bias in Portuguese society governed primarily by a religious and moral conservatism. This bias also played a huge part in the creation of a national literary symbolic which was dominated primarily by male writers or women writers who either adhered to a certain conservatism in their work, or who were subtler and less open in their criticism of patriarchal society or the *Estado Novo*.[21] When women writers began to openly describe their own bodies and their own sexualities in a way that defied traditionally conservative gender roles or social norms, they were censored or viewed with disdain in the literary world with writers such as Judith Teixeira and Florbela Espanca remaining largely invisible to the academic world until very recently. The way in which the Three Marias, Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta directly challenge patriarchal definitions of gender and speak about their bodies is, therefore, nothing short of revolutionary. Each of these writers challenges the restrictions placed upon the female body in Portuguese society and also question the validity of the definitions of the female body offered by the patriarchy.

Luiza Neto Jorge makes what is probably the most obvious reference to the superficial and hegemonizing socialisation of the docile body in the title of a section of the book *Terra Imóvel* (1964) called *Os Corpos Vestidos.* The title itself makes allusions to something that is artificial and part of the socialisation of the human body – clothing is what renders the human body socially acceptable and the manner in which one dresses defines not only one's gender, but also one's social status. In *Os Corpos Vestidos,* therefore, we find the bodies of men and women being defined or 'dressed' by hegemonic societal forces. The first poem, "Homem", for example, describes a man who is "não escoado ainda/ pelas costuras das ruas/ e dos fatos"

[21] Writers such as Sofia de Mello Breyner Andresen and Agustina Bessa Luís were able to flourish even during the *Estado Novo* dictatorship. Although these writers can be seen as having questioned gender roles and gender identities, their criticism was often much less directly political, much more symbolic in nature and much more subtle in terms of their expression of sexuality. In "Sobre a Escrita Feminine", Santos and Amaral point out the difference between writers, such as Agustina, who do not identify as erotic writers and those who highlight sexuality in their works in terms of "feminine writing" (Santos/Amaral, 1997: 28).

and who "brinca/ com os dedos/ inventa-lhes um ofício" (Jorge, 2001: 60)[22]. Here Luiza Neto Jorge demonstrates how a man is also subject to the socialisation of the body, and in response to this socialisation she has highlighted the fluidity and superficial nature of the social definition of a body that is dressed by the streets and can invent its own functions.

Despite Luiza Neto Jorge's reticence to adopt a specifically feminist stance, however, she was still aware of and very much against the social structures that restrict women, but rather with the objective of a universally free and liberal sexuality. Even though many do not class Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry as politically revolutionary in the same way as *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* or the provocative poetry of Maria Teresa Horta, at the root of Luiza Neto Jorge's surrealist aesthetics is a definite libertarian sentiment similar to that of the more radically political feminists. In "Corpo, enunciação e identidade na poesia de Luiza Neto Jorge" (2001), Rosa Maria Martelo, for example, claims that:

> não há grande insistência explícita na emancipação de um eros feminino, tal como nem sempre é nítida a construção de uma singularidade lírica claramente identificável como feminina nos poemas mais erotizados. E, no entanto, a poesia de Luiza Neto Jorge concorre decisivamente para o quadro libertário que, deste ponto de vista, se desenha nos anos 60 e 70. (Martelo, 2001: 46)

Thus, whilst in the works of other feminist writers, such as the other authors in this study, examples of sexuality are bold, explicit and the central motifs of the literary works, in Luiza Neto Jorge, whilst sexuality and eroticism play an important part, the themes are developed in a much subtler way as part of a larger wish for a new, more fluid model of being and knowing. Despite this subtlety, however, her libertarian sentiment and critique of patriarchal restrictions to a freer practice of sexuality and gender is crucial to understanding her poetry. In her poems, Luiza Neto Jorge uses the body and sexuality to challenge patriarchal definitions of the feminine and represent the body in a way that makes these definitions impossible to maintain, as is explained by Marinela Freitas in *Emily Dickinson e Luiza Neto Jorge: Quantas Faces?* (2014):

> Embora muita da poesia jorgiana tenda para a abstracção lírica, a criação de sujeitos que são sexualmente indefinidos ou excessivamente definidos como femininos é incontornável. Muitos dos corpos que encontramos na sua poesia (e são imensos) são corpos sexuados, cuja identidade, no entanto, resiste à definição através de uma tendência para a metamorfose, a disseminação e a desfocagem. Como notou já Manuel Gusmão, dificilmente podemos relacionar esta poesia com uma figuração estável da identidade feminina. (Freitas, 2014: 330-331)

[22] All of the references to the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge are from the anthology of her work *Poesia: 1960-1989*, the second edition published by Assírio & Alvim in 2001.

Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry, therefore, simultaneously reveals the performative and false nature of a gender identity shaped by a system of habits and feminine ideals placed on the female body by a patriarchal society by destabilising the concept of a permanent or 'natural' feminine identity. In the third and fourth poems of the collection, "Objecto Propagado ao Mar" (*idem*: 62, 63) and "Deita-se Como um Objecto" (*idem*: 63), for example, we can see strong images of the subjugation of the female body to the predominantly male forces that shape and define her. This reveals how concepts of the so-called "feminine body" have been artificially created according to patriarchal definitions of "feminine" – ideas that have resulted in the inferiority of the feminine body compared to the masculine body. In "Objecto Propagado ao Mar", the "mulher de areia" is physically shaped by the seemingly male force of the water – "rios a fazem e trazem" – and likewise in "Deita-se Como um Objecto" the woman is described as "um metal fundido", another substance that is artificially shaped or moulded, thus the social positioning and the conception of the female body is shown as something created solely by a male force. In "Deita-se Como um Objecto" the role of social rituals of femininity is underlined in the second stanza:

> DEITA-SE COMO UM OBJECTO
>
> Deita-se como um objecto
> um metal fundido
> entregue ao seu peso a si
>
> Quando ele se ergue
> debaixo do peito tem a sombra
> enterrada lá vive a mulher
> espaço
> habituado a fêmea
>
> Vivendo imposta ao espelho
> retocando os seios
> como os sábios sabem
> para sair em contacto com a sombra
> num terror deixar-se em poucos lábios
>
> (*ibidem*)

Here, it is made clear that social habits and norms have rendered the woman inferior by placing her in the habitual space "debaixo do" [under] man. Similarly, by referring to the woman as a shadow ["a sombra"], Luiza Neto Jorge makes two statements on the state of woman. Firstly, as described by Plumwood in her exploration of the effects of dichotomous thought in Western discourse, that woman is but an echo or shadow of a human, and secondly that her inferior position and her feminine habits are the creation of man; just as, in this image, the shadow is the projection of him. In "Objecto Propagado ao Mar" woman's humanity is also denied as

she is described as a "máquina", an artificial object defined by its function, and in both poems there is a semantic field consistent with imprisonment or confinement: "garfos a possuem", "mão detida", "enterrada lá vive a mulher". This reveals the oppressive and restrictive nature of the way in which discourse and dichotomy have removed the humanity of woman and violently shaped and positioned her in order to assert the dominance of the patriarchy.

In *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* by Maria Teresa Horta, Maria Isabel Barreno and Maria Velho da Costa, the theme of imprisonment is also present, often represented by the cloister or the enclosed situation of a nun. The Three Marias chose the figure of Mariana Alcoforado[23] as the starting point for their "epistolary novel" – a series of letters, poetry and prose attributed to a range of female (and occasionally male) characters, that resemble a kind of prolonged study of the docile and of the resistant female body spanning from the time of Mariana Alcoforado's internment in a convent and affair with the French Chevalier Chamilly (the seventeenth century) to the time of writing (1971). The multiple historical spaces occupied by each of the characters reveals the pan-historical nature of the oppression of women and of the female docile body through a sequence of examples where the female body is used as a tool for the control and oppression of women. The role of Soror Mariana, not only as a starting point, but as a model for the Marianas, Marias, Maria Anas, and Ana Marias that follow, is crucial to the statement made on the oppression of women in patriarchal Portugal, as well as to the Three Marias' concept of resistance in solidarity. In "*Cartas Portuguesas* e *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*: Releituras Im-possíveis" (2012), Marta Mascarenhas writes:

> No texto das três Marias, a reconfiguração de Mariana, como símbolo da opressão, que se desdobra ao longo da obra em múltiplas vítimas do poder falogocêntrico e também da subversão de que estas são capazes de personificar, causou, como é sabido, escândalo e temor à máquina político-ideológica do Estado Novo. Mariana surge na obra como símbolo de todas as mulheres enclausuradas à força de leis e costumes, nas quais se auto-incluem as próprias autoras. (Mascarenhas, 2012: 74)

The central and symbolic role played by Mariana Alcoforado is made clear in "Extratos do diário de D. Maria Ana, descendente directa de D. Mariana sobrinha de D. Mariana Alcoforado, e nascida por volta de 1800":

> Que mulher não é freira, oferecida, abnegada, sem vida sua, afastada do mundo? Qual a mudança, na vida das mulheres, ao longo dos séculos? No tempo de tia Mariana as mulheres

[23] Whether or not Mariana Alcoforado was real has been widely disputed, but most believe her letters to be epistolary fiction. Her letters (whether real or fictional) to her French *chevalier* lover were first published in French under the title *Les Lettres Portugaises* in 1669 by Claude Barbin. They tell the tale of a nun who has an affair with a French soldier, the Marquis of Chamilly, who then goes back on his promise to take run away with her, returning to France alone and leaving Soror Mariana in her convent in Beja. For more on this topic, see *Mariana Alcoforado: Formação de um Mito Cultural* (2006) by Anna Klobucka.

> bordavam ou teciam ou fiavam ou cozinhavam, sujeitavam-se aos direitos de seus maridos, engravidavam, tinham abortos ou faziam-nos, tinham filhos, nados-mortos, nados-vivos, tratavam dos filhos, morriam de parto às vezes (…); estamos em tempo de civilização e de luzes, os homens fazem livros científicos e enciclopédias (…). O que mudou na vida das mulheres? Já não tecem, já não fiam, talvez (…) as mulheres bordam, cozinham, sujeitam-se aos direitos de seus maridos, engravidam (…). (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 140)[24]

Here, it is evident that Mariana epitomises the experience, and the 'cloistering' ["enclausuramento"] of women all through the ages. By asking "What woman is not a nun?" ["Que mulher não é freira?"], the Three Marias refer to the universal imprisonment of women at the hands of the patriarchal discourse that relegates them to a position of inferiority and enclosure. In particular, the public/ private dichotomy is highlighted in this passage, with men taking part in the arts and the sciences and women still cooking, subjecting themselves to the rights of their husbands, or falling pregnant. In using the encyclopaedia as an example of man's public work, the Three Marias have simultaneously brought attention to the role of man as 'definer', and thus to the patriarchal nature of the discourse that defines, and to the system of knowledge that alienates woman. Furthermore, the body is singled out as the site of the suffering caused by the enclosure of women, and of the confinement of women to these 'private' or 'domestic' functions in the list of examples of bodily processes and pains that the female body is subject to: "engravidavam, tinham abortos ou faziam-nos, tinham filhos, nados-mortos, nados-vivos, tratavam dos filhos, morriam de parto às vezes". The suffering conferred upon the female body is listed as though a list of chores or duties assigned to a woman by her husband and by society.

Like the confinement of the woman buried in the body – "enterrada lá vive" – in Neto Jorge's "Deita-se Como um Objecto", the imprisonment of women in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* is often defined by 'female habits' ["habituada à fêmea"]. In particular, as we have seen above, the public/ private dichotomy has been used to confine women to domestic duties and prevent them from entering any mind-based (public) work or roles. The Three Marias, in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* demonstrate the restriction of woman in this manner in the piece of prose "O Cárcere" by creating a prison for a female protagonist whose confinement is defined by her domestic duty to her husband. Like the above extract from the diary of D. Maria Ana, the role of the woman in the 'prison cell' is of the domestic variety – cooking and cleaning, for example. However, what I would like to draw attention to here is the violence of the

[24] All quotations from *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* in this thesis are taken from the annotated edition organised by Ana Luísa Amaral and published by Dom Quixote in 2014.

incarceration of the female character and in particular the semantic field consistent with surveillance:

> (…) espiando o seu silêncio e os seus gestos, buscando o mínimo pretexto que lhe permitisse passar ao ataque, à brutalidade, (…) talvez lhe tenha efectivamente chamado polícia ou bruto, ou polícia bruto ou coisa parecida, (…) viriam os interrogatórios sobre a sua vida toda, os seus passos, as suas conversas, até os seus olhares, em tudo era posta suspeita de conspirações e crimes. (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 170)

In this passage, language consistent with surveillance and discipline recalls Foucault's theory on the docile body and the way mechanisms of power "[place] under surveillance their everyday behaviour, their identity, their activity, their apparently unimportant gestures" (Foucault, 1995: 77). The surveillance of woman's gestures, words, attitudes and habits are analysed not only in this fictional situation of confinement, or in the nun's cell, but in the everyday life of real, ordinary women, where divergence is suspicious, conspicuous and in the context of Portugal's dictatorial regime, apparently a danger to the health of the nation. In this text, the repercussions, or the discipline, resulting from the surveillance of the protagonist is played out on the very site of control (the body) and in a violent manner that underlines the violence of repression – "o seu corpo todo feito numa massa mole" "e ali ficou no chão, inchando e sangrando" (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 170).

Although this representation of the repression of woman through a dichotomous and binary thought that reduces woman to the private sphere is an extreme one, the sentiment and the understanding of the role of habit in defining femininity and the model for the female body is present. Equally, in the poem "Senhora", the Three Marias demonstrate the emptiness of the life of a woman who must follow the rituals of femininity, of life in the private sphere:

> (…)
> Senhora, o que te traz tão sujeita,
> Tão faltosa
> Suspirosa?
> Quem fia, borde e ajeita
> Murcha cedo como a rosa
> Não tem ciência nem prosa
> Não sabe o nome que aceita.
> (…)
>
> (*idem*: 18)

In this stanza we can see a number of the binary pairs that have been identified by many feminist theorists as repressive. We have already seen the public/ private dichotomy which is present here in the domestic activities "fia, borde, e ajeita", but we can also see the nature/ culture dichotomy as the woman is likened to a flower, who is without the aspects of culture

["ciência" e "prosa"] that are available to man. In the final line, like the shadow-woman of Luiza Neto Jorge, the woman is denied her humanity as, like an animal, she has her name given to her by man, yet "não sabe o nome que aceita". The trope of naming in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* becomes a form of resistance. In this poem, the reality of Man legally conferring his name upon his wife and daughters is highlighted, but the lineage created by the Three Marias here is one of first-names (the Mariana, Marias, Maria Anas, Ana Marias, Monicas, Joanas etc.) who continue the name and the memory of Mariana Alcoforada and "utiliz[am] sua descendência sem nome nem propriedade para perpetuar o escândalo e o inaceitável" (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 139).

Like Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry and *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, Maria Teresa Horta also places a lot of emphasis on the control of woman through the female body via rituals, habits, and the surveillance of the docile body. In the poem "Acusação no Vento" from Horta's first collection, *Espelho Inicial* (1960), for example, there is a multiplicity of language consistent with rules or laws and with the guilt of someone who cannot fulfil these laws: "acusaram-me", "angústia", "desencontradas", "deslealdade" (Horta, 2009: 31-32)[25]. This language betrays an immense self-consciousness that comes from an atmosphere of surveillance, the key weapon in the arsenal against the docile body. The omnipresent nature of the atmosphere of surveillance is made clear in the poem by using face-less and ever-present images: "acusaram-me os arbustos", "acusaram-me as mãos/ na loucura das luas", and in the title "acusação no vento". The link between the atmosphere of surveillance and control is linked to models of femininity in the fourth stanza:

> nos espelhos
> a angústia
> tomou a forma
> duma mulher
> vestida de encarnado
>
> (*idem*: 32)

Here, as in Neto Jorge's "Deita-se como um objecto" the mirror acts as a frame for an image of femininity – of superficial femininity. Mirrors, reflecting only the image or the surface of a thing or person, are in these two poems used to underline the superficiality and the artificiality of the image of femininity, and also the projection of the image away from the body of the woman. In projecting the image of femininity into the mirror, we can see that there

[25] All quotations from the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta in this thesis are taken from her collected works *Poesia Reunida*, published by Dom Quixote in 2009.

is something underneath the veneer – a real body/ a real woman lies beneath the "corpo vestido".

The idea of habits that help to define the image of femininity is made particularly clear in "Mulheres Quotidianas" from Maria Teresa Horta's collection *Mulheres de Abril* (1976). This poem, which follows the poem "Mulher – Resistente", is part of a collection of poetry that recounts the repression and the often violent repercussions of resistance under the *Estado Novo.* The inclusion of the 'everyday women' in this collection places the everyday repression of women in the private sphere on an equal footing with the incarceration and torture of women in the public sphere. The setting for "Mulheres Quotidianas" is marked clearly as private (or domestic) by the peppering of household items and tasks: "à mistura na tábua/ com os lençóis" (*idem*: 453), "à mistura com os tachos/ e as panelas" (*idem*: 454) thus, once again, calling upon the public/ private dichotomy. The first poem in the collection *Mulheres de Abril, "*Basta", highlights the relationship between the public/ private dichotomy and the discipline carried out on the female body:

> BASTA
>
> Basta
> – digo –
> que se faça
> do corpo da mulher:
>
> a praça – a casa
> a taça
>
> (*idem*: 448)

In this brief poem, the female body is likened to three items: "a praça – a casa/ a taça". Two of these are domestic, the house as the primary site of the private sphere which is effectively the imprisonment of everyday women, and the cup as a domestic item that can be read to symbolise a collective private memory, or alternatively a symbol of the female body. The other – "a praça" – is a public space, a public arena where women are viewed and judged as they go about their lives in public, bringing to mind the regulation of the body in social spaces. Using symbols of domesticity and of a public arena really underline the regulation of the female body that takes place both in public and in private.

Although the dichotomous thought of Western culture is here described through images and often concrete objects, the principal identification of the way in which binary discourse represses women in the work of Maria Teresa Horta is through language and voice. Silence is a key theme in the work of Maria Teresa Horta, and is identifiable as an image of the

oppression of women. In "Mulheres Quotidianas", for example, the women described are denied of voices: "Mulheres quotidianas/ são aquelas/ que ao porem no mundo os filhos/ sossegam o sorriso", "O riso dobram em silêncio", "Silenciosamente… dão a vida ao mundo/ sem nunca ninguém/ reparar nelas" (*idem*: 453-454). These women, although they show some resistance with their 'sorrisos' and 'risos' and the independent thought masked by the silent façade, are forced into silence via the same binary thought processes that relegate them to the private sphere. This phenomenon is also demonstrated in the cloistering of the Marianas in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and in the works of Luiza Neto Jorge, there is a definite sense of an internal struggle between speaking and silence in the construction of a new lyrical subject.

The mind/ body, public/ private, reason/ emotion and culture/ nature dichotomies have created a structure of hierarchy where the mind, the public, the reason, and the culture (the male qualities) are seen as superior qualities, of what separates man from animal. The body, the private, the emotional, and the natural (the female qualities) have thus been marked as inferior and more animalistic than human. This immediately invalidates and effectively silences the voice of women meaning that even when she does speak, she is rarely heard, as is explained by Deborah Cameron:

> It has been argued (…) that the silence of women is above all an absence of women's voices from high culture. If we look at society's most valued linguistic registers – religious ceremonial, political rhetoric, legal discourse, science, poetry – we find women for the most part silent and in many cases silenced: it is not just that women do not speak, they may actually be prevented from speaking, whether by explicit taboos and restrictions or by the more genteel tyrannies of custom and practice. (Cameron, 1991: 3)

Thus, the relationship between dichotomy and language is crucial to understanding the alienation of women and of the female body in culture and, indeed, all public spheres of society. The dichotomous discourse of the Western world has silenced women essentially by correlating female existence with the body as a means of invalidating the female voice. If woman is not mind, has no reason, exists only in private, and has more to do with nature than culture, then what is the point in hearing her voice? In order to counteract this tendency, many women writers have chosen to unite body and voice, or body and language in acts of resistance.

Maria Teresa Horta uses the body as a source of subjectivity and authority from which to project a poetic voice. The effect of this is to create a new kind of knowledge system and language that is spoken through sensuality, as is expressed in the collection *A Educação Sentimental* (1975), which is a female response to the male-authored text *Éducation*

Sentimentale written by Gustave Flaubert in 1869. The original French novel traces a young man's journey through Paris as he is educated in the ways of life. Maria Teresa Horta's choice of starting point is significant as it points to a different kind of education where the student is still male, but the education consists of a female lyrical voice teaching the male student how to enjoy and interact with other bodies. *Educação Sentimental* is a huge body of work that, through a language of flesh and sensations, explores and traces the female body and the female imaginary. The collection acts as, and encourages, a study or knowledge of the body and all of its extensions, representing a much more complex and subjective system of knowledge than that of the dichotomous and phallic knowledge-basis that Horta opposes.

The similarity between Maria Teresa Horta's project in *A Educação Sentimental* and the project of *écriture féminine* cannot be ignored. According to Miriam Bittencourt in her doctoral thesis "A escrita feminina e feminista de Maria Teresa Horta" (2005), the creation of a new kind of bodily experience and corporeal knowledge-basis is in-keeping with the values of *écriture féminine* which is based on a feminine perspective of the world which é a marca mais relevante da escrita feminina. Falar de um universo individual do ser-mulher e levá-lo ao conhecimento do outro como forma de 'educação afetivo-erótica' é quebrar a barreira daquilo que o senso comum chama de 'mistérios da feminilidade'. (Bittencourt, 2005: 80). For Bittencourt, feminine writing is a way of removing women from their foreigness ("estranheza") and of creating a universe that can be enjoyed by men and women together. The female body in its closer relationship with the other, and a language which can capture this body would, therefore, in a utopian world, be able to undo the alienation of women.

In *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Hélène Cixous' manifesto of *écriture féminine,* Cixous encourages women to write the body:

> Text: my body – shot through with streams of song; I don't mean the overbearing, clutchy 'mother' but, rather, what touches you, the equivoice that affects you, fills your breast with an urge to come to language and launches your force; the rhythm that laughs you; the intimate recipient who makes all metaphors possible and desirable; body (body? bodies?), no more describable than god, the soul or the Other; that part of you that leaves a space between yourself and urges you to inscribe in language your woman's style. (Cixous, 1976a: 882)

This is exactly the link between voice and the body that Maria Teresa Horta is encouraging in her poetry, and the tone of Cixous' manifesto on feminine writing is unmistakeable in "O Corpo" from the very first stanza:

> O CORPO
>
> Digo do corpo

o corpo
e do meu corpo

digo do corpo
o sítio e os lugares

de feltro os seios
de lâminas os dentes
de seda as coxas
o dorso em seus vagares

Lazeres do corpo
os ombros
as lisuras o colo alto
a boca retomada

no fim das pernas
a porta da ternura
dentro dos lábios
o fim da madrugada

Digo do corpo
o corpo
e do teu corpo

as ancas breves
ao gosto dos abraços

os olhos fundos
e as mãos ardentes
com que me prendes
em súbitos cansaços

Vício de um corpo
o teu
com o seu veneno

que bebo e sugo
até ao mais amargo

ao mais cruel grau
do esgotamento
onde em segredo
nado em cada espasmo

Digo do corpo
o corpo
o nosso corpo

digo do corpo
o gozo
do que faço

Digo do corpo
o uso
dos meus dias

a alegria do corpo

sem disfarce

(Horta, 2009: 400)

It is clear that the body has become the opposite of Foucault's docile body. Instead, the body of "O Corpo" is a subject that speaks for itself rather than the object of the exertion of discipline, and the body also has the power of transcendence which denies the definition or enclosure of patriarchal discourse. Maria Teresa Horta's "O Corpo" also recalls the subjectivity attributed to feminine writing as a result of the specificities of the female body. In her famous essay "This Sex Which is Not One", Luce Irigaray emphasises how the vagina, in the way in which it is in constant contact with itself, and the multiple erogenous zones of the female body create a different kind of subjectivity based on touch rather than sight. In saying this, Irigaray is rewriting the phallocentric discourse of Freud and Lacan that sees woman as having no sexual organ and, therefore, as lacking from a perspective where the single organ and the scopic economy are prime.

> So woman does not have a sex organ? She has at least two of them, but they are not identifiable as ones. Indeed, she has many more. Her sexuality, always at least double, goes even further: it is *plural*. (…) But *woman has sex organs more or less everywhere*. She finds pleasure almost anywhere. Even if we refrain from invoking the hystericization of her entire body, the geography of her pleasure is far more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle, than is commonly imagined – in an imaginary rather too narrowly focused on sameness.
>
> 'She' is indefinitely other in herself. (Irigaray 1985b: 28)

The altered, and indeed heightened, sense of the other and permeability of the female body, in terms of subjectivity, is expressed in "O Corpo" by the plurality of bodies present and the fluidity between the speaking subject and the other bodies: "Digo do corpo/ o corpo/ e do teu corpo", "que bebo e sugo", "Digo do corpo/ o corpo/ o nosso corpo" (Horta, 2009: 400-401). The fluidity of the subject subverts the polarity of dichotomous discourse in its insistence on a strictly subject/other or I/other relationship and proposes rather a shared and equal experience of the two bodies – an image that bears remarkable resemblance to Luiza Neto Jorge's "porta giratória" from the poem "Pelo Corpo", which will be explored further in Chapter Four.

This binary understanding of subjectivity is instrumental to the phallocentric model of authorship where the subject/ author/ enunciator has sole authority over the object/ other that it describes. The project of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* works to subvert the phallic and dichotomous order of the concept of authorship on many fronts. The anonymity and plurality created by a co-authored project, aside from being an instrument in legal defence to avoid prosecution, negates the role of author as sole enunciator with its multiple voices. Furthermore,

the form itself of an epistolary novel with such a vast plurality of speaking (predominantly female) subjects creates a much more complex concept of subject and object. Finally, the characters selected can be seen as representing a historical selection of Others – those who have been alienated, enclosed, and excluded by a phallocentric discourse that has traditionally denied woman's right to authorship. One could say, therefore, that *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* as a whole represents the plural subjectivity described by Irigaray and inscribed on the body.

The character Mariana acts as a kind of tool for the questioning of subjectivity and for an exploration into a multiplicity of female voices. As well as becoming a symbol of all enclosed women at the mercy of law and social codes, Mariana becomes a pretext for the self- and inter-reflection of the multiples selves projected in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*. The use of Mariana to these ends is made clear in "Segunda Carta IV":

> De Mariana tirámos o mote, de nós mesmas o motivo, o mosto, a métrica dos dias. Assim inventamos já de Mariana o gesto, a carta, o aborto; a mãe que as três tivemos ou nunca e lha damos. A acusamos, recusando-nos a ilibá-la por fraqueza, cobardia, fazendo dela uma pedra a fim de a atirarmos aos outros e a nós próprias. (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 67-68)

Thus, the joint creation and projection of an external character (like a stone thrown) has the equivalent reaction of allowing an exploration of the self; or in other words, the creation of an-other aids the creation or development of the self. The multiple authorship of this character further complicates and calls into question the dichotomous phallocentric construction of the single, authoritative self by allowing a fluidity of enunciation between the Three Marias.

The "Segunda Carta Última" demonstrates the progression from woman-as-object/ other to women-as-plural-selves/ self-and-other: "Tu, mulher olhando o seu corpo como coisa distinta, como seu próprio objecto erótico, e não como seu eu" (*idem*: 284) becomes, via Mariana "Brando queixume que te escapa, me ocupa, me emprenha, me ultrapassa e mata: minha escrita…" (*idem*: 286) and finally "que esta nossa dialéctica retorcida se desenrole entre nós e os outros, e não só intra-eus ou intra-nós" (*idem*: 289). In this summarising letter of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, therefore, we can see the progression from individual women who can barely recognise themselves as 'selves' to a group of authorial voices that flow between subjects, to a multiplicity of subjects and others that are reaching out and flowing into other Others and other selves – it would be difficult to get much further from the static phallocentric polarity of subject/ self/ mind versus other/ object/ body than this.

The problematisation of phallocentric binarisms that restrict the extension of subjectivity is also present and important in the work of Luiza Neto Jorge. Like the concept of *écriture féminine,* the poetic works of Luiza Neto Jorge reject the scopic male economy that has become dominant in modern

society in positing a static relationship of identity upon the body. The male scopic sexual economy, based on desire, places a necessary distance between the body of the subject and that of the object and fixes their positions in place, neatly divided into the subject/ object dichotomy. In "Exame", one of the poems from the plaquette *Quarta Dimensão* (1961), however, Luiza Neto Jorge creates a space of fluidity between two subject-identities. The fact that the two 'characters' are a 'senhor professor doutor' and a 'senhora'/ 'menina' also calls into question the validity of the hierarchy created and maintained by patriarchal systems of language and knowledge. The seniority of the title "senhor professor doutor" is aligned with the inadequacy of a system based on vision, dichotomy, and phallic structures:

(…)
Eu não sou senhor professor doutor
minha não-senhora minha não-menina
e se estou de pé é ilusão de óptica
eu estou sentado todos nós sentados
isto é não rígidos não equilibrados
(…)

(Jorge, 2001: 50)

In this stanza, the hierarchy that separates the "senhor professor doutor" (mind/ male/ reason/ culture/ subject/ public) from the girl is destabilised and invalidated as a mere optical illusion ["ilusão de óptica"]. The 'feminine'[26] understanding of the body and of the body's subjectivity in relation to the Other is much more fluid. The language of this poem revolts against the static male/ female identifications of phallocentric discourse and the linear and rigid nature of the hierarchy that has been created by a knowledge-system based almost entirely on the phallus. The "predominance of the visual, and of the discrimination and individualization of form" (Irigaray, 1985b: 25) of Western knowledge is invalidated in "Exame" as Luiza Neto Jorge calls into question the whole system of representation as favoured by phallocentric discourse:

(…)
Já sabem que o outro era esse mesmo
construiu um vácuo e deitou-se a esmo
de cabeça ao caos
os homens são maus
não são não senhor pode ser que seja
apenas temor
o que é é pode ser que seja
apenas não ser
(…)

(Jorge, 2001: 51)

[26] Here I refer to 'feminine' as employed by Hélène Cixous, where feminine does not necessarily refer only to women, but rather the feminine sexual economy which is not, as the masculine sexual economy, driven by desire.

This stanza is particularly damning to the phallic economy for a number of reasons. Firstly, the over-use of the verb 'to be' combined with language consistent with uncertainty ["pode", "seja", "apenas"] destabilises the system of representation of the phallic economy by calling into question the verb of essence – essence being what is to be recreated in representation. Secondly, the first line of the stanza removes the distance between the subject and the Other – a distance upon which the masculine sexual economy relies on in order to justify the self/ other dichotomy. And finally, the verb "construer", which represents the linear and end-based nature of the phallus and the thought processes that mimic it, is completely negated by the word "vácuo".

These texts have shown that each of the authors in this study had an acute awareness of the structures of power in society, and the way in which discourse has been manipulated in a way that is detrimental to women's freedom. At the centre of both the discourse that represses, and the resistance to and subversions of this discourse in the works of Luiza Neto Jorge, Maria Teresa Horta and the Three Marias, is the body. Through their literary works, using the body, these Portuguese women writers have revealed and condemned the mechanisms of power and discourse that work against them, silencing them, dehumanising them, and creating a whole series of dichotomies that relegate them to an inferior position in society. Firstly, they destabilised the image of the body and in particular of the feminine body, by revealing it as artificially created. Secondly, they exposed the violence inherent in a discourse that consistently represses, encloses and manipulates women through their bodies via a discourse that defines their femininity. Finally, Luiza Neto Jorge, Maria Teresa Horta and the Three Marias have each used subversive language to break the silence imposed upon women, and have deconstructed the dichotomies that claim women's inferiority. By challenging male authority over language and subjectivity, and calling upon the female body as a source of an alternative knowledge and language to the patriarchal system of knowledge that has for so long prevailed in Western culture, they have used literature to free the female body from patriarchal oppression.

Chapter Two: Representations

Jamais je n'obéirai
Je répète: jamais. À mon insu, jamais.

Luiza Neto Jorge

Having seen the way in which discourse, and in particular dichotomous thinking in patriarchal discourse, has altered the way in which the female body is perceived in society, the next step will be to investigate representations of the female body in art and literature. Firstly, I will address the 'negative' representations of the female body – those conceived of by a patriarchal system of representation – and secondly, I will explore the ways in which Luiza Neto Jorge, Maria Teresa Horta, and the Three Marias have called into question and replaced male-dominated representations of the body. This chapter will eventually demonstrate not only the crucial role of representation in constructing (and deconstructing) discourse on the body, but also the diversity of approaches employed by these writers in counteracting previous bodily representations that have only acted to oppress and limit women.

The female body has, in the past 50 years-or-so been called into question by many feminist writers and theorists. At the centre of this critique, especially in art and literature, has been the objectification of the female body by the male speaking and seeing subject. A new feminist project soon emerged in which women writers and artists were urged to rediscover and reappropriate themselves as subjects and on their own terms. The texts that we will later analyse are part of this project of reappropriation but what we will see is that this project has developed as something much more complex than originally supposed. The objectification (and therefore the de-objectification) of women is, in fact, an extremely complex process that exists on many levels and leads to a questioning, on a massive scale, of much of what we have come to accept and take for granted in Western culture after such a lengthy and complete reign of masculine discourse. You could say that feminist attempts to reappropriate a feminine speaking subject has opened a veritable Pandora's box, and has led to a long, difficult, and often conflicting project that encompasses more facets of knowledge and academia than almost any other aspect of feminist theory. Susan Suleiman explains the scale of the project to assert women as subjects in *The Female Body in Western Culture* (1986):

> What seemed, at first, an unproblematic desideratum – let woman speak her own body, assume her own subjecthood – has become problematized, complicated by increasingly difficult questions: what exactly do we mean when we speak of woman as subject, whether of speech or writing or of her own body? Is there such a thing as *a* – (or *the*) – subject? Is there such a thing as woman's body, woman's sexuality? Is there such a thing as woman, or, for that matter, man? These questions – which become inevitable the moment one begins seriously to think about the body or about sexuality, whether male or female – did not originate in the contemporary women's movement or in contemporary feminist thought; but the latter has evolved to encompass them and has infused them with a new urgency (…). (Suleiman, 1986: 9-10)

In Western culture, the system of representation has long been governed primarily by the 'male gaze'. The male gaze has acted to reproduce in art and literature its perception of sexual difference which, yet again, is seen through the lens of dichotomy where the distinction between male and female relies on whether the body in question is a subject (active) or an object (static/ passive). This distinction is made clear in Laura Mulvey's celebrated essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1989): [27]

> Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning. (Mulvey, 1989: 14)

The language employed by Mulvey is indicative of the dichotomous dominance-submission relationship that we have already seen as characteristic of phallocentric discourse. Mulvey's theory on the male gaze is based on her reading of Freud's theories of scopophilic pleasure and she claims that cinema prioritises scopophilic pleasure in order to cater primarily for a male spectator. According to Mulvey, male characters in cinema (the active characters) are filmed in a way that encourages identification with the male spectator who should see the male hero as a more perfect version of himself. This act of self-preservation or 'ego libido' is the first kind of scopophilic pleasure. The second is referred to as an 'instinctual drive', whereby the spectator finds pleasure in the separation of erotic identity of the subject from the object. Thus man finds pleasure in designating woman as the object. The same applies in literature, an example being the traditional distinction between poet and muse where the muse is the almost exclusively a static female whose role is defined by her role as the object of the male (poet's) gaze. Mulvey explains that "[i]n their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously

[27] Although my study is based on literature, this text and other influential texts on the role of male and female gazes are often conceived under the discipline of film studies. Laura Mulvey's text and others including E. Ann Kaplan's "Is the Gaze Male?" (1983) and Mary Anne Doane's "Film and the Masquerade*"* (1982) have nonetheless been widely applied to a range of cross-disciplinary studies including the study of literature.

looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote 'to-be-looked-at-ness'" (i*dem*: 18).

In representation, therefore, woman has become characterised by her position as object, relegated to a mere image, and locked into a static position. This position is, of course, reserved almost exclusively for women:

> According to the principles of the ruling ideology and the physical structures that back it up, the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification. Man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like. (*idem*: 19)

So, like the mind/ body dichotomy, the subject/ object dichotomy has also been rigidly adhered to in Western culture. This is particularly noteworthy if we consider the rules of censorship, not just in Portugal, but across the Western world and throughout history – there has been much less controversy over male-authored texts about the female body, yet when women writers take to describing or expressing desire for a male body in literature, it is called 'indecent' or 'pornographic'. Its use in cementing men in the position of subject and women as objects has meant that the male gaze has become a particular target of feminist theorists and of feminist literature and art which have attempted to reverse or subvert the male gaze, as has been explained by E. Ann Kaplan in "Is the Gaze Male?" (1983):

> This positioning of the two sex genders in representation clearly privileges the male (through mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism, which are male operations, and bcause his desire carries power/ action where woman's usually does not). However, as a result of the recent women's movement, women have been permitted in representation to assume (step into) the position defined as 'masculine' as long as the man then steps into her position, thus keeping the whole structure intact. (Kaplan, 1983: 42)

Reversing the male gaze by reverting the subject/ object positions is a technique employed by many women writers as a way of reversing the power politics involved in representation. One of the best examples of this trend amongst feminist writers is to be found in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* in the letter "O Corpo". In this prose-text, the male body is described in a way that completely reverses the power positions of the poet/muse, dominance/submission and subject/object relationships that are embodied by the male gaze. The text begins:

> Ali estava o seu corpo adormecido, aninhado no seu descanso, tão quieto, tão presente na luz amarelada, definindo-se por seu peso e por aquele estar quieto, todo tomado de luz, sem contorno que separasse corpo e luz (…). (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 175)

With no indication of the gender of the body described until the very end of the description, the major part of this text contain all the hallmarks of the male gaze that one would expect to see in a text by a male poet describing his female muse. For example, the body is asleep

["adormecido"] and therefore in a state of complete passivity in relation to the active gaze that sees and describes it. What's more, being asleep necessarily implies having closed eyes, thus the passive object of the gaze is denied a gaze of its own. Besides the lack of gaze, the muse described, being the muse and not the poet, is also denied a voice and movement, which is emphasised by the repeated use of the word quiet ["quieto"] four times in the first seven lines. The word quiet can simultaneously refer to silence and to stillness.

This lack of movement and voice recalls Mulvey's description of the female object in cinema: "her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (Mulvey, 1989: 19) So the fetishized women in cinema, like the body of "O Corpo", are static and outside of a narrative as such. The still-life description of the sleeping body ["corpo adormecido"] in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* resembles the close-up that halts the narrative of cinema. The body is frozen into an image by the gaze. When the Three Marias describe this body as being lit up by a yellow light ["tão presente na luz amarela"], they are heightening the sense of display or exhibitionism that is characteristic of the object of the gaze – in "O Corpo" it is almost as if the body is suspending and lit up in a kind of display case for inspection. The image of the male body lit up and static as if it were in a museum bears a striking resemblance to Mulvey's later description of the male gaze.

The way in which the descriptive eye of the text slowly and deliberately devours the male object, moving over each part of the body one by one, leaves the object at the complete mercy of the subject. The dynamics of the male gaze therefore is regulated by a specific power structure, and as we can see in "O Corpo", the subject of the gaze does not necessarily have to be male, but the relationship between subject and object remains distinctly of a masculine nature. The way that this kind of feminist appropriation of the gaze resembles and recreates the power structures of the male gaze has been highlighted by Kaplan as she questions the term 'male gaze', proposing instead the use of the term 'masculine':

> We have thus arrived at a point where we must question the necessity for the dominance-submission structure. The gaze is not necessarily male (literally), but to own and activate the gaze, given our language and the structure of the unconscious, is to be in the 'masculine' position. (Kaplan, 1983: 42)

Here, Kaplan reminds us of Kristeva's definition of gender that relies upon one's position within discourse rather than one's biological sex as such, as is made clear in Kristeva's 1981 interview: "Women's practice can only be negative for in opposition to that which exists, to say that 'this is not it' and 'it is not yet'. What I mean by 'woman' is that which is not

represented, that which is unspoken, that which is left out of namings and ideologies" (Kristeva, 1981: 166).

Thus, according to Kaplan (and Kristeva's definition of gender), substituting the male sex with the female sex in the male gaze does not actually change the gendered positions and power structures that patriarchal discourse relies upon. Gender as defined by the dominance-submission structure referred to by Kaplan is still present in the actions or state of being that is implied by gendered activity (masculine/ feminine) rather than sexed (male/ female). The maintenance of the power structure is made especially clear in "O Corpo". For example, when the sex of the body is finally revealed at the end of the text:

> (…) nas coxas, nas pernas, entre as coxas o seu sexo, os dois pequenos pomos cuja firmeza se desenha na pele branda e a corola recolhida de seu pénis adormecido. (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 176)

Here, it is clear that the dominant position has been removed from the male character. The masculine symbol of power, the erect penis,[28] is diminished in this description by being described as asleep ["adormecido"] and with small apples ["pequenos pomos"] – thus the power still lies with the subject of the gaze. The images provoked by these descriptions can also be seen as related to femininity, and in particular symbols of femininity that have been mythologised in Western culture such as sleeping beauty or Eve's apple. The fact that language often equated with the feminine is still used by the object of the gaze – the submission part of the dominance/ submission dichotomy – shows that the dynamics have not been changed in this scene. Power is still, therefore, described in masculine terms and the dominant position, whilst being a female authorial voice, remains masculine, and the submissive position, whilst being male, is described using feminine terms and images. So, despite the reversal of positions, this text does little to actually change the rules of representation through the male gaze, just as in reality the male striptease or male sex industry does little to alter the primacy of the dominance-submission structure, which is precisely the example used by Mary Anne Doane in "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator" (1982):

> The male striptease, the gigolo – both inevitably signify the mechanism of reversal itself, constituting themselves as aberrations whose acknowledgement simply reinforces the dominant system of aligning sexual difference with a subject/ object dichotomy. And an

[28] Here, it is worth remembering the words of Luce Irigaray on the subject: "The more or less exclusive – and highly anxious – attention paid to erection in Western sexuality proves to what extent the imaginary that governs it is foreign to the feminine. For the most part, this sexuality offers nothing but imperatives dictated by male rivalry: the 'strongest' being the one who has the best 'hard-on,' the longest, the biggest, the stiffest penis, or even the one who 'pees the farthest'" (Irigaray, 1985b: 24-25).

> essential attribute of that dominant system is the matching of male subjectivity with the agency of the look. (Doane, 1982: 98)

The irrelevance of the physical sex of the body described to the construction of gender in the gender positions of dominance and submission is made especially clear in this text by the fact that there is no reference to the sex of the body until the very end. Instead it is the positioning of gaze (looker) and object (looked-at) that defines the body. This text, therefore, is structured so as to call into question the validity of the male gaze and of the assumption that 'male' must necessarily be the dominant party.[29] According to Kaplan and Doane's theories, therefore, even though "O Corpo" could be described as an example of the female gaze, it cannot be described as 'feminine' as it still relies on a distinctly masculine concept of gaze and representation that relies on the dichotomous pairs of dominance/ submission and subject/ object.

The incompatibility of the male gaze with femininity is due to the masculine concept of representation that, just as Mulvey's description of the scopophilic male gaze, relies on vision and the necessary distance between the subject and object that vision requires. In the male gaze and in the Three Marias' female gaze in "O Corpo" there is a distance between the speaking, voyeuristic subject and the remote, looked-at object because it is this distance that masculine representation and masculine desire relies upon. Note, for example the use of the word "Ali" [there] at the beginning of the text – "Ali estava o seu corpo adormecido" (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 175) – which establishes a degree of distance between the subject and the object from the off-set. The relationship with the body created by the male gaze is defined by the distance between the subject and the object. A feminine relationship with the body, however, is defined by proximity – on the constant touching of itself, as we saw in Irigaray's *This Sex Which Is Not One* in Chapter One. Irigaray goes on to explain in the interview "Women's Exile" (1977) the chasm that lies between traditional representation and femininity:

> The masculine can partly look at itself, speculate about itself, represent itself and describe itself for what it is, whilst the feminine can try to speak to itself through a new language, but cannot describe itself from outside or in formal terms except by identifying itself with the masculine, thus by losing itself. (Irigaray, 1977: 65)

[29] Placing the female in the position of the male gaze would have been seen as scandalous at the time, and no doubt played a part in the censor's designation of the text as 'pornographic'. Whereas descriptions of female nudity were generally accepted as part of art and literature (written by men) by the authorities, when the male naked body is described or pictured, it was often targeted by censorship as immoral or pornographic. 'Pornography' was also the term used to justify the censorship and arrest of the Three Marias following the publication of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* with the Portuguese state citing "conteúdo insanavelmente pornográfico e atentatório da moral pública" as justification for trial. For further information on the trial of the Three Marias and the reception of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* see the chapter "Da «exposição de meninas na roda»: A recepção em Portugal de *Novas Cartas Portuguesas"* by Ana Luísa Amaral e Marinela Freitas in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas: Entre Portugal e o Mundo* (2014).

So, in order to accurately portray the feminine, there must be a proximity, a touching, that would negate the necessity for a separate subject and an object whose relationship to each other relies on distance.

These theories, however, whilst providing important insight into the dynamics of gender/sex relations in gaze theory, neglect to take into account the fact that role-reversal can be an extremely effective tactic for expressing and creating a space for female desire in literature. In changing the representational dynamics of the image in "O Corpo", the Three Marias introduce a female gaze that is not based solely on the proximity or distance that is so crucial to Kaplan's definition of femininity, but rather it is based on the creation of a desiring female subject that does not exist in the male gaze. This female gaze, despite what Kaplan and Doane see as limitations, transgresses the restrictions of masculine representation and is, in fact, an important feminist strategy for challenging the relations of power in representation. Thinking in terms of Foucault's definition of a docile body, the role-reversal used in "O Corpo" introduces a kind of surveillance and docility of the male body which brings into question the dynamics of power in a social context as well as a representational context.

In feminist literature, including *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the works of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta, however, there is also evidence of the creation of alternative forms of representation that do more closely correspond to the definitions of the female gaze that we have already seen in the works of Kaplan, Mulvey and Doane. As phallocentric concepts of representation are constructed solely in the interest of a male spectator, an important aspect of much feminist literature is appearance of the female spectator. Doane explains the options for finding a position for the female spectator outside of the dominance/submission structure of phallocentric representation that actively denies a space for the female spectator (and thus a female gaze):

> [A position for the female spectator] is ultimately untenable because it lacks the attribute of distance (…). The entire elaboration of femininity as a closeness, a nearness, as present-to-itself is not the definition of an essence but the delineation of a *place* culturally assigned to the woman. Above and beyond a simple adoption of the masculine position (…), the female spectator is given two options: the masochism of over-identification or the narcissism entailed in becoming one's own object of desire, in assuming the image in the most radical way. (Doane, 1982: 108)

When Doane writes of the 'masochism of over-identification' she is referring to the tendency for so-called 'women's films' to be based around the 'family drama' where the woman often takes a self-sacrificing role and where the female spectator is expected to sympathise with the female protagonist and the punishment or ill treatment of the protagonist's body. In *Novas*

Cartas Portuguesas, we can see a similar masochistic tendency in written form with the documentation of different forms of violence that the female body is subjected to in a historic setting. In *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* the Three Marias have created a pan-historical identification of women's suffering and they have used this suffering to build solidarity amongst women and encourage women to stand up to the forces that oppress them. In "Literatura e Mundo em *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*: O Azulejo dos Tempos" (2013), Ana Luísa Amaral describes *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* as part poetic and part socio-philosophical in its effect:

> (…) mesmo quando dá a mostrar a sempre actual denúncia sobre as várias instâncias de discriminação dos excluídos e dos sem poder – sejam eles as mulheres, sejam eles os soldados de guerra colonial, a transitarem, entre trauma e sangue e vulnerabilidade, para o nosso tempo, sejam eles o próprio corpo do discurso. É por isso, um livro – epistolar, e também de poesia, de ensaio filosófico, de ficção – sobre direitos humanos, que denuncia o perigo das normas e das regras impostas pela cristalização de papéis e de lugares sociais, políticos, sexuais; um livro de revolta e contra o medo, reivindicando o direito a ter direitos. (Amaral, 2013: 11)

Thus, the Three Marias have used literature to bring to light the very real social oppression of women and the violence to which women are and have been submitted in Portugal. In raising consciousness of the historical suffering of women at the hands of a masculine system of oppression, the Three Marias were able to build an identification between the women suffering under the *Estado Novo* and the situation of women from as far back as the times of Mariana Alcoforado. It is for this reason that suffering (especially bodily suffering) becomes a symbol of female solidarity in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, and Mariana Alcoforado the symbol of feminine suffering around which this bond is created.

One recurring motif through which this unity is created in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* is the spilling of women's blood. Blood has long been a powerful symbol of femininity as it recalls menstrual blood and motherhood, but feminist writers have in recent decades imbued the symbol of blood with further significance as a sign of women's unity. Germaine Greer, for example, in *The Female Eunuch* (1970), encourages women to see menstrual blood as a symbol of their emancipation, stating that acceptance and pride in menstruation is crucial in seeing oneself as truly liberated, even going so far as to encourage women to taste their own menstrual blood: "If you think you are emancipated, you might consider the idea of tasting your menstrual blood – if it makes you sick, you've a long way to go, baby" (Greer, 1970: 57). Irigaray also sees blood as a symbol of pure, ancient femininity, repeatedly referring to 'red blood' in her works, which is her term for a time before the distortion and appropriation of female relationships by patriarchal logic: "Culture, at least in its patriarchal form, thus effectively

prohibits and return to *red blood,* including that of the sexual arena" (Irigaray, 1985b: 192). Hélène Cixous, on the other hand, uses the motif of blood to explain feminine writing in *La Venue à L'Écriture* (1977) [*Coming to Writing*], as it can represent the shared bodily female experience that Cixous strives to achieve in writing:

> Writing is good: it's what never ends. The simplest, most secure other circulates inside me. Like blood: there's no lack of it. It can become impoverished. But you manufacture it and replenish it. In me is the word of blood, which will not cease before my end. (Cixous, 1991: 4-5)

Thus, for a present-day feminist reader of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* the motif of blood is a loaded one as a representation a shared bodily experience through writing, of the suffering of the female body, of acceptance and emancipation of the female body and of solidarity and unity amongst women.

In *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* one of the most striking images of blood is that of Soror Mariana – an image that simultaneously evokes suffering and resistance - namely in the descriptions of Mariana's bleeding in "Lamento de Mariana Alcoforado para Dona Brites" and "Carta de Mariana, sobrinha de Mariana Alcoforado, Deixada entre as Folhas do seu Diário, para Publicação após a sua Morte, à Guisa de Resposta a M. Antoine de Chamilly":

> Da morte teria tal alegria, que desconfiança tenho não a conseguir tão cedo, mesmo quando a febre a jorros me corre das entranhas e em grandes haustos fico, banhada no sangue de minhas partes vindo. Inútil sinal de mim, marca de pecado, de mal: sinal de gosto, de gozo… tudo então seria tão bem-vindo! (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 72)

> (…) e imaginação foram para vós todas as mezinhas preparadas por D. Brites, que eu ingeri, e minhas cólicas, e meus suores frios, e meus excrementos cheirando a podre, e meus desmaios, e finalmente esta onda de sangue sem fim, vindo do medo e da fraqueza e das noites de vigília e em tudo isso se prolongando sem fim, cavaleiro, que pensei então ser meu corpo todo que se desfazia e esvaziava; jurei que vosso sangue pagaria o meu. (*idem*: 123)

The waves of blood described in these two letters represent the physical, bodily suffering of women at the hands of men and the social norms and codes created by a patriarchal society that force women into feeling shame. The aura of shame that encircles the female body[30] in Portuguese (and indeed Western) society is demonstrated by Mariana's description of her bleeding as the mark of sin and a sign of her illicit sexual pleasure ["marca de pecado, de mal: sinal de gosto, de gozo"]. In these scenes of suffering, the physical source of the bleeding is not made explicit, but rather it is the suffering itself that is the focus. The sources of the blood could be read as either menstruation or the blood of abortion as there is a reference not only to the spilling of Mariana's blood, but also to the spilling of the Cavalier's blood ["jurei que vosso

[30] The theme of menstruation in terms of social taboo will be explored more completely in Chapter Four.

sangue pagaria o meu"] and also the link made between Mariana's bloody suffering, and her 'sin' and 'pleasure'.

The prevailing social view of abortion in Portugal at the time, propagated by a fiercely patriarchal and Catholic society and value-system, is more directly criticised in "Extractos do Diário de Ana Maria, Descendente Directa da Sobrinha de D. Maria Ana, e Nascida em 1940" and "Texto de Honra ou de Interrogar, Escrito por uma Mulher de Nome Joana". The former presents a series of vivid and gruesome images that detail the lengths to which a woman is forced to go in order to achieve an abortion as a direct result of a society that illegitimises sex and motherhood outside of wedlock yet denies women a safe method of abortion by illegalising the act.

> E morreu, por fazer um aborto com um pé de salsa, morreu de septicemia, a mulher-a-dias que limpava o escritório onde trabalho, e soube depois, pela sua colega, que era o seu vigésimo terceiro aborto. E contou-me, há anos, uma amiga minha, médica, que no banco do hospital eram tratadas com desprezo as mulheres que entravam com os seus úteros furados, rotos, escangalhados por tentativas de abortos caseiros, com agulhas de tricot, paus, talos de couves, tudo o que de penetrante e contundente estivesse à mão, e que lhes eram feitas raspagens do útero a frio, sem anestesia, e com gosto sádico, «para elas aprenderem». (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 205)

"Texto de Honra ou de Interrogar, Escrito por uma Mulher de Nome Joana", however, provides a consideration of the link between the legal situation of a number of countries (including Portugal) in comparison to the reality. In this letter, the verdict on Portugal is damning and the tone of the authorial voice sharply condemns the status of abortion in Portugal.[31]

> E visto que também em Portugal o aborto é ilegal (não lutando contra isso a mulher, aqui sempre passiva) e o conhecimento do aborto escamoteado da informação das pessoas que fingem entretanto ignorar o que ignorar já não se pode… (*idem:* 248)

In *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* however, the Three Marias go further than to simply criticise the legal status of abortion and lament the widespread suffering of women; they also employ the blood of abortion as a symbol of resistance. The blood spilled during abortion can also be seen as a form of bodily resistance against a society that forces women to follow phallocentric codes that determine when pregnancy or sexual relations should be permitted for women and where they shouldn't. In leaving Mariana childless by choice, and by having her abort her baby, the Three Marias subvert the structures of reproduction and of the continuation of male lineage in order to create a separate, non-linear female genealogy. This rejection of the male blood-line

[31] For further reading on the subject, Manuela Tavares has written extensively on the political and social situation of abortion in Portugal and of its decriminalisation, presenting a detailed consideration of feminist discourse on abortion (Tavares, 2011: 272-284).

is explained by Hilary Owen and Claudia Pazos Alonso in their introduction to *Antigone's Daughters?* (2011):

> The Three Marias's reinvented 'Marianas' reject the women's role as the warrior's repose, the bearer of male heirs, the matrix of genealogical continuity which allows man to elude the finite nature of his own existence. (Owen/ Pazos Alonso, 2011: 28)

When Mariana's niece states "sangue de aborto não é sangue vertido pelo rei, é sempre vertido contra vós todos" (Barreno, Horta, Costa, 2014: 123), it becomes clear that the abortion of Mariana's child and the blood spilled in the process is to be read as a form of rebellion against the 'man-to-man' linear structure of society. It is a sign of resistance against the patriarchal business-like transactions of marriage and of child-bearing where men have 'ownership' over all those that continue their name and carry their bloodline. The fact that society, and discourse, is structured according to these male-to-male transactions is explained by Irigaray in "Women on the Market*",* from the collection of essays *This Sex Which is Not One,* in which she describes Western society's reliance upon male-to-male transactions as a 'ho(m)mo-sexual monopoly':

> (…) all the systems of exchange that organize patriarchal societies and all the modalities of productive work that are recognized, valued, and rewarded in these societies are men's business. The production of women, signs, and commodities is always referred back to men (when a man buys a girl, he 'pays' the father or the brother, not the mother…), and they always pass from one man to another, from one group of men to another. (Irigaray, 1985b: 171)

Thus the breaking of the bloodline, the spilling of the Cavalier's (and Mariana's) blood in the process of abortion, is an act of resistance on behalf of all women, against all men, but in order to achieve this act of resistance, Mariana must undergo her share of suffering. The masochistic over-identification of Doane's female spectator relies on a certain amount of suffering and upon the identification of Mariana as 'everywoman' in order to function, but the Three Marias have gone further than Doane's solution by using a symbol of suffering to simultaneously evoke resistance. The project of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* can, therefore, almost be seen as a study of women's suffering *and* of women's resistance where the identification of the female spectator with the suffering of the 'Marianas' is the Three Marias' answer to the question of the male gaze and also the key to understanding their conceptualisation of a Portuguese women's resistance. The masochistic over-identification with the suffering female characters, once achieved, in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* has led to an ability to use the collective suffering of women as a base for the resistance against and the subversion of the male forces that oppress them – the blood spilled in abortion being just one example of this.

So what of Doane's other alternative to the adoption of the male gaze? – 'the narcissism entailed in becoming one's own object of desire'. This tactic negates the distance between the

subject and the object that is necessary in the male gaze by uniting the subject and the object and removing the male gazing-subject from the equation. A prime example of this approach to representation is Maria Teresa Horta's collection *Minha Senhora de Mim* (1971).

This collection is a re-working of a specific form of medieval troubadour poetry, the *cantigas de amigo* in which the male poet takes on a female character's expression of love. The *cantigas de amigo* were seen to represent the other side of the *cantigas de amor* which detailed the Troubadour's seduction of the woman. The roles in the *cantigas de amor* are defined as the 'servidor' (the poet or lyrical subject) and the 'senhor' (the woman evoked by the lyrical subject – the muse). Despite adopting a supposed 'female voice' in the *cantiga de amigo,* however the Troubadours do not entirely remove the distance between the 'servidor' and the 'senhor' as the poems still relied heavily on the external eroticisation of the female body. Thus, the emotions of love and the eroticism are still exteriorised and materialised onto the female body as is characteristic of the male gaze.

In *Minha Senhora de Mim,* Maria Teresa Horta changes the dynamics of the subject-object relationship through a real female voice that un-writes the female-body-as-object in the original Troubadour poetry. Horta achieves this by merging the lyrical voice with the female body, as is made clear in the title of the collection where 'minha senhor' (the traditional evocation of the muse-woman in troubadour poetry) is replaced by 'minha senhora de mim' which emphasises the unity (and therefore the negation) of the subject and object. The effect of this is to add depth to the woman and eventually invalidate the phallocentric system of representation that relegates woman to a mere image and object, rewriting the traditional role of the female body in literature and art. Monica Sant'Anna in her essay "A Censura à Escrita Feminina em Portugal, à Maneira de Ilustração" (2009) in her description of *Minha Senhora de Mim* highlights the role of excessive or redudant pronouns in creating a strong sense of a female voice in order to distance her poetic voice from that of the Troubadours':

> Assim, vemos que a 'corporização' do texto/ linguagem enumera o espaço do desejo e da escrita, num discurso de ruptura com a tradição literária hegemonicamente masculina, tem continuidade no livro *Minha Senhora de mim,* quando a autora tenta atualizar o passado literário medieval e, numa referencia explícita, retoma as Cantigas de Amigo, agora numa verdadeira voz feminina, realçada pela força do uso de pronomes em primeira pessoa, de forma redundante, como se este mecanismo desse a força da voz feminina dessa senhora. (Sant'Anna, M., 2009: 15-16)

This gives a certain strength and exertion to the feminine voice and makes the poetry seem even more determinedly deviant from the original *cantigas de amigo.* In many of the poems though, what really seems to demonstrate change and distance from the traditional

representation of the female body is the change from a static image, to an actively moving erotic body.

Images of the female-body-as-object according to the male gaze separate woman from her sexuality by creating a sexuality that is conferred onto the female body by the male spectator – just as the 'senhor' in *cantigas de amigo* is defined by the exteriorised eroticism that comes from her position as love or lover of a man. This act of separating woman from her sexuality and creating a purely exterior façade of eroticism is what freezes her as an image or object, rendering her less of a threat according to Sigmund Freud's castration complex. Women, according to Freud's psychoanalytic theory, are threatening to men because they engender the threat of castration.[32] The male gaze, according to Mulvey, counteracts this threat by creating an avenue of escape from castration anxiety via

> (…) complete disavowal of castration by the substitution of a fetish object or turning the represented figure itself into a fetish so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous (hence over-valuation, the cult of the female star). This second avenue, fetishistic scopophilia, builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself. (Mulvey, 1989: 20)

Thus, the static image of a woman from which the male spectator takes pleasure is based on exteriority – where eroticism is projected onto the exterior of the woman's body specifically to create a fetish of the female-body-as-image, hence removing the threat of castration. By uniting the subject and the object in *Minha Senhora de Mim*, Maria Teresa Horta allows access to the interior eroticism of the female body instead of just the exterior image of eroticism projected onto the body by the male gaze. This technique has the double effect of creating a new kind of representation that bypasses the male gaze and also subverting the dichotomous thinking that we saw in Chapter One by bringing together the exterior and interior and therefore the body and the mind.

Whilst her representation of the female body remains erotic, she renders the fetishisation of the female body impossible. One of the techniques that Horta uses to achieve this is by subverting the aspects of the *cantigas de amigo* that are used to create exterior, materialist definitions of femininity and eroticism. In "Segredo", one of the most well-known poems of the collection, she rejects the materialism of the *cantigas de amigo* by re-inscribing the objects

[32] In the essay "The dissolution of the Oedipus complex" (1924), Freud states that "The observation which finally breaks down his unbelief [in the threat of castration] is the sight of the female genitals. Sooner or later the child, who is so proud of his possession of a penis, has a view of the genital region of a little girl, and cannot help being convinced of the absence of a penis in a creature who is so like himself. With this, the loss of his own penis becomes imaginable, and the threat of castration takes its deferred effect" (Freud, 1961: 175-176).

traditionally used to adorn the female protagonists as symbols of their femininity, namely the 'vestido', 'cortinados', 'anel', 'novelo' and 'roca de fiar', with a sense of movement and active eroticism:

SEGREDO

Não contes do meu
vestido
que tiro pela cabeça

Nem que corro os
cortinados
para uma sombra mais espessa

Deixa que feche o anel
em redor do teu pescoço

Com as minhas longas
pernas
e a sombra do teu poço

Não contes do meu
novelo
nem da roca de fiar

Nem o que faço
com eles
a fim de te ouvir gritar

(Horta, 2009: 342)

In "Segredo" the previously static objects used to represent femininity are wielded by the female body for her own means. Instead of being a static image with objects placed on or around her, the female body is one in movement that, in fact, dominates not only the objects but her sexual partner. This poem clearly places the woman in the dominant subject position as she manipulates the objects that were previously used against her. The woman has clearly become the subject of the action that occurs in this poem ("meu/ vestido/ que tiro", "corro os/ cortinados", "o que faço/ com eles/ a fim de te ouvir gritar"). Yet, the body remains eroticised ("vestido/ que tiro pela cabeça", "as minhas longas/ pernas") and, with the emphasis on the female erotic body, it is clear that there has not been a simple substitution of the male gaze. Unlike "O Corpo" in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* where the masculine definition of gaze is maintained and the male and female roles are merely switched, in this poem there is still a focus on the erotic female body, only there is no 'subject/object' opposition. This allows Maria Teresa Horta to destabilise the terms of traditional patriarchal representation.

As, however, phallocentric representation has become ingrained in the Western mind-set, there is also significant work to be done in un-doing the aspects of representation that have come to

be fixed. Ana Luísa Amaral explains how the fact that the female lyrical voice has taken the subject position is not the only way in which the relationships of power in representation have been altered as the female voice changes the dynamics of the representation of the whole scene and does not simply objectify a masculine body instead of a feminine one. In particular, Amaral highlights the role of this female lyrical voice in re-writing the female body (the focus of the poem) and the dynamics of a sexual encounter:

> Revertem-se os papéis sexuais e sociais e o sujeito lírico transforma-se em encenador, e já não objecto de encenação, de um encontro sexual (…) Assim se des-diz, se desmonta, se des-nomeia. E se constroem novas imagens do corpo.[33] (Amaral, 2003: 110)

The act of re-naming is a task that many have undertaken in the search for a more feminine form of representation to undermine the static definitions of femininity of phallocentric codes. In the above cited text, Amaral goes on to reference Dale Spender who, in *Man-Made Language* (1980), pinpoints the use of language and of naming as a structure for the way in which the world is perceived as well as represented. This structure, according to Spender, is inherently sexist as it is men (the patriarchy) who have historically determined the categories according to which knowledge and the world is structured.

> The group which has the power to ordain the structure of language, thought, and reality has the potential to create a world in which they are the central figures, while those who are not of their group are peripheral and therefore may be exploited. (…) Males, as the dominant group, have produced language, thought, and reality. Historically it has been the structures, the categories, and the meanings which have been invented by males (…). In this process women have played little or no part. (Spender, 1985: 142)

Therefore, what Maria Teresa Horta has accomplished in "Segredo", using the symbols that have been categorised by the patriarchy as representative of femininity ("anel", "novelo", "vestido", "roca de fiar") is really quite revolutionary. In choosing a literary form and a set of objects that, together, make it impossible to ignore their association as traditional objects of femininity, Horta has directly subverted the categorisation or naming of the female body. These objects, representative of domestic actions and marriage, had been used as a superficial mask by the male gaze in order to project man's subjective view of what it is to be female onto the female body. But here, these objects that symbolise femininity under phallocentric codes, have been given a new meaning in association with an active female body that employs these object

[33] In this text, Amaral places an emphasis on the role of women in sexual encounters. This is a significant point to make when discussing this poem and the significance of the active or passive role during sex will be returned to in Part Two of my thesis. It is also important to note here, that Ana Luísa Amaral launched her own career as a poet with the publication of her book *Minha Senhora de Quê* in 1990 which enters into direct dialogue with Maria Teresa Horta's *Minha Senhora de Mim.*

in her actions upon the male sexual partner. The objects gain new meanings as symbols and as words in their association with an eroticised, active female body.

Another example of a symbol that Maria Teresa Horta re-inscribes into an eroticism based on the female body is blood. Whereas in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* blood was used as a motif for feminine unity based on connotations of suffering, Maria Teresa Horta uses blood in her collection *Rosa Sangrenta* (1987) in a process that simultaneously re-names and resituates menstruation as a part of an active and erotic female body. Although I will return in more detail to the question of menstruation in Chapter Four of this thesis, I would just like to highlight two stanzas from the poem "As Mulheres" which underline the effect of the creation of new symbols of feminine unity and strength in the face of the patriarchy:

> (…)
> modificam os actos
> dos homens e da história
>
> Fervem os seus remédios
> feitos
> com o mênstruo
> (…)
>
> (Horta, 2009: 604-605)

Here, like in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* blood is used as a symbol of feminine unity against the patriarchy. The menstrual blood of this poem acts in much the same way as the blood spilled against men described by the Three Marias ["não é sangue vertido pelo rei, é sempre vertido contra vós todos" (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 123)]. The language used by Maria Teresa Horta and the Three Marias to invoke new, positive symbols of feminine solidarity through blood, in both cases, has acted as a weapon against the male-dominated process of naming and of writing history in Western culture to open up Western discourse to the world of feminine experience.

The link between language and our understanding of the world, and in particular of the human body, is integral to the project of deconstructing phallocentric conceptions of the body in order to leave room for a broader understanding of the body and its place in the world. The relationship between language/ text and the body is explored in even more depth in the work of Luiza Neto Jorge who uses this relationship to question the limits of representation. Rosa Maria Martelo in "Corpo, Enunciação e Identidade na Poesia de Luiza Neto Jorge" (2001) states that: "Toda a escrita de Luiza Neto Jorge se constrói sobre um jogo de velocidades intensivas que inscreve o corpo na linguagem. É uma educação pelo corpo, visando a

sabotagem do mundo de evidências carregado pela língua" (Martelo, 2001: 47). What Martelo refers to as the 'sabotage' of the world created by language is a key distinguishing feature of Neto Jorge's poetry where her innovative use of language acts to re-name the body and create a new world of understanding through a new form of representation based on the body. In her work, Luiza Neto Jorge presents the reader with an infinitely more complex human body than can possibly be expressed by the simplistic binarity of the male gaze, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, or by the patriarchal system of representation and language, as described by Spender, in which reality is neatly separated into rigid categories.

Luiza Neto Jorge, despite exploring many themes in her poetry, always has as the central motif the body and the relationship between the human body and the body of words. She uses the central motif of the body as a focus for her criticism of existing forms of representation from which stem the body's relationship with the subject, with the other, with the world and with language. In her work, the Portuguese poet produces a kind of chaos of multiple and contradictory representations and identities that lead us to question the limits of language and the ability of language to 'name' which she perceived as limiting our knowledge or understanding of the world.

In "O Poema", from the book *Terra Imóvel* (1964), Neto Jorge links language to creation and definition using the motif of the body:

O POEMA

I

Esclarecendo que o poema
é um duelo agudíssimo
quero eu dizer um dedo
agudíssimo claro
apontado ao coração do homem

falo
com uma agulha de sangue
a coser-me todo o corpo
à garganta

e a esta terra imóvel
onde já a minha sombra
é um traço de alarme

II

Piso do poema
chão de areia

Digo na maneira
mais crua e mais
intensa

de medir o poema
pela medida inteira

o poema em milímetro
de madeira

ou apodrece o poema
ou se ateia

ou se despedaça
a mão ateia

ou cinco seis astros
se percorre

antes que o deserto
mate a fome

(Jorge, 2001: 57)

In the second stanza, Luiza Neto Jorge blurs the lines between the subject and the creation, and between the body of the subject and the body of the text. The subject is speaking itself. The body of words is encroaching upon, and plays a part in the creation of the body of the subject and *vice versa*. This stanza highlights the body as transgressor, and the ability of the body (whether human or of words) to transgress the limits imposed upon it and to become more than itself. The key to this ability to surpass limits is in the eroticisation of the body of word and of writing itself.[34]

Whereas Maria Teresa Horta eroticises the physical female body in order to give it movement and break free from the static position of the female-body-as-object of the male gaze, Luiza Neto Jorge eroticises the poem as a body. In doing this, the poem becomes an individual active in space and time and therefore capable of breaking boundaries and of appealing for freedom itself. Very much linked to the state of political oppression in Portugal and to the oppression of women and the female body, the body of the poem situates itself historically in an attempt to free itself from the restrictions of the subject. The subject of the poem (which, as we can see in "O Poema", is inseparable from the writing itself) seeks to break the boundaries and limits that restricts it through innovation in language, which is therefore also social innovation. If language controls our reality, then innovation in language can change our reality.

[34] The eroticism of the body of word in the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge will be explored in more depth in Part Two of this study.

That is not to say, of course, that the liberating process of speaking the body is an easy one. Like the suffering of Mariana Alcoforado in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, there is a process of suffering undergone by the female voice and the female body that plays a significant role in their plight for liberation. Once again, the motif of blood emerges as a symbol simultaneously of oppression and of resistance. The image of a needle sewing a body can not only be read as a symbol for the creative powers of language, naming and discourse, but also as an example of the violence with which women have been treated under phallocentric systems of representation. Firstly, this image underlines the sheer violence inherent in the process of shaping and deforming the female body to fit phallocentric concepts of representation. And secondly, the act of sewing right up to the throat shows how the female subject has been so violently prevented from speaking because of a system that forces and violently silences her into an object position. The process of speaking the body and breaking out of existing forms of representation is, therefore, a painful one for women. Women must speak, write or create with their own blood as a testament to their historical suffering, literally using their bodies as a vehicle in their resistance and rebellion against patriarchal representation and social rule.

The poem "O Corpo Insurrecto" from the section *Os Corpos Vestidos* of the book *Terra Imóvel* explicitly utilises the body as a form of rebellion against the restrictions of representation.[35] The body of "O Corpo Insurrecto", as insurgent, is imbued with destructive and creative force as it is used to destroy the limits of patriarchal representation and create a new perception of the body as transgressor of limits. First, Luiza Neto Jorge negates the flat, one dimensional patriarchal representation (such as the male gaze) by blurring the lines between exterior and interior, by presenting to the reader a body that is in constant flux as the outside world permeates the body, and the body permeates the outside world. In the first stanza, for example, the body "Consome-se, combustível,/ no sexo, boca e recto." (Jorge, 2001: 79). Here, Luiza Neto Jorge chooses to highlight the three principal bodily entrance and exit sites – the three principal sites where exchange between the interior and the exterior take place ["sexo, boca e recto"].

Furthermore, by describing a body that consumes itself ["consome-se"], Luiza Neto Jorge reinforces the image of an entity that is at once interior and exterior – think of the snake that swallows its tail, for example – thus demonstrating that the dichotomous categorisation of reality is limited in its ability to truly represent something so transgressive. This striking image

[35] I say 'explicitly' because the title itself describes the body as insurgent.

and the transgression of the boundaries between exterior and interior calls into question the role of the subject and of the subject/ object split in patriarchal representation. Furthermore, the term "combustível" connotes destruction, fire, and a state of change, underlining the power of the body to surpass its limits as a rebellious force and the creative force of this transgression and the ability for the body to act as an instrument for change.

In the third stanza Luiza Neto Jorge describes the body using language associated with water for a similar effect:

> (…)
> as glândulas, esponjas
> que os corpos apoiam,
> zonas aquáticas
> onde os órgãos boiam.
> (…)
>
> (*ibidem*)

Just as fire has been used to evoke an image of change, so water is used to express a fluidity in the body. The sponge in particular connotes permeability and the transition of exterior to interior, and the aquatic zones where organs float ["zonas aquáticas/ onde os órgãos boiam"] reveal a constant movement and flowing. Water and fire are, obviously, opposing images and the ability for the body (of text or human) to encompass both opposites nullifies the polarity of traditional representation and dichotomous thinking. "O Corpo Insurrecto" is filled to the brim with similarly contradictory pairs, for example creation and destruction ["combustível"/ "ardida" *versus* "ovo"/ "solar"], sacred and human ["sendo um corpo humano/ sendo outro mais alto"], or life and death ["pulmões"/ "respiração"/ "ovo" *versus* "morte"/ "mortalmente"/ "podre"]. In *Um corpo escrevente* (2000), José Ricardo Nunes explains the role of the body in Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry, and its flexibility in terms of representation:

> Ora, na poesia de Luiza Neto Jorge verifica-se que o corpo é representado como algo de fluido, desarticulado, deformado. O corpo, como um camaleão, revela-se sempre outro e furta-se a qualquer apreensão que não seja parcelar. É um corpo que se repartiu, que está desagregado, que não tem, por assim dizer, ossatura; é um corpo infinitamente divisível e cujos componentes podem livremente ser usados para produzir novas formas. (Nunes, 2000: 26)

Hence the body becomes a tool for the creation of a freer form of representation, as opposed to the body that is restricted in its representation, such as the 'dressed body' ["o corpo vestido"] that we saw in Chapter One. Furthermore, the way in which the body represents not only the subject but also the text in Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry not only deconstructs our conception of the body by creating a broader field of understanding, but also specifically targets the discursive elements that govern representation.

Dale Spender states that "Once certain categories are constructed within the language, we proceed to organize the world according to those categories" (Spender in Cameron, 1998: 96), but Luiza Neto Jorge shows us in her poetry that this is not the only way of perceiving the world. Employing multiple and contradictory representations, she shows that both language and the body need not be limited by patriarchal binary categorisations but can occupy what Nunes calls "um espaço com aberturas (…) num precário equilíbrio, entre um interior e um exterior" (Nunes, 2000: 27). In this manner, Luiza Neto Jorge invalidates the organisation of the world according to categories that have been created by the dominant patriarchal language and discourse. She challenges the consequent restriction of our understanding of the world that denies us a myriad of possibilities, just as the oppressive dictatorship in Portugal created a society that is rigidly categorised to restrict the movement and intellectual freedom of the people.

Luiza Neto Jorge's approach to resisting oppression via the language and knowledge-basis that are at the root of Western representation lies in contrast with the seemingly more violent eroticism and rebellious baring of the female body in the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta and in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*. Each of the authors present a certain weaponisation of the body, yet Luiza Neto Jorge employs the body as a form of resistance against repression via the innovation of language and of meaning, creating a more liberal form of expression that subverts the restrictions of language and representation as an antidote to the atmosphere of oppression in the *Estado Novo.* Maria Teresa Horta and *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* on the other hand, engage more directly with the social and political ramifications of the discursive and linguistic structures targeted in Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry. Horta's poetry and *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* enter into direct criticism and subversion of women's social subjugation (no doubt the cause of their falling foul to censorship), whilst Luiza Neto Jorge's (still powerful) resistance aims at a broader change in Western perception and discourse – as is also claimed by Nunes: "ela procede menos a uma denúncia aberta do que a uma desconstrução dos discursos repressivos" (*idem*: 44).

The distinction between Luiza Neto Jorge's resistance and that of Maria Teresa Horta and the Three Marias is clear, but what also becomes apparent is that the stances taken on representation in these three cases are also very different. Maria Teresa Horta subverts the passive and static women depicted (or created) by the male gaze in Portuguese literature by creating an actively erotic female body that uses the traditional, patriarchal symbols of femininity to change the status of women in literature. In doing this, Horta is directly criticising

the male gaze – a more concrete example of male dominance over language and representation that has clear links to women's social subjugation – and subsequently uses her criticism to empower and praise the female erotic body in movement, whilst simultaneously creating a positive space for the desiring feminine subject. This tactic was, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, identified by Doane as a form of narcissism that can be used to counteract and rebel against the male gaze.

Novas Cartas Portuguesas similarly focusses on the social and political consequences of male representation. In the first example given in this chapter, we saw how the Three Marias called into question the validity of the male gaze by substitution – placing the female in the masculine position of the gaze and the male in the feminine position of 'to-be-looked-at-ness'. Like "Segredo", "O Corpo" targets the male gaze as an example of women's social victimisation. However, whilst Maria Teresa Horta's narcissistic technique provides an adequate space for the female spectator, Kaplan has shown how the simple substitution of male and female positions cannot realistically subvert the masculine dominance/ submission structure that created the male gaze. "O Corpo", therefore, can call into question and challenge the validity of the male gaze, but does not on its own provide a viable alternative that would provide for the female spectator. What it does do, however, is make room in representation for the female desiring body as a subject. Although Kaplan and Doane do not see this technique as the creation of an accurate 'feminine' gaze, it does provide a kind of 'female gaze' that acts as a viable challenge to the male gaze and to masculine domination in representation and is an effective feminist technique for undoing and resisting the objectification of women in Western representation.

Another technique that was identifiable in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* is that of a form of masochistic over-identification that works by finding a specific space in the text for a female spectator. The whole project of documenting and creating a history (herstory?) of female suffering in Portugal works because of the need for women to find solidarity in their victimisation. The 'masochistic over-identification' employed by the Three Marias provides a space for the female spectator outside of the parameters of the male gaze and the dominance/ submission paradigm that this necessitates and also leaves room for the significant politicisation of women's suffering. In this chapter we saw the way in which the theme of abortion had been used to show suffering at the hands of the patriarchy (allowing for the

identification of the female spectator) and also became a source of solidarity and eventually bodily resistance against patriarchal structures.[36]

The poetry of Maria Teresa Horta and *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, therefore, use methods of representation similar to those proposed by Doane as alternatives to the male gaze; methods that escape the dominance/ submission and subject/ object dichotomies and provide alternative paradigms through which to perceive the world. Luiza Neto Jorge's approach to representation, however, whilst also centred on the body, does not specifically seek a space for a female spectator but rather strives for a more fluid and liberal subject position that is articulated by the breaking-down of boundaries and limits that have for so long structured Western perception. So, whilst Luiza Neto Jorge targets the root of the system of representation as it has come to be understood in Western culture, Maria Teresa Horta and the Three Marias target a more specific aspect of representation – the male gaze – which has developed in art and literature as a consequence of the system of representation targeted by Luiza Neto Jorge.

What these authors do share, however, is the rebellious act of breaking the rules of representation that have been created by the patriarchal dominance. For all of these texts, too, the site of rebellion is the body. The body has been singled out as the entity most restricted and 'boxed in' by traditional representation and thus is the primary site for the innovation of representation, whether this be a subversion of the static female-body-as-object or through the complete innovation of our definition of the body. The poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta and *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* therefore act as a resistance to the representational control over the body, simultaneously revolutionising the way the body is represented and criticising the rigidity of patriarchal structures of oppression in Portugal.

[36] There are, of course, many other political elements involved in the extensive project *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* such as the institutions of marriage and motherhood, contraception, the colonial wars, physical, psychological and sexual abuse and incest (amongst others). Linda Kauffman's *Poetics, Passion and Politics in The Three Marias: New Portuguese Letters* (1988) provides an interesting analysis of the political and social commentary in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* for further reading (Kauffman, 1988: 279-311).

Part II: Sexuality

Não neo, portanto, o exercício do amor. O sofrimento como exercício do mesmo e o mesmo amor como exercício da paixão, qualquer que seja.

The Three Marias

In Part One we have seen evidence of how a series of dichotomous pairs have defined the concept of the body in Western culture and have been used by a largely patriarchal discourse to relegate the female body to a lower position in the hierarchy of Western understanding. The exploration into these methods of oppression has revealed that the mind/ body dichotomy has been particularly instrumental in this process and has led to the creation of further binary pairs such as public/ private, subject/ object, culture/ nature and reason/ instinct that all correspond with the male/ female dichotomy. Part Two of this study adds another dichotomous pair to this collection: the sexual/ erotic dichotomy. This polarity has long been used in Western culture firstly to distinguish human sexual activity from animalistic sexual activity, and secondly as a precept for the organisation and hierarchisation of sexual activity which enables sexual activity to become 'socialised' and therefore part of culture. The latter of these uses of the sexual/ erotic dichotomy has acted as a justification for the creation of various taboos and the concept of 'perversion' which will be a particularly instrumental aspect in approaching a feminist reading of how sexuality is expressed in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and in the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta and Luiza Neto Jorge. First, however, it is important to understand how the sexual/ erotic dichotomy has become so important to Western philosophy and how this dichotomy has grown into an organised system of sexuality that feminist writers and theorists have long been working to undo.

Many philosophers and anthropologists have, over the past century, turned to a study of sexuality in order to understand human's differentiation from animals. This is the first and most basic form of the hierarchisation of sexual activity where theorists seek to explain and justify why human sexuality is a higher form than that of animals. The French philosopher, Georges

Bataille, author of the in-depth study of eroticism, *L'Érotisme* (1957) [*Erotism: Death and Sensuality*], states that

> [h]uman eroticism differs from animal sexuality precisely in this, that it calls inner life into play. In human consciousness eroticism is that within man which calls his being in question. Animal sexuality does make for disequilibrium and this disequilibrium is a threat to life, but the animal does not know that. (…) However that may be, eroticism is the sexual activity of man to the extent that it differs from the sexual activity of animals. Human sexual activity is not necessarily erotic but erotic it is whenever it is not rudimentary and purely animal. (Bataille, 1986: 29)

In calling into question one's existence and thus creating a discourse around sex, therefore, humans created 'eroticism'. Thus, for Bataille, it is this ability to create a discourse around sexuality, and to create an 'eroticism' which exceeds the basic sexual act, that marks human sexuality as superior. Discourse on sex has removed it from the realm of the animalistic and placed it within culture – the ultimate mark of human activity. Equally, Michel Foucault in his *History of Sexuality: Volume 1* emphasises the organisation of sexuality into a system of knowledge as that which brings sexual activity into the realm of 'man':

> The most important elements of an erotic art linked to our knowledge about sexuality are not to be sought in the ideal, promised to us by medicine, of a healthy sexuality, nor in the humanist dream of a complete and flourishing sexuality, and certainly not in the lyricism or orgasm and the good feelings of bio-energy (these are but aspects of its normalizing utilization), but in this multiplication and intensification of pleasures connected to the production of the truth about sex. (…) in short, the formidable "pleasure of analysis" (in the widest sense of the latter term) which the West has cleverly been fostering for several centuries (…). (Foucault, 1978: 71)

Just as Bataille highlights the act of questioning, Foucault places a great deal of emphasis upon "the production of the truth about sex" and the "pleasure of analysis". The terms used by Bataille and Foucault all point to the creation of a discourse on sex that elevates it from the rudimentary act alone. It is when sexuality is studied, spoken about, organised and turned into a series of signs or metaphors that it becomes 'erotic' and therefore a human phenomenon. Octavio Paz – Mexican poet, diplomat and essayist – wrote extensively on love; most notably in *La Llama Doble: Amor y Erotismo* (1993) [*The Double Flame: Love and Eroticism*], his famous essay on the relationship between love and eroticism. In *The Double Flame,* Paz uses literary terms to explain the difference between sex and eroticism, likening eroticism to the metaphor and the use of imagination in literary creation: "Eroticism is not mere animal sexuality: it's a ceremony, a representation. Eroticism is transfigured sexuality: a metaphor. The agent that moves both the erotic and poetic acts is imagination" (Paz, 1996: 10).

Understanding eroticism as a discursive creation that elevates the sexual act to its current status in Western culture opens it up to criticism in the same way that revealing the body as a socially constructed concept did in Part One. However, whereas the previous dichotomous pairs we have seen in this study have been relatively simple, eroticism is necessarily more complex due to its ambiguous status.

The status of the erotic is ambiguous because it is at once superior and inferior depending on which criteria is being used. Despite the fact that the erotic is seen as part of human culture, a positive concept that elevates sex from animalistic sexual relations, it is also seen as a lesser form of knowledge compared to reason. *Eros,* the original Greek term, traditionally refers to man's instinctual drive – something that must be controlled. In "Erotics",[37] Part Four of Michel Foucault's *L'Usage des Plaisirs* (1984) [*The Use of Pleasure*], Foucault references Plato's contempt for those who prioritise *Eros* and allow it to control their actions and decisions:

> When he portrays the tyrannical man – that is, one "in whose soul dwells the tyrant Eros who directs everything"[38] – Plato shows him from two equivalent angles, so that what we see in both instances is contempt for the most fundamental obligations and subjection to the rule of pleasure (…). (Foucault, 1990: 187)

Thus, Foucault demonstrates that when considering the ideal of human knowledge, *Eros* has traditionally (since at least the Ancient Greeks) been placed second to philosophy and reason. From Plato onwards the erotic has been perceived as a kind of temptation that ought to be resisted in favour of a search for a purer knowledge.

German-American philosopher Herbert Marcuse believed that this relegation of *Eros* in favour of *Logos*[39] should be opposed and that *Eros'* value should be reinstated as the equal of *Logos* to create a less repressive society. In *Eros and Civilization: a Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955) Marcuse claims that

> [t]he vision of a non-repressive culture, which we have lifted from a marginal trend in mythology and philosophy, aims at a new relation between instincts and reason. The civilized morality is reversed by harmonizing instinctual freedom and order: liberated from the tyranny of repressive reason, the instincts tend toward free and lasting existential relations – they generate a *new* reality principle. (Marcuse, 1966: 197)

[37] More on this later, but Foucault's "Erotics" is an in-depth consideration of the beginnings of a regulation of sexuality in Ancient Greek discourse on homosexuality – in particular, relationships between adult men and young boys – compared to the regulation of heterosexual sexual relations.
[38] Here Foucault is quoting Plato's *Republic,* book IX, 573d.
[39] Although today *Logos* is conventionally translated as 'word' or 'language', in Ancient Greece it was more consistent with a kind of rhetoric based on logical argument – Aristotle described it as 'reasoned discourse', for example. So whereas *Eros* is a kind of knowledge or instinct based on natural drives, *Logos* refers to a logical form of reasoning that appeals to facts or general truths and is what the Western concept of knowledge is based on.

Marcuse, therefore, sees *Eros* (human instinct) as the key to gaining freedom from a repressive society.[40] It is clear in this extract in particular, with the use of the word 'tyranny', that Marcuse's view of *Eros* is the complete opposite of the view that Western knowledge has been formed upon as expressed by Plato who viewed *Eros* as the tyrannical force. It therefore follows that Marcuse's opposition to the predominance of *Logos* in Western culture is a criticism of the same oppressive discourse that has since been widely criticised by feminist writers.

In particular, the tendency to give value to instinct over reason is one that is key to the development of French poststructuralist feminism and especially Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous' concepts of *l'écriture féminine, jouissance* and the pre-symbolic. We have already seen how the concept of *l'écriture féminine* refers to a kind of writing that stems directly from the body rather than from reason, which has been explained with relation to the nature/ culture and body/ mind dichotomy in Part One. The two following terms, '*jouissance'* and the 'pre-symbolic', are similar in that they turn more towards a bodily identification or instinctual perspective than to a patriarchal, rational one. *Jouissance* and the pre-symbolic both feature heavily in the works of the New French Feminist and semiologist Julia Kristeva,[41] who uses the 'Mother-woman' as a central figure in her exploration of a more instinctual kind of sexuality (*jouissance*), knowledge and language (the pre-symbolic).

Jouissance, although originally used by French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan to refer to both male and female libidinal economies,[42] has been used by the French poststructuralist feminists to refer specifically to a feminine economy of sexual pleasure that is distinct from the scopophilic desire that defines the masculine sexual economy. The distinguishing feature of *jouissance,* the feminine libidinal economy, is its reliance upon touch. In *This Sex Which is Not One,* Irigaray comments that

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[40] Marcuse's repressive theory is part of the 'repressive hypothesis' that Foucault expands upon in *The History of Sexuality.*

[41] I have referred to Julia Kristeva as a 'New French Feminist' here because she is generally considered in academia as part of the group of French poststructuralist feminists alongside Cixous and Irigaray. Placing Kristeva within this group, however, has been questioned on numerous occasions due to the fact that she does not adhere to several key concepts that are crucial to the works of Irigaray and Cixous including, and most notably, *l'écriture féminine.* Rather than seeing the feminine as a mark of sexual difference, Kristeva takes the term 'feminine' to refer to a semiotic realm that challenges and subverts symbolic codes (which she refers to as the 'Law of the Father'). This distinction means that the feminine is something that can be found in the work of any writer (male or female) that has not repressed the pre-symbolic bond with the mother.

[42] Jacques Lacan spoke widely on *jouissance* – most notably in his seminar *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959-1960) – and claimed that *jouissance* was a transgression of the pleasure principle. The greatest effect of Lacan's work on sexuality according to psychoanalysis was to move away from the reductive biologism of Sigmund Freud who preceded him. It wasn't until his seminar *Encore* (1972-1973), however, that he finally introduced the idea of a specifically feminine *jouissance* that was fundamentally different to phallic *jouissance.* Lacan's definitions of phallic and feminine *jouissance* will be further elaborated in Chapter Three of this study.

> (…) the predominance of the visual, and of the discrimination and individualization of form, is particularly foreign to female eroticism. Woman takes pleasure more from touching than from looking, and her entry into a dominant scopic economy signifies, again, her consignment to passivity (…). (Irigaray, 1985b: 25-26)

This relationship to sexual pleasure in itself relies more on instinct than reason or language as opposed to the masculine concept of sexual pleasure in which vision and language combine to create a sexual pleasure based on desire. Vision and language require the raw materials (the object of the desire) to be mediated by the brain and turned symbolic in order for masculine sexual pleasure to function; *jouissance,* however, being based on touch, allows a more direct contact between the object and the subject, thus relying on the same basis of proximity as the forms of representation we saw in Chapter Two. Remarkably, although the ultimate goal of *jouissance* remains to create an alternative that can subvert the masculine economy of sexual pleasure, the term is used with different nuances by each of the French poststructuralist feminists. Irigaray, as we have seen, distinguishes feminine sexual pleasure from masculine sexual pleasure using the anatomy of the female body and the propensity to the sensation of touch rather than vision. Cixous, on the other hand, identifies *jouissance* as a key element in the creation of *l'écriture féminine,* placing her emphasis on the way in which *jouissance* is expressed and written:

> No, it is at the level of sexual pleasure [*jouissance*] in my opinion that the difference makes itself most clearly apparent in as far as woman's libidinal economy is neither identifiable by a man nor referable to the masculine economy (…) 'How do I experience sexual pleasure?' What is feminine *sexual pleasure,* where does it take place, how is it inscribed at the level of her body, of her unconscious? And then how is it out into writing? (Cixous, 2013: 363)

In the English translation of Kristeva's *Semeiotikê. Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (1969) [*Desire in Language*], the editor, Leon S. Roudiez describes *jouissance* as "sexual, spiritual, physical and conceptual, at the same time" (Kristeva, 1980: 16). This description of the use of the term *jouissance* in Kristeva's work highlights its transcendent quality and its ability to go beyond the symbolic (the level of masculine sexual economy). Like Cixous, Kristeva sees *jouissance* as a key aspect of finding a more feminine language, but unlike Cixous she links this concept of sexual pleasure to the pre-symbolic stage of psychological development (previously theorised by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan[43]) before the child rejects their relationship with their mother to enter the symbolic stage of development. Kristeva promotes

[43] Lacan's definition of the symbolic is where one's perception of the world is (over)determined by socio-linguistc structures and dynamics. Lacan also identifies a 'symbolic order' which takes into account the effects of institutions, laws, customs, norms, rituals, practices and traditions of the subject's culture and society on the subject's perception and articulation of the world as these entities are often entwined with language in their creation and elaboration. For further information on the symbolic order, see Lacan's *Écrits* (1966).

a language that is only possible when the speaker (or writer) retains or rediscovers the pre-symbolic relationship with the mother and embraces her *jouissance.* Kristeva explains the alienation of the mother and the link between language and *jouissance* in her essay "Motherhood According to Bellini", from *Desire in Language:*

> It is as if paternity were necessary in order to relive the archaic impact of the maternal body on man; in order to complete the investigation of a ravishing maternal jouissance but also of its terrorising aggressivity; in order somehow to admit the threat that the male feels as much from the possessive maternal body as from his separation from it – a threat that he immediately returns to that body; and finally, in order not to demystify the mother, but to find her an increasingly appropriate language, capable of capturing her specific imaginary jouissance, the jouissance on the border of primal repression, beyond, although always coexistent with, the imagery of full, mimetic, and true signs. (Kristeva, 1980: 263)

For Kristeva the development of a language that focusses entirely on meaning and signs (the language that one encounters upon entering the symbolic stage) is to the detriment of a more semiotic, rhythm-based language that can better express the mother's *jouissance.* Kristeva states that the place where this kind of language can be found is in poetry where the symbolic is not the only significance of language:

> Language as a symbolic function constitutes itself at the cost of repressing instinctual drive and continuous relation to the mother. On the contrary, the unsettled and questionable subject of poetic language (for whom the word is never uniquely sign) maintains itself at the cost of reactivating this repressed instinctual, maternal element. (*idem*: 136)

The form of knowledge and language used in poetry, therefore, is linked to the instinctual, maternal, pre-symbolic knowledge and language that relies heavily upon feminine (the mother's) *jouissance.* This kind of knowledge, based on instinct, rhythm, and drive can be likened to the *Eros* described by Marcuse that has been repressed in favour of *Logos,* and simultaneously (according to the French poststructuralist feminists) in favour of the masculine libidinal economy and a repressive, symbolic consciousness and language.

The repression of certain kinds of sexual pleasure, such as the feminine libidinal economy *jouissance,* has been theorised by Herbert Marcuse as playing a central role in the organisation and creation of the modern capitalist society. According to Marcuse, the repression of *Eros*[44] has taken place in modern civilization for the continuation of social dominance and of a

[44] Whereas Freud took *Eros* to mean a kind of affection or friendship, for Marcuse *Eros* was entirely sexual, referring to sexual drive or instinct and often interchangeable with 'libido'. Marcuse also took *Thanatos,* the death instinct, to mean 'labour' or 'work', so that the triumph of *Eros* over *Thanatos* represented the triumph of libido over labour.

capitalist society.[45] His work bears many a similarity to the theories of the French poststructuralist feminists in his acknowledgement of the role of the patriarchy, and of the father in the foundations of sexual repression, but rather than focussing on the development of language, Marcuse highlights the organisational role of sexual repression in the creation of class structures and in the organisation of labour. In Robinson's words:

> Marcuse agreed with Freud that the most important result of the primal dictatorship was to exclude sons from sexual access to the sisters and mother. And he stated explicitly that the economic corollary of this sexual isolation was that the sons bore the burden of work within the primal horde. Excluded from sexual pleasure, they were 'free' to channel their instinctual energy into unpleasurable but necessary activities. Thus the matter of sexual repression was clearly linked to economic subordination – and therefore to the rise of capitalism. (Robinson, 1990: 209)

Thus, repression and the rules and norms that surround sexuality are used as organisational tools for the creation of a class system and the maintenance of a capitalist society: the term that Marcuse applies to repression used explicitly for the creation and maintenance of dominance in society is 'surplus repression'. From a feminist perspective, Marcuse's identification of a system of sexual repression created by the father is significant as his description of this system reveals a complete alienation of the mother and of women. The libidinal economy created by the patriarchy excludes not only the sons from sexual pleasure, but also the women who have remained under the thumb of 'the law of the Father'. In Marcuse's utopian ideal of a society where *Eros* is liberated, there would be an entirely different libidinal economy which actually bears remarkable similarities to Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva's descriptions of *jouissance:*

> No longer used as a full-time instrument of labor, the body would be resexualised. The regression involved in this spread of the libido would first manifest itself in a reactivation of all erotogenic zones and, consequently, in a resurgence of pregenital polymorphous sexuality and in a decline of genital supremacy. The body in its entirety would become an object of cathexis, a thing to be enjoyed – an instrument of pleasure. (Marcuse, 1966: 201)

Thus, many prominent thinkers have studied the repressive nature of the phallocentric libidinal economy that supports patriarchal rule in the Western world[46]. The hierarchisation of sexuality and the repressive nature of the organisation of sexuality has been noted by many philosophers

[45] Throughout his career Marcuse continued to criticise capitalist society as repressive, although moving away from and also criticising Marxism. He also encouraged a certain radical left-wing politic, particularly in his later works such as *An Essay on Liberation* (1969) and *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972).

[46] This includes deconstructionist philosopher Jacques Derrida who coined the term "phallogocentrism" (a portmanteau of phallocentrism and logocentrism) which refers to the fact that Western philosophy, predominantly written by men, has developed according to a system of metaphysical oppositions. The result of this dualist bias is that Western philosophy has tended to mark the dominant terms as masculine and symbolic. Derrida's phallogocentrism has since been used as a theoretical ground for feminist thinkers as it allows for a critique of gender inequality and facilitates an analysis of the male bias of Westers, patriarchal culture. See *Dissemination* (1972) by Jacques Derrida for further information on phallogocentrism (Derrida, 1981).

and sociologists over the years. In "Erotics", Michel Foucault looked back to Ancient Greece in order to trace the regulation of sexual pleasure with a particular focus on what constitutes a valid sexual pleasure and what was seen as perverse or 'wrong'. Foucault found a source for the regulation of sexual activity in the homosexual relationships of the Greeks that existed between adult men and young boys:

> Unlike other sexual relations, it seems – or in any case, more than they – the relations that united man and boy across a certain age and status threshold that separated them were the object of a sort of ritualization which by imposing certain rules on them gave them form, value, and interest. (…) They defined a whole set of conventional and appropriate behaviours, making this relation a culturally and morally overloaded domain. (Foucault, 1990: 196)

Foucault goes on to explicitly liken the ritualization of the man-boy relationship in Ancient Greece to women's sexuality in modern civilisation, stating that

> Later, in European culture, girls or married women, with their behaviour, their beauty, and their feelings, were to become themes of special concern; a new art of courting them, a literature that was basically romantic in form, an exacting morality that was attentive to the integrity of their bodies and the solidity of their matrimonial commitment – all this would draw curiosities and desires around them. No matter what inferior position may have been reserved for them in family or in society, there would be an accentuation, a 'valorization' of the problem of woman. Their nature, their conduct, the feelings they inspired or experienced, the permitted or forbidden relationship that one might have with them were to become themes of reflection, knowledge, analysis, and prescription. (*idem:* 213)

By imposing certain values upon different forms of sexual pleasure and different sexual acts, the Greeks (and modern Europeans) were in fact creating a system of hierarchisation that today is almost second nature to us in Western civilisation. Today the words that we use to describe this phenomenon are 'taboo' and the 'perverse', where certain sexual acts are seen as immoral, undignified, or disgusting. The term 'taboo' also connotes an impossibility of speaking about the acts to which it refers – Foucault describes the development of anal sex as a taboo term in Ancient Greece:

> There was a reluctance to evoke directly and in so many words the role of the boy in sexual intercourse: sometimes quite general expressions are employed, such as "to do the thing" (*diaprattesthai to pragma*); other times the "thing" is designated by the very impossibility of naming it; or again – and this is what says most about the problem posed by the relation – people resorted to metaphorical terms that were "agnostic" or political: "to yield," to "submit" (*hypēretein*), "to render a service" (*therapeuein, hypourgein*). (*idem:* 223)

In modern society this attitude towards language and sexuality has expanded to encompass a number of sexual acts that are deemed 'wrong' according to social norms and as a result of the regulation and organisation of sexuality. This applies particularly to the case of female sexuality and the female body, where themes such as female sexual pleasure, female

masturbation, menstruation, the female orgasm, female domination in sexual intercourse, oral sex, and the vagina are glossed over, censored, euphemised or simply avoided altogether. Another aspect of sexuality and the female body that is often silenced and is part of social taboo, is the theme of violence against the female body, where violent acts such as rape, incest, or domestic violence are often dismissed as "private matters" and are thus publically ignored whilst victims must suffer in silence. Furthermore, patriarchal and phallocentric definitions of sexuality have, to a certain extent, normalised violence against women as 'erotic', as is explained by Adrienne Rich in her essay *"*Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (2003):

> The most pernicious message relayed by pornography is that women are natural sexual prey to men and love it, that sexuality and violence are congruent, and that for women sex is essentially masochistic, humiliation pleasurable, physical abuse erotic. But along with this message comes another, not always recognized: that enforced submission and the use of cruelty, if played out in heterosexual pairing, is sexually "normal," (…). (Rich, 2003: 20)

Here, Rich shows how pornography has banalised violence against women so that it seems 'erotic' according to phallocentric definitions. It is this supposed pleasure in sexual masochism that is conferred upon women as a silencing mechanism, and is an example of the way in which the hierarchisation of sexuality and the erotic is used in a way that alienates women's sexuality.

Another definition of the 'erotic' that is worth remembering here is that of French philosopher and literary theorist, Roland Barthes. For Barthes, it is the fact of hiding or concealing a body, showing only a small part of skin, that is erotic. This is an interesting idea as it allows us to questions whether patriarchal censorship of the female body is in fact a way of eroticising the body for the male gaze. In *Le Plaisir du Texte* (1973) [*The Pleasure of the Text/ O Prazer do Texto*], Barthes states that:

> O lugar mais erótico de um corpo não é o ponto em que o vestuário se entreabre? Na perversão (que é o regime do prazer textual) não há «zonas erógenas» (expressão aliás bastante importuna); é a intermitência, como muito bem o disse a psicanálise, que é erótica: a da pele que cintila entre duas peças (as calças e a camisola), entre duas margens (a camisa entreaberta, a luva e a manga); é essa própria cintilação que seduz, ou ainda: a encenação de um aparecimento-desaparecimento. (Barthes, 1997: 44)

Thus, in textual representation, what constitutes erotic is not the actual body, but the idea of a body: the hiding of the body. The female body is, therefore, even in erotic representations (erotic according to patriarchal definitions), censored and hidden. The bare, nude, on-display female body (which causes so much controversy when written by women) is not erotic according to the phallocentric hierarchisation of sexuality, but is rather seen as

"pornographic".[47] Whether a text is seen as pornographic or erotic is mostly a question of whether it broaches any 'taboo' subjects. The creation of taboo, and the subsequent distinction between the erotic and the pornographic relies upon the hierarchisation of sexual activity and whether an act, image or description is deemed legitimate by moral and social codes. In "(Re)presentations of Eros: Exploring Female Sexual Agency" (1989), Eileen O'Neill explains the difference between the erotic and the pornographic:

> (…) the erotic is that which has a content deemed more sensuous than lewd and which is apt to arouse sexual interest in the viewer – where we feel that such a sexual response is legitimate. Pornography, on this analysis, is a representation apt to arouse sexual interest because of the sexual illegitimacy of what is represented, and which endorses such a response on those grounds. (O'Neill, 1989: 69)

Texts deemed pornographic, therefore, are only pornographic because of the parameters created by society that define which forms of sexuality are 'illegitimate' (taboo) and which are socially 'legitimate'. In the following two chapters we will see how Maria Teresa Horta, Luiza Neto Jorge and The Three Marias attempt to challenge and ultimately alter the parameters that alienate feminine sexual pleasure and repress feminine sexuality via the creation of certain taboos.

[47] The term 'pornographic' is particularly interesting as it was used by the *Estado Novo* censors to justify the censorship of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* among other texts. For *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* however, many (including Maria Teresa Horta) suspect that the use of the term "pornographic" was used specifically to humiliate the Three Marias, when in fact it was the political criticism of the *Estado Novo* that prompted the censorship. For further elaboration on Horta's experience and opinions, I refer again to her chapter in Azevedo's *A Censura de Salazar e Marcelo Caetano* (1999).

Chapter Three: *Jouissance* and Sexual Pleasure

Olhos a arder em êxtases de amor,
Boca a saber a sol, a fruto, a mel:
Sou a charneca rude a abrir em flor!

Florbela Espanca

Foucault and Marcuse have engaged in lengthy philosophical studies on the status of sexuality and its role in the organisation and stratification of modern societies, placing a heavy focus upon the inferior position given to sexuality when compared with other forms of knowledge such as *logos* or philosophy. Foucault has taken his study slightly further so as to demonstrate the regulation of sexuality and the mechanisms that define certain forms of sexuality and certain sexual roles as higher than others. Aside from the briefest of mentions, however, these 'great' philosophers have made little reference to the status of women's sexual pleasure or a feminine sexual economy – leaving largely unspoken the oppression and neglect of female sexual pleasure not only in practice, but also in discourse.[48] The closest we come to an acknowledgement of a different libidinal economy is Marcuse's description (cited above) of what he considered a 'utopian' (but not yet achieved) libidinal economy that would only become possible once *Eros* is re-evaluated as the equal of *Logos*. What Marcuse failed to notice whilst writing *Eros and Civilization* in 1955, and what was not brought to the world's attention until the rise of the New French Feminists in the 1970s, was that his description of the "resexualisation" of the human body which includes the "spread of the libido", the "reactivation of erotogenic zones" and a "resurgence of pregenital polymorphous sexuality" actually mirrors the female libidinal economy (Marcuse, 1966: 201).

This failure to take into account a feminine experience of sexuality when theorising eroticism, and the 'false neutral' created by theories that claim to define a human approach to sexuality when, in fact, they have only considered half of humanity (the male half), led to a boom of theoretical texts and literature on female sexuality from the late 1960s onwards. This boom

[48] The fact that they repeatedly use the false gender-neutral "man" in their writing is evidence enough. For further reading on false gender-neutrality I recommend the essay "Gender, the Public, and the Private" (1998) by Susan Moller Okin which explores the role of false gender-neutrality in reinforcing the public/ private dichotomy. Luce Irigaray also wroted about gendered language in "Linguistic Sexes and Gender" from *Je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference* (1993).

included, but is not limited to, the works of the French poststructuralist feminists. One of the most common victims of feminist criticism on the neglect of female sexuality is Freud, the keystone of phallocentric psychoanalysis. Freud has been heavily criticised by feminist scholars for actively alienating and dismissing female sexuality.[49] Whereas this denial of female sexuality is present in many key philosophical and psychoanalytical texts, Freud is probably the most explicit in his dismissal. Kate Millett, in her ground-breaking critique of the role of patriarchy in sexual relations, *Sexual Politics* (1969), describes the "habitual masculine bias" of Freud's theories, in this case highlighting the inadequacy of the term 'penis envy':

> It would seem that Freud has managed by this highly unlikely hypothesis to assume that young females negate the validity, and even, to some extent, the existence, of female sexual characteristics altogether. (…) In formulating the theory of penis envy, Freud not only neglected the possibility of a social explanation for female dissatisfaction but precluded it by postulating a literal jealousy of the organ whereby the male is distinguished. (Millett, 2000: 183)

Millett's criticism of Freud is actually characteristic of the treatment of female sexuality throughout modern Western culture, where sexuality is theorised and elaborated with no thought to women, either by applying masculine theories of sexuality to women without stopping to question whether women may have different experiences of sexuality, or by discounting female sexuality by designating them 'abnormal' on account of the fact that they are not male (as is the case with Freud's theory of penis envy). Western discourse had, therefore, been entirely biased towards a masculine libidinal economy, whether concerning socio-political discourse on sexual relations, the replication of masculine desire in dominant forms of representation (as we saw in Chapter Two) or in the structure of language and knowledge itself. The term *jouissance,* and the theoretical elaboration of a female libidinal economy arose, therefore, as an opposition to the systematic neglect of female sexual pleasure in Western discourse.

Although the term *jouissance* has long existed in the French language, loosely translated as "pleasure", the French feminists (in particular Luce Irigaray) took the term from Jacques Lacan. Lacan used the term *jouissance* to elaborate an alternative theory on sexuality that would move away from the biologism of Freudian theory and focus more on the way in which sexual relations were experienced. Lacan's description of a masculine (phallic) *jouissance* and a feminine (other) *jouissance* is one of the earliest acknowledgements of differing sexual economies, yet still left much to be desired. According to Lacan, phallic *jouissance* was a whole

[49] Freud claims in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) that only male sexuality is accessible to psychoanalysis. For further reading see Freud, 1962.

one based on the integrity of the phallus but whose 'wholeness' was responsible for the impossibility of a true sexual relation. Feminine *jouissance,* however, is described as existing beyond the phallus, but "being not-whole, she [woman] has a supplementary jouissance compared to what the phallic function designated by way of jouissance" (Lacan, 1998: 73). So, despite moving away from restrictive biologism, Lacan still provides a largely unsatisfactory description of feminine sexuality by essentially describing it as 'not phallic' and 'not whole'. It is this unsatisfactory definition of female sexuality that prompted the French poststructuralist feminists to elaborate their own definitions of feminine *jouissance* and to finally articulate that which seems to escape masculine logic.

In literature, too, female sexuality (from a female perspective) finally became visible, with writers such as Erica Jong and Adrienne Rich bringing female sexuality to the forefront of literature, simultaneously causing shockwaves and sighs of relief around the world. In Portugal, *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta were similarly revolutionary in terms of their unveiling of a varied and full female sexuality that had rarely been seen before in Portuguese women's writing.[50] In these texts, just like the literature of sexual liberation in other countries, there is a politicisation of sexuality where female sexual pleasure is used to dismantle the discourses that had previously denied its existence or declared it improper or immoral. Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry, on the other hand, engages less in the politicisation of sexual acts, and more in the sexualisation and eroticisation of language in an act of rebellion against restrictive patriarchal discourse.

Novas Cartas Portuguesas, in particular, places female sexuality at the forefront of the Three Marias' call for social and political reform, describing female sexual experience alongside criticism of Portugal's dictatorial colonial policy, denunciations of social inequality, and condemnations of violence against women. In "Novas Cartas Portuguesas: Uma Abordagem Feminista*"* (2012), Isabela de Jesus explains the force of The Three Marias' treatment of feminine sexual experience:

> Se os outros elementos de opressão social e política simbolicamente evidenciados na obra com o consequente questionamento da ordem social, exigiam uma subtileza de análise mais dificilmente exercida pelos censores, a expressão do erotismo e da sexualidade e, ainda mais, em palavras de mulheres, assumindo o corpo e o prazer, constituíram uma afronta

[50] To a certain extent, the earlier works of Florbela Espanca and Judith Teixeira also explored female sexuality, but much less explicitly. Florbela Espanca wrote about female sexuality using imagery and metaphor and adhering to the stereotypically 'feminine form' of sonnet-writing, and the work of Judith Teixeira was suppressed by censorship and has only recently been re-discovered.

> inadmissível à moral oficial de um poder estabelecido no masculino que se arrogava o direito de decidir o que às mulheres convinha ou servia, para que servidos eles fossem. (Jesus, 2012: 44)

It can be claimed, therefore, that not only was female sexuality placed in the realm of the political, but it was also the theme that the Three Marias deemed so important as to be dealt with much more explicitly and with more force.

An important theme in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* is that of unveiling and unsilencing, and of telling the truth about women's experience of life in Portugal, thus nothing but an explicit and complete description of female sexuality will suffice to achieve a complete revelation of the way in which a woman experiences sex. The Three Marias, like the French feminists with their definition of *jouissance,* aimed to (re)define feminine sexuality and reveal how female sexual pleasure is not only misunderstood, but often ignored. This dissatisfaction with masculine definitions of sexuality, and in particular with what is defined as 'erotic' is highlighted in "Extractos do diário de Ana Maria, descendente directa da sobrinha de D. Maria Ana, e nascida em 1940":

> E o erotismo, senhores, e o erotismo? Em quase todos os livros chamados eróticos que por hoje abundam, *il n'y a pas de femmes libres, il y a des femmes livrées aux hommes.* É essa a libertação que os homens nos oferecem, de repouso do guerreiro passamos a despojo de guerra. (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 205)

Here, the narrative voice is demanding an explanation from the patriarchy (in an extremely accusatory and aggressive tone) for their definition of eroticism which excludes the perspectives of women. The narrator uses a particularly striking image of women as prizes, traded almost like slaves, and describes women as "the spoils of war" ["despojo da guerra"] to emphasise the way in which men feel entitled to their version of eroticism and treat women as instruments for their own pleasure rather than as equal partners who have their own definitions of what is erotic. This accusation, therefore, demonstrates the incompatibility of female sexual pleasure with a purely masculine definition of eroticism.

In *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* the Three Marias reveal the real nature of female sexual pleasure or *jouissance* in explicit descriptions of sexual acts in a way that denies the phallocentric nature of masculine sexual pleasure. The descriptions of sexual pleasure in the text resemble, in particular, Irigaray's definition of a female sexuality that is multiple, encompassing the stimulation of multiple erotogenic areas of the body and with a particular emphasis on touch. When Mariana imagines her ideal sexual encounter during in "A Paz", for example, it is not only the vagina that is stimulated, but her whole body, and the same is true in "Intimidade", where another of Mariana's pleasurable sexual encounters is described:

> Quebra-se, pois, a clausura: pelos seios ele a tem segura a rasgar-lhe os mamilos com os dentes. (…) Recurva, tenso, o ventre: a língua entumescida. Dele a língua quente, áspera de saliva e o demorado sugar, rente, ritmado a esvaziá-la devagar da vida. (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 36)

> (…) mordida pela nudez dos pés, que tu Mariana tens pequenos, a desdizer tua altura, medida ao longo da nudez do corpo sobre o qual ele desliza quando te monta, te habita, a morder-te ao de leve os mamilos brandos, às vezes nacarados ou quase tão castanhos como o louro roubado dos teus cabelos lisos ou encrespado púbis tão alheio.
>
> Bem pode ele morder-to como a boca, os seios; a língua leve a infiltrar-se já na fenda entreaberta que os dedos alargam e por inteiro se expõe. (*idem*: 108)

In these sexual encounters, Mariana's whole body is incorporated into her experience of sexual pleasure; the words of Irigaray seem particularly apt here: "the geography of her pleasure is far more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, subtler, than is commonly imagined – in an imaginary rather too narrowly focussed on sameness" (Irigaray, 1985b: 28). This pleasure, this *jouissance*, activated by the touch of the female body in its multiple erotogenic spots, is a source of liberation from the restriction of a patriarchal definition of sexuality. For Mariana, these sexual encounters are an act of transgression through which she can surpass the limits of the convent, and reject the role that has been ascribed to her. The transgressive potential of *jouissance* is highlighted in Isabel de Jesus' definition of the term:

> "Jouissance" de dificíl tradução, corresponde a um prazer associado à realização de desejo que ultrapassa as barreiras permitidas às mulheres, o que reforça a natureza transgressora do acto. (Jesus, 2012: 49, n23)

The description of Mariana's imagined, ideal sexual encounter is expressed as breaking her enclosure ["Quebra-se pois a clausura"], which demonstrates the ability for *jouissance* to act as a rebellion and as a form of liberation from patriarchal structures (in this case the social structures that have resulted in her being cloistered). What is also noticeable in "A Paz" and "Intimidade" is the brevity of the role of the erect penis in the sexual encounters. Although the penis and penetration of the vagina by the penis do play a part in the erotic scenes, far more attention is paid to the stimulation and description of other parts of the female body and of touching with hands, fingers and the mouth rather than the genitals. The diminished role of the phallus, therefore, subverts and breaks away from the phallocentric nature of masculine *jouissance* – that which according to Lacan "is the obstacle owing to which man does not come (…) to enjoy woman's body, precisely because what he enjoys is the jouissance of the organ" (Lacan, 1998: 7).

The difference between masculine and feminine sexual economy and pleasure becomes particularly apparent if we compare the above cited scenes of female sexual pleasure, with other descriptions in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* of sexual encounters that take place under a

masculine sexual economy where the only priority is the male character's sexual pleasure. The following scenes are extracts from "Carta de D. Joana de Vasconcelos para Mariana Alcoforado Freira no Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição em Beja" and "Texto Sobre a Solidão":

> O corpo dilacerado por membro estranho, escaldante, a magoar sobretudo a alma? Espada leivosa a retalhar-nos as carnes, Mariana, sabes tu minha irmã, o que é calarmos, dia após día, o nojo, a aflição já sem lágrimas (…) (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2014: 135)

> Petrificada, Mónica sentiu que ele começava a entrar nela, devagar primeiro, o sexo ainda mole, indeciso na sua meia impotência, depois mais grosso e quente, impaciente, inábil. (…) O homem esforçava-se por acabar, exausto, o sexo perdido dentro daquela vagina seca, hostil, inóspita. Esforçava-se, naquela carne esponjosa, raivosamente, as mãos espalmadas na cama. Depressa, depressa, num movimento pendular ia e vinha, rápido, a apressar o orgasmo (…) (*idem*: 192)

Whereas the extracts that correspond with feminine *jouissance* depict an extended pleasure that takes place in multiple erotogenic zones, based on touch and lasting the entirety of the sexual act, these extracts of male *jouissance* are structured in a completely different way. The focus is solely on penetration and on achieving male orgasm – the description from "Texto de solidão" cited above shows no pleasure but rather a forced process and movement that is endured (by both parties) solely to achieve the male orgasm, the only description of the man's pleasure in this scene occurs when he finally climaxes: "forçou-lhe o ânus onde entrou rasgando-a, em gozo, vindo-se logo, enchendo-a com o seu leite aguado e morno. E aí se excitou e se veio de novo a vingar-se dela" (*idem*: 193). The entire sexual encounter is based on penetration, with no other erotic actions and with no pleasure (but rather discomfort and pain) for the female partner.

The violence in these descriptions reflect the violence with which a woman is forced to adhere to a libidinal economy that is so different to her own. In the extract from "A Carta de D. Joana (…)", the violence is described as spiritual, as hurting the soul ["a magoar sobretudo a alma"], whereas in "Texto de Solidão" the violence is physical as the body of the woman is literally ripped open ["entrou rasgando-a"] for the pleasure of the man. On both levels – spiritual and physical – the women are injured and oppressed by phallic *jouissance* which contrasts sharply with the liberation felt by Mariana after her experiences of feminine *jouissance.* The contrast between these two kinds of sexual experience is stark and points to the ability of sexual relations to transcend the physical.

Maria Teresa Horta's autonomous poetry also tends towards a more feminine libidinal economy with touch playing a primary role in poems about sexual encounters. The poem

"Educação Sentimental", for example, depicts a sexual scene where the female voice is teaching the sexual partner how to pleasure her by touch, with the movement and direction of fingers over the body taking precedent over penetrative sex:

> EDUCAÇÃO SENTIMENTAL
>
> Põe devagar os dedos
> devagar...
>
> e sobe devagar
> até ao cimo
>
> o suco lento que sentes
> escorregar
> é o suor das grutas
> o seu vinho
>
> Contorna o poço
> aí tens de parar
> descer, talvez
> tomar outro caminho…
>
> Mas põe os dedos e sobe
> devagar…
>
> Não tenhas medo
> daquilo que te ensino
>
> (Horta, 2009: 352)

Within this education-by-touch the speed of the sexual encounter is significantly reduced, and the repetition of the word slowly ("devagar") emphasises the savouring of sensations because the process of touching and stimulating is the objective in itself rather than working towards the finality of an orgasm as in phallic *jouissance.* The fact that the female voice is teaching the (presumably male) sexual partner, points towards a lack of understanding concerning feminine *jouissance* in men, and the final stanza underlines how uncommon and, indeed, frowned upon the pursuit of female sexual pleasure was as the directing voice deems it necessary to reassure and comfort her student. What is also important, and a common aspect of much of Maria Teresa Horta's erotic poetry, is that the female lyrical voice is dominant, addressing the male 'student' in the imperative and the power roles of the traditional sexual encounter have been reversed. The presence of fear in particular shows a changing power status as, traditionally, fear belonged to the woman who would have had no experience of sex until her wedding night, had no knowledge of the act, and who would no doubt fear the violence of penetration. In "Educação

Sentimental", however, the woman is the dominant party and the possessor of knowledge, and it is the male character who is experiencing and being taught something new.[51]

Another aspect of Maria Teresa Horta's poetry, and similarly of the scenes of feminine *jouissance* in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* is the rejection of Catholic and *Estado-Novo*-approved images of the feminine body as functional (for reproduction), as shameful or evil (like Eve), or as pure, immaculate and de-sexualised (like the Virgin Mary). Whereas in images of female sexuality in Catholic and state ideology female sexual pleasure was always linked to a certain function or status, this is entirely removed in the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta as the sexual encounters described instead *create* a new feminine body. Ana Luísa Amaral's statement that the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta enters into a re-naming process and builds new images of the female body – "Assim se des-diz, se desmonta, se des-nomeia. E se constroem novas imagens do corpo." (Amaral, 2005: 110) – is not only true of the poem "Segredo", as demonstrated in Chapter Two, but can also be applied to the creation of a body that desires and experiences pleasure as an end in itself in the poem "Encontro":

> ENCONTRO
>
> Com virilidade – com ócio
> e com ausência
>
> de oceano
> com ébano
> e por fraqueza
>
> com suporte orgânico
> refiro-me aos teus
> dedos
>
> longos locais claros
> para inventar
> nas ancas
>
> (Horta, 2009: 139)

In this poem, the verb 'invent' ["inventar"] is an indicator of the creative power of erotic experience, especially concerning the female body. Here the erotic touch of the fingers is linked to the creation of a new kind of female body that defies functional and religious definition. The hips ["ancas"] in question here are not a symbol of childbearing, nor are they a symbol of the seduction and ruination of man, nor are they immaculate and desexualised, but they belong to a female body whose primary concern (or purpose) is *her own* pleasure.

[51] The same kind of sexual education where the female character has the dominant voice takes place in Maria Teresa Horta's short story "Mónica" (2013) where transgression is achieved via this sexual encounter.

Whereas in phallic *jouissance* the phallus is the driving force of the act, linked to 'spreading the seed' of humanity and the objective of male orgasm, in "Encontro", the fingers are the driving force of the erotic act and are entering into a creative and inventive act with the female body. This distinction in the poem brings into focus the difference in the role of power between phallic and feminine *jouissance.* Phallic *jouissance* is based on the violent act of penetration in which one party (male) is the active penetrator and the other (female) is the passive receptor, but in "Encontro" the driving force of the erotic pleasure is the hand-that-touches, and both the touching hand and the touched hips are active. In *O Canibalismo Amoroso,* Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna states that "[a] relação erótica entre o homem e a mulher, no sistema falocêntrico, transforma a relação sexual numa prática sacrificial e num exercício de poder" (Sant'Anna, A., 1993: 31). The erotic relationship in "Encontro" therefore escapes this sacrificial relation as the described act involves the creation of a body rather than the sacrifice of a body, and the virility or power described at the beginning of the poem ["com virilidade – com ócio/ e com ausência"] is a less violent one that does not seem concerned with subjugation or possession but which seems more linked to the power of the erotic act itself as a form of transgression.

In both *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and in the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta, therefore, feminine *jouissance* is put forward as an alternative to the previously universally accepted phallic *jouissance*. What becomes clear in the analysis of the use of feminine *jouissance* in these texts, however, is that different libidinal economies ought to be treated as one would treat a language; the format that one adheres to alters the way in which one encounters the world and processes it. Furthermore, like listening to a foreign language that you don't speak, when forced to adhere to a form of *jouissance* that is not your own, there is an incompatibility that renders the sexual experience frightening and violent as we saw in "A Carta de D. Joana (…)" and "Texto de Solidão" in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas.* Perceived in this way, the writing of feminine *jouissance* can be seen as writing in a forgotten or ignored language that has been side-lined in favour of the dominant language of phallic *jouissance* in patriarchal discourse. Feminine *jouissance* in language, therefore, is a form of anti-discursivism and an act of rebellion against the dominant language of the distinctly patriarchal Western culture.

For Julia Kristeva, the language that best conveys feminine *jouissance* is poetic language as it is the only language to embrace the marginalised and repressed aspects of human nature that have been lost on account of the rejection of the Mother: "The poetic word, polyvalent and multi-determined, adheres to a logic exceeding that of codified discourse and fully comes into

being only in the margins of recognized culture" (Kristeva, 1980: 65). In "The Novel as Polylogue" from *Desire in Language*, Kristeva encourages writers to

> [k]now the mother, first take her place, thoroughly investigate her jouissance and, without releasing her, go beyond her. The language that serves as a witness to this course is iridescent with a sexuality of which it does not "speak"; it turns it into rhythm – it is rhythm. (*idem*: 191)

It is, therefore, the relationship with the marginalised mother that allows poetic language to access *jouissance* and use it in the creation of a written word that acts outside of, and as a subversion to, codified, patriarchal discourse. In "Conquistar a Outra Face de Tudo (Algumas Notas para Ler Dezanove Recantos)*"* (2006), Rosa Maria Martelo uses Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's[52] definition of high literature (which states that high literature must be a kind of minority literature) to describe Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry:

> Dito de outra maneira: se começo por afirmar a (indubitável) grandeza da obra de Luiza Neto Jorge é também porque gostaria de mostrar que essa condição se deve, em muito, a uma concepção particular da linguagem poética enquanto uso minoritário ou "estrangeiro" de língua – num sentido aproximável daquele que Deleuze reconhece nas palavras de Proust, quando este escritor defende que os grandes livros sempre estariam escritos numa língua desfamiliarizada, na qual simultaneamente reconhecemos e estranhamos a "nossa" língua. (Martelo, 2006: 85-86)

This unfamiliar and foreign language seems to correspond with Kristeva's marginalised maternal language where a language that expresses itself using feminine *jouissance* also constitutes a challenge and a deviance from the familiar language of the patriarchy. According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1975), "The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialisation of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation" (Deleuze/ Guattari, 1986: 18). The 'connection of the individual to a political immediacy' in Luiza Neto Jorge can refer to the oppressive, political reality of dictatorial Portugal, or equally to the oppression of women by patriarchal and phallocentric systems of language, knowledge and representation. In terms of Kristeva's theory of *jouissance* and pre-symbolic language, it is the oppression of the mother and pre-symbolic instinct in favour of phallocentric symbolic language which has resulted in the historical alienation of women.

The first and third characteristics – the 'deterritorialisation of language' and 'the collective assemblage of enunciation' – refer to changes in the way that language is used which enable

[52] The concept of a minor literature [*littérature mineure*] was explored by Deleuze and Guattari using the work of Kafka in a co-authored text entitled *Kafka: Pour une Littérature Mineure* (1975).

the minor literature to differentiate itself from the major literature.[53] Both Kristeva's theory for a pre-symbolic language, and Luiza Neto Jorge's innovative use of language in her poetry, involve, firstly, a deterritorialization of language and representation away from the psychological space of the patriarchy and the symbolic and, secondly, an assemblage of enunciation that challenges phallocentric notions of the lyrical or narrative subject. Both the deterritorialization and the collective assemblage of enunciation involve a wrenching of language away from the space of the major (patriarchal/ phallogocentric for Neto Jorge and Kristeva) literature that allows for a transgression of the limits of the major (symbolic) language. For example, Deleuze and Guattari describe the deterritorialization of language and the collective assemblage of enunciation in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*:

> There is no longer man or animal, since each deterritorializes the other, in a conjunction of flux, in a continuum of reversible intensities. Instead, it is now a question of a becoming that includes a maximum of difference as a difference of intensity, the crossing of a barrier, a rising or a falling, a bending or an erecting, an accent on a word. (Deleuze/ Guattari, 1986: 22)

If we were to replace the word "animal" with "woman", this description of the deterritorialization of language and the collective assemblage of enunciation in Kafka could well refer to the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge where patriarchal and phallogocentric definitions of gender and sexuality are destabilised by a minor language that transgresses their limits (for example, in "Deita-se Como um Objecto", "Exame" and "Pelo Corpo").

According to Martelo, traces of a 'minor literature' are particularly noticeable in the collection *Dezanove Recantos* (1969) in the way that it challenges literary discourse and the language and form which it has traditionally taken. By creating a series of *recantos,* Luiza Neto Jorge is narrating what Martelo calls a counter-epic ["contra-epopeia"] (*idem*: 92). In *Dezanove Recantos,* Luiza Neto Jorge circumvents ["contorna"] the form of the epic, sometimes touching it, sometimes narrating part of a journey or a shipwreck, sometimes adhering to a *camoniano* metric, sometimes alluding to *Os Lusíados*. The fact that *Dezanove Recantos* is a literary response to Camões' epic brings to light the stark differences between Camões' verses and Jorge's. In "Recanto 1" we can find some explanation of the position of Luiza Neto Jorge's epic in relation to that of Camões:

[53] In their theorisation of the three characteristics that are necessary in the creation of a minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari refer also to the use of grammar in the 'minor language' as a way of altering and subverting the 'major language'. Whilst this would be an interesting line of analysis for the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge, I do not have the space here to enter into such an in-depth study and will limit my analysis to the notions of foreignness and deterritorialization that are more pertinent to this study.

Proposição:

Contorno-vos. Socorre-se a terra de mim
para vos contornar.
(…)

(Jorge, 2001: 175)

This first stanza of the collection tells us a lot about the project of *Dezanove Recantos.* Firstly, the use of the verb "contornar" [circumvent] is more than just a reference to Camões' epic and the journeys of discovery narrated in the traditional Portuguese epic, it can also be used to define the purpose of the *Recanto*. Instead of simply making another traditional epic, Neto Jorge is re-doing it – altering it – and she is doing this from her land ["a terra de mim"]; and her land is from the margin. One alteration made by Neto Jorge, for example, is the number of "recantos" in her epic. Ana Luísa Amaral points out, in "Do Centro e da Margem: Escrita do Corpo em Escritas de Mulheres", that in writing nineteen "recantos", Luiza Neto Jorge is almost, but not quite, doubling the number of "cantos" from Camões' epic in a process that she refers to as "[m]ultiplicação pela falta" and which calls upon an "excess da ausência" (Amaral, 2003: 15). This "excess of absence" works to subvert and question the form of the Camões' epic and to completely resituate the work by bringing into a noticeably different, contemporary, marginal space.

This is a particularly literal example of the deterritorialization of literature as the traditional Portuguese epic has been removed from the ideologically recognisable space of the 'major literature' and has been placed in the oppositional space of the 'counter-epic' using a language that subverts and transgresses the major language of traditional Portuguese literature. The form of the epic has been deterritorialised from the state (patriarchal) definition of the Portuguese epic. Also in this first stanza, there is a distinct sense of the narrative voice being that of a minority, given the use of the pronouns 'vós' and 'mim', which goes to further cement the sense of a *littérature mineure* by reinforcing the idea of a minority *versus* a majority. The approach ["proposição"] for this epic poem, therefore, is to write a new version of Portuguese history through a different (this time feminine and marginal) lens.

The style of narration in *Dezanove Recantos* is fragmented and often relocated into the private realm as opposed to the public and much celebrated space of the epic adventures of the discoveries. In "Recanto 13", for example:

(…)
e a mulher (Ila, irmã de Ilo o mundo, a minha irmã),
que é repouso vasto enfurecido

corre a apanhá-los,
ao espelho, à flor,
da cintura irrompendo como de um jardim
para uma espécie de corpo inenarrável.

(Jorge, 2001: 194)

Here, the woman is the focus of the action and the heroic action takes place in a domestic setting characterised by a mirror, a flower, a belt and a garden ["espelho", "flor", "cintura", "jardim"]. The female character is described in a similar manner to the heroes of Camões' epic, as part of a kind of 'sisterhood' instead of a 'brotherhood', facing heroic deeds ["corre a apanhá-los"], but in the last line the phrase 'unspeakable body' ["corpo inenarrável"] reveals the silence that female sexuality has traditionally been forced to hide behind. By altering the language of the epic, rendering it more ambiguous, fragmenting it, disassociating it from the heroism of men and bringing it into a marginal realm, Luiza Neto Jorge destabilises the centrality of the masculine epic discourse that has for so long dominated Portuguese literature.[54]

This marginal lens or *littérature mineure* that seeks to speak in a language that comes from outside the dominant discourse can be seen to correspond with Kristeva's notion of a language that rejects the 'symbolic' – the stage of development where, according to Freudian theory, we repress our desire for the mother and begin to acquire language – and returns to a knowledge that stems from the semiotic, pre-symbolic relationship with maternal *jouissance.* For Kristeva, this *jouissance* and this de-repression of the mother can be found in poetic language which is characterised by rhythm and natural drives or instincts rather than signs and signification.

The link between *jouissance* and language, such as that proposed by Kristeva, is crucial to understanding the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge who eroticises not only the body, but the body of text. According to Ana Luísa Amaral, it is this aspect of Luiza Neto Jorge's writing – the destabilisation of the traditional poetic subject and the eroticisation of the act of writing – that best enables her to transgress and challenge patriarchal discourse:

[54] The heavy focus in Portuguese literature on Camões was part of the *Estado Novo's* efforts to instill a kind of national pride in the Portuguese and to encourage an image of a 'golden age' in Portuguese history that could be returned to. Aside from societal codes and moral values, this effort on behave of the state, no doubt, was intended to encourage support for the state's colonial exploits. In *Estados novos, estado novo: ensaios de história política e cultural* (2009), Luis Reis Torgal highlights the role that *Os Lusíadas* played in *Estado Novo* education where children were taught nationalist ideals from an early age: "É afinal a conhecida memória dos bancos da escola, onde se falava da Fundação da Nacionalidade, da Expansão, do nacionalismo literário da grande epopeia de *Os Lusíadas* (mais do que da *Mensagem* de Pessoa), do autoritarismo reformista de D. João II e de Pombal" (Torgal, 2009: 43).

> A essa crise de identidade alia-se uma consciência da escrita de mulher, instância performativa erótica que transgride as leis do discurso poético tradicional, pela invenção de uma linguagem de resistência. (Amaral, 2003: 115)

The poem that best expresses the fluidity between the eroticism of the body and the eroticism of the poetic text is "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza", where the title itself establishes a starting point lacking in stability. By using the title to merge her own name with a poetic form (the sonnet), Luiza Neto Jorge ensures that there is some ambiguity as to whether the poem is about the body of the author or the body of the text. In "Corpo, Enunciação e Identidade na Poesia de Luiza Neto Jorge", Martelo highlights the unbreakable relationship between the two bodies (author and text) and of the role of eroticism and desire in defining the identity of both in "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza":

> A relação entre o título "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza" e o soneto que assim se intitula mostra, em "mise-en-abîme", a importância dessa relação entre o nome e a obra. Neste poema, cujo título funde o nome da autora com o nome da forma poética utilizada, como se o texto de algum modo constituísse, em auto-retrato, uma identidade marcada pela pujança erótica presente no poema, não é possível estabelecer fronteiras entre a construção dessa identidade e o próprio acto de escrita. (…). (Martelo, 2001: 46-47)

Martelo then goes on to point out that, conversely, in the later poem "Minibiografia" (where the title itself hints at the same theme as "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza"), "a degradação do corpo manifesta-se como retracção do desejo e da escrita" (*ibidem*). The ambiguity between body and text, and its relationship to the erotic, is particularly clear in the first stanza of "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza":

> SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza
>
> A silabar que o poema é estulto
> o amado abre os dentes e eu deslizo;
> sismos, orgasmos tremem-lhe no olhar
> enquanto eu, quase a rimar, exulto.
>
> Conheço toda a terra só de amar:
> sem nós e sem desvãos, um corpo liso.
> Tenho o mênstruo escondido num reduto
> onde teoricamente chega o mar.
>
> Nos desertos – íntimos, insuspeitos –
> já caem com a calma as avestruzes
> – ou a distância, com os oásis, finda;
>
> à medida que nos arcaicos leitos
> se vão molhando vozes e alcatruzes
> ao descerem ao fundo pego, e à vinda.
>
> (Jorge, 2001: 209)

Here the verbs and actions used ["silabar", "deslizo", "orgasmo", "tremem-lhe", "olhar", "rimar", "exulto"] present a consistent ebb and flow between the body of the author and the body of the text, with actions such as the orgasm, the look and trembling bringing to mind the human body, yet simultaneously actions such as to syllabify, to slide from a mouth, and to rhyme are actions most commonly used to describe language. This unstable subject not only acts as a challenge to the traditional lyrical subject used in poetry, but also enables the eroticisation of language so that the exultation and sexual pleasure or *jouissance* described could also be referring to language. Like much of Luiza Neto Jorge's work, the tone of the poem in particular is highly erotic. At the very beginning of the poem, for example, the verb syllabify creates an air of the erotic, as though the whole process of reading or writing has been slowed down to be savoured one syllable at a time, emphasising a kind of *jouissance* that stems from the touching and caressing of the text.

In *Um corpo escrevente,* José Ricardo Nunes attributes the driving force of the action in the poem to *Eros*.[55] If we think back to Marcuse's theory that *Eros* holds the key to liberation, and to the socio-political repression of sexuality, however, we can see that there is something very different in the representation of eroticism in the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge. Despite brief moments of exultation, the eroticism and the bodies in Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry are often violent. In "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza", for example, the constant switching between body and text, and the intensity of the verbs cited above reveal not only brief moments of *jouissance,* but also a constant tension and violence, where the bodies described are never simply at ease in their eroticism. This intensity prevents the air of freedom and liberation that is brought by eroticism both in Marcuse's utopian ideal and in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta. The eroticism of the body and text in Luiza Neto Jorge, despite an effective rejection of the masculine libidinal economy and patriarchal discourse, remains a body in a violent state of flux and transition where the potential freedom of *Eros,* whilst promising freedom and driving the action of Neto Jorge's poetry, is not yet completely realised.

If patriarchal libidinal economy (such as the dominance of *Logos* described by Marcuse) is based on repression, a single subjectivity and the good of the public sphere, the female libidinal economy expressed through the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta and in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* represents a release from repression, an embracing of *Eros,* an open

[55]As Nunes states, "(…) o texto é de uma particular transparência: a força que torna possível a transmutação é da ordem do *eros;* é, muito claramente, uma pulsão sexual (e não é no acto sexual, recriado pelo poema, que maximamente se fundem dois corpos num outro tridimensional, como se 1+1 fosse igual ainda a 1 e não a 2?" (Nunes, 2000: 19)

and fluid subjectivity that is not based on the supremacy of a single 'I', and an erotic sexuality that is, above all, an end in itself. Although there is a rift between the tone of Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry and that of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Mara Teresa Horta, it is clear that, for these women writers at least, the erotic holds a potential key to effectively challenging and subverting the phallocentric hierarchisation of sexuality in Western culture. Undoubtedly, the approaches taken by these Portuguese women writers are extremely varied, but what they do share is the ability to boldly claim an alternative, feminine libidinal economy as their own and to show the way in which this economy affects language and irrevocably alters their world views.

Chapter Four: Taboo

cosa casi sagrada
es una cosa casi sagrada
una cosa casi
casi sagrada
tan casi sagrada es esta cosa
que llama poderosamente la atención

Susana Thénon

Under the rule of the patriarchy, female sexuality occupies an extraordinarily unique position in the hierarchy of sexual activity. According to their designated role in society, women are defined as purely sexual beings whose role is centred around their capacity for motherhood and their ability to please men sexually. In *Sexual Politics* (1969), Kate Millett describes the effect of patriarchal social conditions upon women's sexuality as resulting in "enormous and even anomalous results". Describing how women are forced to endure their sexuality as a punishment, rather than deriving pleasur from it, Millett states that

> [o]ne also observes the paradoxical situation that while patriarchy tends to convert woman to a sexual object, she has not been encouraged to enjoy the sexuality which is agreed to be her fate. Instead, she is made to suffer for and be ashamed of her sexuality, while in general not permitted to rise above the level of a nearly exclusively sexual existence. For the great mass of women throughout history have been confined to the cultural level of animal life in providing the male with sexual outlet and exercising the animal functions of reproduction and care of the young. (Millett, 2000: 119)

The language employed by Millett to describe the position of female sexuality in patriarchal society is especially useful in the context of this study. In particular, Millett's designation of women being sexually confined to the cultural level of animals brings to mind both the nature/ culture dichotomy of Chapter One and the definitions of human sexuality and the erotic by Paz, Bataille and Marcuse that we saw at the beginning of Part II. This description therefore helps us to understand the position of women in the hierarchisation of sexuality. If women are inferior because they lack the ability to play a part in 'culture' and remain closer to nature (as according to the nature/ culture dichotomy), and natural or animalistic sexuality is inferior to the 'human' eroticisation of sexual activity, then women must occupy a doubly inferior position. Moreover, women's identification under the patriarchy as being almost entirely sexual beings renders them trapped and imprisoned in this position of double inferiority.

In *Sexual Politics,* Millett focusses on the dynamics of power and domination to explain the process by which the patriarchy has been able to effectively and consistently relegate women to such a bleak, inferior position where "sexual association involves 'surrender'" and where "sexual intercourse is in fact (for women) a political act of submission" (*idem*: 116).[56]

The existence of taboo created by a hierarchy of sexual relations that relies on power and dominance is nowhere so clear as in the way we (even today) speak of and perceive the male and female sexual organs. The phallus, and shapes and symbols relating to the phallus, have become a universal symbol of power, where a larger phallus becomes a source of pride for its owner. The vagina, on the other hand, has become a source of taboo as it is almost universally perceived as impure and unclean. According to Millett:

> The uneasiness and disgust female genitals arouse in patriarchal societies is attested to through religious, cultural, and literary proscription. In preliterate groups fear is also a factor, as in the belief in a castrating *vagina dentata*. The penis, badge of the male's superior status in both preliterate and civilized patriarchies, is given the most crucial significance, the subject both of endless boasting and endless anxiety. (*idem:* 47)

This uneasiness and disgust has translated into a reluctance to speak of female genitalia[57] and of female sexual functions such as menstruation,[58] which are seen as impure. In order for women to ever experience complete sexual liberation, the taboo that surrounds their sexual organs, sexual functions and sexual desires must be removed. This is the goal that feminists and the women writers addressed in this study are striving for: a sexual equality and the removal of stigma from feminine sexuality. Writing from Portugal, of course, social taboo is an even more formidable opponent given the strength of the national censors and the ability of the state to prosecute the writers of any text deemed 'pornographic'.[59]

The text that most directly and completely addresses the taboos surrounding female sexuality in Portugal is, without a doubt, *Novas Cartas Portuguesas.* This epistolary novel is almost encyclopaedic in its discussion of a myriad of social taboos surrounding sexuality including explicit descriptions of the female body, female masturbation, sexual assault, incest, female

[56] This notion of surrender and performing a service recalls Foucault's description of homosexual relations in Ancient Greece (the original hierarchisation of sexual activity) and the way in which the position of power in sexual relations is accompanied by a certain social superiority as opposed to the submissive position which is perceived as shameful, impure and unspeakable: a taboo topic.

[57] The most taboo word of the English language, for example, is 'cunt' – a slang word for a vagina, often employed as an insult.

[58] In popular language menstruation is often referred to as 'the curse'. This language is consistent with the idea of punishment – no doubt as a result of women's supposed impurity.

[59] See Eileen O'Neill's "(Re)presentations of Eros" (1989), as cited in the introduction to Part Two, for further information on definitions of pornography.

sexual pleasure, female domination in sexual situations, orgasm, extra-marital sex, abortion, contraception and even bestiality, all in a mammoth project to support the second wave of Portuguese feminism and open the public's eyes to the reality of women's sexuality. Isabela de Jesus comments:

> A segunda vaga espelhava a enorme vontade das mulheres para decidir da sua própria vida, do seu corpo e da sua sexualidade, aspectos nunca antes evidenciados de um modo tão directo e generalizado, sendo que a desocultação da palavra se inscrevia como elemento fulcral nesse projecto pessoal e político. (Jesus, 2012: 47)

The phrase employed here by Isabela de Jesus, "a desocultação da palavra" [the unmasking of the word], emphasises the new openness with which the Three Marias approach the theme of women's sexuality and hints at the undoing of taboo. Indeed, the form of the epistolary novel itself – comprised of a mass of distinct female voices speaking openly and frankly to each other about their sexuality – is an immensely powerful one due to the sheer number of voices that are defiantly thwarting social taboos. This open and frank approach is crucial to achieving a sexual revolution that would free women from their inferior social position. In fact, for Millett, the breaking of taboo is the first move towards sexual revolution:

> A sexual revolution would require, perhaps first of all, an end of traditional sexual inhibitions and taboos, particularly those that most threaten patriarchal monogamous marriage: homosexuality, "illegitimacy," adolescent, pre- and extra-marital sexuality. (Millett, 2000: 62)

The idea of basing *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* on a well-known story of illegitimate love and extra-marital sexual relations is therefore highly significant as a form of rebellion against the patriarchal institutions that designate feminine sexual freedom as taboo. A whole community of female voices speaking against the silencing of women's sexuality has grown from the tale of a rebellious nun who has committed the unspeakable sin of engaging in frivolous sexual relations outside of marriage. *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* uses the breaking of taboo – the unveiling of voices – as a form of transgression that gives power to the female characters over the patriarchy that has defined said taboos.

The masturbation scene from the letter "A Paz", for example, can be seen as a demonstration of the transgressive power given to the female characters of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (in this case to Mariana Alcoforado herself) in the process of breaking taboo and in the practice of taboo acts. Masturbation for both sexes has long been a taboo subject, but the acceptance and acknowledgement that males masturbate took place long before that of female masturbation. In fact, female masturbation still remains a largely taboo topic compared to the relative openness with which male masturbation is perceived. This is perhaps due to the fact that female

masturbation was historically seen as doubly threatening; whereas male masturbation was discouraged simply on the grounds of supposedly wasting sperm or giving into sinful temptation, female masturbation was seen as a threat to both men and women. This phenomenon is explained in *With Pleasure: Thoughts on the Nature of Human Sexuality* (2002), by Paul Abramson and Steven Pinkerton:

> Female masturbation, in contrast, challenged prevailing beliefs in the asexuality of women, and allegedly incited lusts that could only be satisfied by the wanton expenditure of the male essence; female masturbation was thus as much a threat to masculinity as to femininity. (Abramson/ Pinkerton, 2002: 173)

Despite the fact that these strong anti-masturbatory views did mellow and become more logical in time, the stigma against female masturbation remained largely on the grounds of the expected 'asexuality' of women and the supposed dangers of women with a strong sense of their sexuality. It is the patriarchal expected roles of men and women, in society and in sexual relations, that are supposedly threatened by female masturbation and that justify the continuation of the taboo against it. Ultimately, the reason behind most feminine sexual taboos is that women were not expected to desire or become sexually aroused according to the role prescribed to them under patriarchal rule. It is for this reason that speaking openly about female masturbation and describing the act can be seen as subversive and transgressive, thus challenging patriarchal perceptions of female sexuality.

In "A Paz", whilst the transgressive act of masturbation takes place in secret (Mariana is concealed in her nun's cell), the pleasure experienced by Mariana comes not only from the physical act itself but also from its transgressive nature. The taboo act, therefore, is more pleasurable for being taboo. In *Erotism: Death and Sensuality,* Bataille describes what he calls "the paradox of the general taboo on sexual freedom":

> The remarkable thing about the sex taboo is that it is fully seen in transgression. It is inculcated partly through education but never resolutely formulated. Education proceeds as much by silence as by muffled warnings. The taboo is discovered directly by a furtive and at first partial exploration of the forbidden territory. At first nothing could be more mysterious. We are admitted to the knowledge of pleasure in which the notion of pleasure is mingled with mystery, suggestive of the taboo that fashions the pleasure at the same time as it condemns it. (Bataille, 1986: 107)

Although Bataille is not speaking specifically of the taboos that act to restrict and prohibit women's sexuality, his point that the transgressive and 'mysterious' nature of taboo acts creates or enhances the pleasure of committing them is nonetheless pertinent. The language used in "A Paz" does indicate that part of the pleasure in the taboo sexual act comes from the transgression itself. In the midst of the description of Mariana's pleasure, for example, we see the phrase

"Quebra-se, pois, a clausura" [she then breaks the enclosure] which is a clear mark of transgression. There is also a reference to the silence of the nun's cell ["silêncio da cela"] which appears to reflect the silencing of Mariana when she was confined to the convent, but which could also refer to the silencing of women and women's sexuality in a wider context (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2010: 36). In an almost circular structure, the taboo of pleasure causes the pleasure of taboo; for this reason, it is in moments of *jouissance* that we see the text repeatedly returning to the motif of speaking which just goes to highlight the link between pleasure and the breaking of taboo and silence. For example, whilst describing Mariana's body in ecstasy, the term 'erect tongue' ["língua entumescida"] is used. Just as the erect penis penetrates and breaks the vagina from itself, Mariana's tongue, erect from the pleasure of masturbation, penetrates the silence of the cell and breaks taboo. It is also important to remember here that the Portuguese word "língua" is also used to mean "language".

In "A Preface to Transgression",[60] Michel Foucault explains how sexuality has not been liberated but has been carried to and defines our limits of being; this includes the limit of consciousness ("because it ultimately dictates the only possible reading of our unconsciousness"), the limit of the law ("since it seems the sole substance of universal taboos"), and the limit of language ("since it traces the line of foam showing just how far speech may advance upon the sands of silence") (Foucault, 1977: 30). The fact that sexuality, according to Foucault, marks the limit of our being means that transgression of the limits designated by the hierarchisation of sexuality would constitute a reorganisation of structures of consciousness, law and language: the three areas which have been highlighted in this study as the primary sites of patriarchal oppression of women. This movement and reorganisation is inherent in the nature of transgression itself, as Foucault explains:

> transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more to the horizon of the uncrossable. But this relationship is considerably more complex: these elements are situated in an uncertain context, in certainties which are immediately upset so that thought is ineffectual as soon as it attempts to seize them. (*idem:* 34)

Thus, once the line that designates the limit has been moved (transgressed), everything that once lay inside the limit must be reorganised to incorporate that which has been obtained via transgression. So, in terms of sexuality, transgression, whilst increasing the sense of pleasure by its nature as transgression, also acts to reconceive the definitions of sexuality,

[60] First published in an edition of the journal *Critique, "Hommage à Georges Bataille"* [Hommage to Georges Bataille] in 1963, the year following Bataille's death.

consciousness, language and law. In the case of the Portuguese women's writing studied here, therefore, the incorporation of female sexual pleasure and previously taboo aspects of the female body and sexuality could necessitate a fundamental change in the patriarchal organisation of sexuality that previously defined limits to exclude female sexuality.

In "A Paz", these changes (to discourse and language in particular) are made clear in the repeated references to the mouth and the tongue which occur in moments of transgressive sexual pleasure. Towards the end of the letter, for exemple, we see the sentence "Devagar meu amor, devagar o nosso orgasmo que contornas ou eu contorno com a língua" (*idem:* 37). In this imagined scene of sexual pleasure, the focus is on both the male and female parties reaching orgasm at the same time. The female orgasm is part of the taboo of female sexuality where women are expected to endure sex rather than enjoy it. The use of the word "língua", though, is especially interesting as it is used with the verb "contornar" [get around or negotiate]. This implies that language, as well as the explicit show of female sexual pleasure, is used to bypass or detour around social taboo. It also recalls Foucault's notion of transgression, as the word "contornar" is reminiscent of the reorganisation of the parameters of sexuality and the language that defines it, and of a limit that is being altered, or negotiated to incorporate female sexual pleasure.

This exercise of breaking taboo to further the cause for a freer expression of women's sexuality is referred to in "A Paz" as an "exercise of bodily passion, the exercise of baring the roots of passion" ["Exercício do corpo-paixão, exercício da paixão na sua causa" (*idem*: 36)].[61] This phrase, and in particular the word "cause" ["causa"] tells us that the transgression in this text is not simply an individual act of transgression against Mariana's specific situation, but is an act of transgression that aims at a higher cause and a wider context. This is not a single act of rebellion against Mariana's confinement in a convent, but is a symbolic act of rebellion against the taboo of female sexuality and against the patriarchal organisation of sexuality and the erotic that has caused the relegation of women's sexuality to such an inferior position.

Aside from breaking the taboo on female sexual pleasure, however, the Three Marias also address a pressing concern in Portuguese feminism: the prevailing silence on sexual violence. Before the growth of international feminist movements in the 1960s and 1970s, conjugal violence, domestic violence and incestuous sexual violence were largely considered private matters and were not considered topics of public concern or for public interference. For this

[61] Translation by Helen R. Lane for the English-language edition of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas.* (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 1975: 59).

reason, the voices of victims of domestic and sexual violence were mostly not only unheard but also unspoken. The attitude towards this kind of violence was one of fear and, on the part of women, endurance. In Portugal, in fact, the question of legally protecting women from domestic violence never even entered discussions until 1989, and there was no law passed on the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence until 1991.[62] Even then, domestic violence was classed as a private crime and didn't change status to become a public crime until 2000.[63] Despite the legislation to protect victims of domestic violence arriving quite late in Portugal, the inability to speak about it – the taboo of domestic and sexual violence – began to break down as more women began to understand that 'the personal is political'.[64] This understanding lead to a wider questioning of the power structures in society and a lot of so-called 'women's issues'.[65] Manuela Tavares explains that

> [u]ma das ideias fulcrais introduzidas pelo feminismo radical: "O pessoal é político" teve uma enorme influência no desenvolvimento de novas áreas de intervenção que causavam rupturas com o pensamento dominante: a legalização do aborto, a violência doméstica sobre as mulheres, as sexualidades, o casamento e as relações no seio das famílias, o lesbianismo. O feminismo denunciou como a sexualidade das mulheres estava limitada pela reprodução, nem sempre desejada, pela dependência económica e social, pelas limitações de um casamento e de uma sexualidade baseados na dominação masculina. (Tavares, 2011: 622)

Novas Cartas Portuguesas almost seems like a specifically Portuguese embodiment of this slogan, as it collects snippets of the daily personal victimisation of women in Portugal and places them in a political sphere. Possibly the most striking portrayal and revelation of a generally unspoken kind of violence in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* are the "A mãe", "O PAI" and "A filha" letters. These letters, interspersed throughout the text yet linked, portray a father's incestuous rape of his daughter and the repercussions through the eyes of the three members of

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[62] See *Lei n.º 61/91, de 13 de Agosto.*

[63] See *Lei n.º 7/2000, de 27 de Maio.* The legislation *Lei n.º 65/98, de 2 de Setembro* made domestic violence a semi-public crime in 1998.

[64] Slogan from the 1960s and 1970s student and second-wave feminist movements which highlights the link between personal experience and larger social and political structures. In terms of second-wave feminism, the slogan was predominantly used in order to challenge the ideal of the nuclear family and the values and roles that accompanied it. The slogan became more well-known and more commonly used with the publication of the essay of the same same by Carol Hanisch in 1970 in *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation,* in which Hanisch emphasized that issues often seen as private (such as abortion, the way women are expected to appear, sex, the division of domestic chores, and childcare) are political and that they are caused by male domination in society (Hanisch, 1970: 76-77).

[65] On the subject of crime, it is particularly interesting that many of the forms of oppression and violence addressed in this thesis were addressed in the first International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in 1976, including (but not limited to): "Compulsory Heterosexuality", "Crimes within the Patriarchal Family", "Dual oppression by Family and Economy", "Violence Against Women" (which included rape, woman battering, and repression of nonconforming girls) and "Sexual Objectification of Women" (Russell/ Van de Ven, 1990: 2-3). This was also the first use of the term "compulsory heterosexuality", (referring to the violence with which women are forced to adhere to phallocentric models of heterosexuality) which would later (in 1986) be more completely conceptualised in Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Hererosexuality and Lesbian Experience".

the small family: the mother, the father and the daughter. "O PAI" is a particularly interesting letter because it is one of the few texts of the novel with a male point of view. Like biblical Eve, the daughter is blamed for inciting and tempting the father to sin, and is made to shoulder the burden of guilt:

> «– Tens de deixar esta casa – disse-lhe ele numa voz neutra, monocórdia – não podemos continuar a viver todos juntos na mesma casa depois do que se passou. Foste a culpada de tudo, bem sabes que foste a culpada de tudo, eu sou homem; sou homem e tu és provocante, perversa. És perversa. Uma mulher sem vergonha, sem pudor. Não te quero ver mais, enojas-me repugnas-me, envergonhas-me. Tu percebias, sei que percebias, que sabias como me punhas. Eu sou homem minha puta.» (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2010: 130)

The language in this passage is consistent not only with that of the original sin ("culpada", "provocante", "vergonha" [guilty, provocative, shame]) but also, the repetition of the word "perversa" ["perverse"] is consistent with the idea of taboo and the differentiation between what constitutes erotic and what constitutes perverse or taboo sexuality. In this letter, there is a distinct sense of hierarchy with the repetition of the phrase "sou homem", which the father sees as a reason in itself of the culpability of the daughter; after all, it is women who are responsible for the fall of man. In *Sexual Politics*, Millett explains how the all-too-common inverted culpability in sexual assault relates to the silence that veils sexual crimes from the public arena:

> Patriarchal force also relies on a form of violence particularly sexual in character and realized most completely in the act of rape. The figures of rapes reported represent only a fraction of those which occur, as the "shame" of the event is sufficient to deter women from the notion of civil prosecution under the public circumstances of a trial. (Millett, 2000: 44)

Thus, the shame instilled upon the victim acts as a silencing mechanism. The unjustified inversion of guilt contributes significantly to the silence and taboo on domestic and sexual violence and allows it to continue unnoticed in a patriarchal society.

The authority to blame the victim, however, doesn't come from the individual king-like status of the father in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, but is rather supported by the entire patriarchal institution of family and marriage where socially, economically and politically the father is given complete and unquestioned power over the women in his family. Kate Millett states that "[w]here differences in physical strength have become immaterial through the use of arms, the female is rendered innocuous by her socialization. Before the assault she is almost universally defenceless both by her physical and emotional training" (*ibidem*).

Thus, it is ultimately the girl's social status as a woman under patriarchal control that renders her a victim; the abuse of patriarchal power cannot, therefore, be overturned. Socially, the

daughter is physically, economically, and legally at the mercy of her father, just as her mother. Like the role of the state in an authoritarian regime, the law of the father prohibits opposition to the patriarch and invalidates his guilt. The daughter's meek response "Claro que sou uma puta, podes estar tranquilo, pai, sou uma puta" (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2010: 130) demonstrates exactly how women are conditioned by the phallocentric structure of the institution of family to submit to and agree with her father even after such a violent attack.

The mother's response to the act goes even further to cement the image of a completely phallocentric structure. When she discovers the rape, the mother turns her anger not towards the father, but towards the daughter as she has to support the patriarch due to the phallocentric nature of the family structure. Just as the daughter repeats and supports her father's assertion that she is a "puta" [whore], the mother's response also employs similar language, repeating the phrase "Grande cabra" [bitch] at her daughter before banishing her from the house. The idea of there being a 'law of the father' that works against the female victim is also apparent in "A filha", the daughter's letter to her mother when she has been asked to forgive her mother for abandoning her:

> Juntamente com o António criaste-o à tua maneira, alegremente rindo do meu desgosto e ânsia de apertar nos braços esse filho que me tiravam, coniventes, ambos carrascos e juízes, unidos a fim de me fazerem sofrer e sob o vosso poder me internarem aqui, onde agora me vieram procurar para perdoar-te o «castigo» que me destes… (Barreno/ Horta/ Costa, 2010: 212)

This passage can be read as a direct criticism of the patriarchal and phallocentric structure of the family which is described using the metaphor of a corrupt legal system intent on silencing and oppressing instead of finding true justice. The idea that the parents play the part of both executioners ["carrascos"] and judges ["juízes"] and are united with the sole aim of making the girl suffer ["unidos a fim de me fazerem sofrer"] highlights the absolute power held by the patriarch in the family and the ease with which this power can be abused. The text then goes on to link the story of sexual abuse in the family to the wider silencing of women by referring to punishment and internment ["castigo", "internarem"] which brings to mind the literal veiling of Mariana de Alcoforado's voice – the symbol used in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* for the universal oppression of women.

Whereas *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* highlights the violence of the taboo and silence on crimes against women under the *Estado Novo* in a way that protects the patriarchy at the expense of the safety of women as well as the taboo on female sexuality, the most striking attacks on taboo in the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta take place in her poems that target the taboo on the female

body. In the collection *Rosa Sangrenta* (1987), the focal point is the breaking of the taboo on female sexual organs and on menstruation. Tellingly, the collection is headed by an epigraph taken from Germaine Greer's famous, yet controversial, text *The Female Eunuch:*

> *Se você se supõe uma mulher livre,*
> *imagine a hipótese de provar o seu sangue menstrual.*
> *Se isso lhe causar nojo, é porque tem ainda*
> *um longo caminho a percorrer*
>
> (Horta, 2009: 600)

This epigraph sets the tone and also lays out the objective of the following poems that aim to challenge the stigma around menstruation and the prevailing idea that menstruation is something disgusting and private; not for public consumption. Describing social perception of menstruation, Kate Millett says:

> The feeling that woman's sexual functions are impure is both world-wide and persistent. One sees evidence of it everywhere in literature, in myth, in primitive and civilized life. It is striking how the notion persists today. The event of menstruation, for example, is a largely clandestine affair, and the psycho-social effect of the stigma attached must have a great effect on the female ego. (…) Primitive peoples explain the phenomenon of the female's genitals in terms of a wound (...). Once she was wounded, now she bleeds. Contemporary slang for the vagina is "gash." (Millett, 2000: 47)

If we look at the first poem of *Rosa Sangrenta*, "Uma rosa…", we can see how Maria Teresa Horta uses imagery to reverse the negative associations that have made menstruation and the vagina such taboo topics. Instead of something impure or painful, the female genitalia become beautiful. In "Da Margem ao Centro: A Poesia em Vermelho" from the book *Letras escarlata: Estudos sobre a representación da menstruación* (2016), Mónica de Sant'Anna describes the way in which Maria Teresa Horta presents the female body and menstruation in *Rosa Sangrenta:* "Com efeito, o sujeito lírico denota alegria e prazer ao poetizar a experiência de ser mulher e de menstruar, o que contrasta com certos esboços do ranço da sociedade patriarcal" (Sant'Anna, M., 2016: 210).

According to patriarchal social values menstruation and the vagina are seen as impure, rancid and unclean, whereas the phallus is perceived as erotic. In "Uma rosa…" Maria Teresa Horta uses language that brings female sexuality and the female body back into contact with the erotic. The poem contains a proliferation of positive metaphors of beauty, sexuality and luxury that are applied to female genitals and menstruation in order to counteract the idea of female sexual functions as an affliction, curse, or wound. Images such as that of a rose, a petal, a ruby, satin or silk ["rosa", "pétala", "rubi", "cetim", "seda"] (Horta, 2009: 601-602) directly contradict the idea that has endured under patriarchal social rule that vaginas and menstruation

are impure, rancid or unclean and invalidate phallocentric definitions of the erotic and the perverse that have led these key symbols of femininity and female sexuality to be demonised and relegated to the realm of taboo.

Whilst Horta has used a series of metaphors, that is not to say that she has fallen into the trap of simply euphemising female sexuality so that it still remains unspoken. In order to break the taboo, it is important to speak the female body as well as change perceptions of it, and this is exactly what Maria Teresa Horta has achieved. Alongside the metaphors of beauty and luxury, Horta also speaks the female body and female sexuality boldly by using the real names of the body parts and functions that have so long remained unspoken: "de mênstruo legado", "um pequeno clitoris alto", "no fundo da vagina", "rosa de orgasmo" [inherited periods; a small, high clitoris; deep in the vagina; rose of orgasm]. Horta has also made it clear in "Uma rosa…" that she is criticising the silencing of the female body and of female sexuality in a few concise phrases: "Uma flor calada", "de lábios mansos fechados sobre a língua" and "esse outro gosto travado sobre a língua" [a silenced flower; of gentle lips closed on the tongue; this other pleasure locked on the tongue] (*ibidem*). In these lines, references to speech remind us of patriarchal society's inability to pronounce the names of female sexuality whilst words consistent with oppression and suppression, such as silent, closed, and locked ("calada", "fechados", "travado") further underline the consequences that this has had on the female ego and on women's ability to practise and understand their own sexuality.

In this poem, what is particularly striking is the way in which Maria Teresa Horta has incorporated the unspoken, taboo parts of the female body and female bodily functions into an erotic poetic that celebrates female sexuality without romanticising it. This ability to combine images of beauty with a matter-of-fact manner of speaking the *real* female body and the pleasures that it can experience is the complete opposite to the either asexual or romanticised (euphemised) portrayals of female sexuality presented by the traditional, patriarchal lyric. The taboo and marginalised image of a sexually active and sexually desiring woman stands proud in "Uma rosa…", owning and celebrating the beauty of her body as part of her eroticism:

> Uma rosa que sangra
> entre as pernas
> no côncavo do corpo adormecida
>
> Uma rosa no ventre
> entreaberta
> em si própria rasgada, enlouquecida
>
> Uma rosa de febre

respirada
tecida nos sucos do desdém

Orgástica – voraz
e decepada
pétala a pétala lambida e desenhada

O caule erguido
no golpe
em que se vem

Uma rosa de fogo
incendiada
de lábios mansos fechados sobre a língua

De sucos doces
e de licores que cavam
esse outro gosto travado sobre a língua

Uma rosa mátria
de mênstruo legado
espécie de pacto – de acto
ou de sina

Com um pequeno clitoris alto
de súbito crescido
e tumefacto
indo explodir no fundo da vagina

Uma rosa poisada
ali no quarto
entre as coxas largada e sem doçura

Carnívora, ardente e esfomeada
de tudo o que sedento
é já fissura

Uma rosa de seda
de sede
de humidade

Uma rosa de pele
uma ametista breve
um rubi sangrando entre as pálpebras

Fazendo estremecer
as espáduas
ao de leve

Uma rosa!
Uma rosa!

Uma flor calada

No limite do corpo e da raiz
indo buscar ao útero
a sua outra face

> Uma rosa de púrpura
> Uma rosa de saxe
> Uma rosa de orgasmo e de cetim
>
> (*idem*: 601-602)

The language of these stanzas in particular is active and loud in its denunciation of the mythical silent, asexualised woman, and the term carnivorous ["carnívora"] can even be seen as a challenge to the demonised images of female sexuality such as the *vagina dentata*[66]. Furthermore, Horta transforms female sexuality and the female body from a source of shame and taboo into a positive symbol of female unity and womanhood. Sant'Anna says:

> O livro *Rosa Sangrenta* que explora com intensidade e pormenor o corpo da mulher através de uma marca, por muito tempo, vista como discriminatória de feminilidade. Tem a intenção de pôr de relevo o que é único e singular na mulher, o seu sangue mensal/ menstrual, inscrevendo-a num destino (com)partilhado (…). (Sant'Anna, M., 2016: 209)

In inverting the meaning of menstruation in particular, Maria Teresa Horta has thus created a stance of power and unity amongst women that is almost rebellious in its self-affirmation, forming a more matriarchal union that can stand up against the power of the patriarchy. Just as Millett described the negative effect that the demonization of menstruation and the female body can have on the female ego, using menstruation as a source of pride and female heritage can have the effect of supercharging the female ego to the extent that it forms a position of viable opposition to the patriarchy. This is particularly clear in the eighth stanza of "Uma rosa…": Here, the rose that represents the vagina and menstruation is described as 'mátria'[67], which is an interesting word, as it plays on the term "patria" [fatherland] and turns it into a feminine concept using the Latin root for the word mother. This word, accompanied by references to legacy, pact, and fate ["legado", "pacto", "sina"] turn the 'rosa' into a kind of emblem of a feminine dynasty, whilst the previous associations with sexual pleasure, pride, and beauty prevent this emblem from becoming a symbol of a biologist definition of womanhood.

Despite narrowly avoiding the trap of biologism, Maria Teresa Horta's notion of female creativity does rely heavily upon the body and the corporeal sexuality of women, as is evident when looking through the index of her oeuvre where nearly every title refers to the body or to

[66] The *vagina dentata*, which literally translates as 'vagina with teeth', is a folkloric figure of a sexually threatening woman with the power to emasculate or castrate men who have sex with her. From a feminist perspective this can be seen as a demonisation of female sexuality, denouncing it as dangerous.

[67] The term "mátria" was also used by Natália Correia as the title of her book of poems "Mátria" (1968) – which also explores the question idea of a female eroticism – and for the title of a television series which discussed political, social and philosophical questions based on Portugal, including the trial of the Three Marias.

bodily sexual pleasure. In her essay, *'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity*, Susan Gubar explains the relationship between the body, blood and female creativity:

> [F]irst, many women experience their own bodies as the only available medium for their art, with the result that the distance between the woman artist and her art is often radically diminished; second, one of the primary and most resonant metaphors provided by the female body is blood, and cultural forms of creativity are often experienced as a painful wounding. (Gubar, 2014: 254)

So, like Cixous' "writing the body", Gubar describes the tendency for women to see the body as central to the creative process, believing that they must literally put themselves into their art. This process recalls Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), and their description of men's creative process of killing women into art ("The pen, therefore, is not only mightier than the sword, it is also *like* the sword in its power – its need, even – to kill" (Gilbert/ Gubar, 2000: 14); so women, in response to this muder-of-sorts, must enter into the process of putting themselves into art, so that they are not killed into it. Menstruation blood, therefore, can be seen as a subversion of the male process of killing-into-art in that it can be seen as a symbol of life at the same time as a symbol of female creativity.[68] In writing her poetry, therefore, Maria Teresa Horta gives a creative voice to the elements of the female body and female sexuality that are silenced under patriarchal constructs of taboo and perversion, and using these previously silent entities to create her own creative and lyrical identity.

Luiza Neto Jorge, however, does not see using the body as a symbol of femininity as an efficient way to erase inequalities but rather as a way of cementing a sexual identification that does not allow fluidity, change or true equality between the sexes. In her work, despite using the body and the erotic extensively in her model of creativity, Neto Jorge denies the possibility of a biologist association of the body as gender identity in favour of a representation of the body that emphasises the performativity of gender. Taboo, then, for Luiza Neto Jorge, is another example of the way in which patriarchal society has organised and imposed certain gestures that it defines as feminine. Not speaking about menstruation, female sexual pleasure, or female genitalia is a social habit that has shaped the normative definition of the female gender and also the relegation of the female gender to an inferior position.

Having said this, menstruation does appear in the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge, but in a much more personal manner as an element of an individual woman's experience of life in the autobiographical poem "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza". Despite the apparently autobiographical nature of this poem that

[68] Some artists have, in the past few decades, taking to using menstruation blood in their work. In 1972, for example, Judy Chicago created the provocative piece *Menstruation Bathroom,* and Vanessa Tiegs' 2010 work *Menstrala* has subsequently sparked the "Menstrala movement", which consists of a whole community of artists who use their menstrual blood as an artistic medium.

prevents a biologist reading of the female body, there is a distinct reference in "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza" to the wider social context of taboo and oppression that Maria Teresa Horta fought against in *Rosa Sangrenta:*

> (…)
> Tenho o mênstruo escondido num reduto
> onde teoricamente chega o mar.
> (…)
>
> (Jorge, 2001: 209)

Here, the use of the words "escondido" [hidden] and "reduto" [refuge] reveal a distinct conservatism to the extent that it brings to mind images of primitive or ancient societies where women were literally removed from society and hidden in a separate room or house for the duration of their periods. This is then followed by a metaphor for male power, as the sea can be seen as a male body exerting dominance over a female body which emphasises the role of power and dominance in the creation of social taboos, such as is the case with menstruation. In the context of the whole poem, these two lines help to point towards a need for the transgression of both literary and social rules and taboos. For example, the erotic pleasure taken in speaking in the first stanza ("A silabar que o poema é estulto (…) quase a rimar, exulto") highlights the pleasure that can be taken from transgression, as we saw in the letter "A Paz" from *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* at the beginning of this chapter.

In "Minibiografia" – a poem published towards the end of Neto Jorge's career and life – Neto Jorge uses the materiality of a body that bleeds, lives and grows old to contrast with the superficiality and performativity of being and of the body:

> MINIBIOGRAFIA
>
> Não me quero com o tempo nem com a moda
> Olho como um deus para tudo de alto
> Mas zás! do motor corpo o mau ressalto
> Me faz a todo o passo errar a coda.
>
> Porque envelheço, adoeço, esqueço
> Quanto a vida é gesto e amor é foda;
> Diferente me concebo e só do avesso
> O formato mulher se me acomoda.
>
> E se a nave vier do fundo espaço
> Cedo raptar-me, assassinar-me, cedo:
> Logo me leve, subirei sem medo
> À cena do mais árduo e do mais escasso.
>
> Um poema deixo, ao retardador:
> Meia palavra a bom entendedor.
>
> (*idem:* 254)

In this stanza, the term "formato mulher" [women's format] can be read as a reference to the female reproductive system and the image to which a woman is created, *per se*, or it could be taken to refer to a specifically feminine outlook. Taken to mean the former, however, this stanza introduces a sense of flexibility and superficiality to the shape and form of a woman's body and questions the extent to which this body is a concrete or unchangeable entity and also the extent to which the body described can reliably be used to define the person inside it. In this stanza taboo topics such as female anatomy and the use of swear words are framed alongside language consistent with performativity ("gesto", "me concebo", "format" [gesture, I conceive myself, format]) to reflect on the idea of the body and the limits of the body as a social creation defined by rules and taboo. In her ground-breaking text on the performativity of gender, *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler explains the way in which taboo affects the social definition of the body's limits using Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger*[69] (1966) as a starting point:

> Her analysis suggests that what constitutes the limit of the body is never merely material, but that the surface, the skin, is systematically signified by taboos and anticipated transgressions; indeed, the boundaries of the body become, within her analysis, the limits of the social *per se*. A poststructuralist appropriation of her view might well understand the boundaries of the body as the limits of the socially *hegemonic*. (Butler, 1999: 167)

Thus the social definition of the body, and what constitutes the boundaries of this body, are not concrete and unmoveable but are defined by the rules and taboos that shape the expression of the body in a given society. The 'formato mulher' of "Minibiografia", therefore, can change or morph according to the society in which it is inscribed; and the limits of the body, as a social phenomenon rather than a biological one, can be transgressed. Judith Butler's gender theory, which posits gender as an identity that exists only according to discourse – "gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid, regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Butler, 1999: 43-44) – is influenced by the New French Feminist's focus on discourse. Butler's theory on gender performativity can be seen partly as an expansion and development of Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman*, where Irigaray employs mimicry to exaggerate and call into question traditional representations of femininity.[70] Butler goes on to state that

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[69] *Purity and Danger: An analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* was written by anthropologist Mary Douglas in 1966. In this text Douglas explores the variety of definitions of dirt and cleanliness in different societies and the ways in which these definitions are employed as models for social order. Douglas states, for example "that ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above [sic] and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created." (Douglas, 2002: 4) Unlike Butler, Douglas accepts a binary understanding of social order on the basis of what is considered clean and what is considered dirty, yet Butler has used Douglas' text as a starting point for understanding the creation of taboo and social orders from which to develop her theory on the effects of taboo on gender identity.

[70] However, Butler's approach to the question of sexual difference differs greatly from Irigaray and Cixous'. Despite the fact that each of the New French Feminists acknowledge the role of discourse in creating gendered identities, Irigaray and Cixous believe that in order to alter the inequalities created by patriarchal discourse,

> Douglas alludes to "a kind of pollution which expresses a desire to keep the body (physical and social) intact," suggesting that the naturalized notion of "the" body is itself a consequence of taboos that render the body discrete by virtue of its stable boundaries. Further, the rites of passage that govern various bodily orifices presuppose a heterosexual construction of gendered exchange, positions, and erotic possibilities. The deregulation of such exchanges accordingly disrupts the very boundaries that determine what it is to be a body at all. (Butler, 1999: 169)

Although Butler is referring predominantly to the perception of homosexual oral and penetrative sex here, her notion of taboo and its ramifications upon the boundaries of the body are still useful for understanding the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge[71]. Neto Jorge's questioning of the limits of the body and the role of performance, habit, and social regulations in creating a seemingly permanent, yet ultimately superficial definition of the body and its boundaries are all too clear in "Minibiografia". In another key poem of Neto Jorge's oeuvre, "Pelo Corpo", she uses the unforgettable image of a revolving door to describe a sexual encounter that bears a remarkable similarity to Butler's definition of a deregulation of the body that would result in the disruption of "the very boundaries that determine what it is to be a body at all":

> PELO CORPO
>
> infinita invenção
> de pétala a escaldar
> desprende o falo
>
> a palavra sublinhada
> que é ele a avançar-me
> pelo corpo
>
> a porta giratória
> que me troca
> pelo homem e, a este,
>
> o fértil trajo
> que lhe cria mais seios
> pelo corpo
>
> (Jorge, 2001: 207)

In this poem, the rules that determine which body belongs to the man and which belongs to the women are removed, thus the 'revolving door' ["porta giratória"] of identity is made possible

feminism should see sexual difference as an ontological reality and embrace it as the basis of feminist theory and practice. Butler, on the other hand, as part of her theory on gender performativity, questions the reality of sexual difference and sees it only as an aspect of the restrictive representational system that created oppressive gender identities in the first place. Furthermore, whilst Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva believe that creating another culturally valued female sexual identity (such as *l'écriture féminine, jouissance* and the pre-symbolic) is enough to alter inequalities, Butler sees parody or drag performances of gender as a more effective method for revealing the heterosexual matrix that restricts gender identity to binarisms.

[71] Given the space to do so, it would be interesting to compare the application of queer theory in the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge to its application in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, which has already been done by Ana Luísa Amaral in "Desconstruindo Identidades: Ler Novas Cartas Portuguesas à Luz da Teoria Queer" (Amaral, 2001) and by Marta Mascarenhas in her thesis "A Fluida Arte da Descosura" (Mascarenhas, 2007).

as they transgress the bodies' boundaries. As we saw earlier in Foucault's "A Preface to Transgression", the act of transgression, of pushing the limits of sexuality and (in this case) gender, necessitates a complete reorganisation of sexuality. This means that the whole concept of gender and sexuality – according to the limits of consciousness, law, and language – are destabilised and put into question.

The taboos that we have seen criticised in "SO-NETO JORGE, Luiza", in the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta and in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* create boundaries, but the removal of these taboos and the hierarchisation of sexuality and gender that has created them, like the removal of the phallus in the first stanza of "Pelo Corpo" can obliterate these boundaries. Luiza Neto Jorge has, therefore, throughout her poetry depicted the superficiality of patriarchal concepts of sex and gender and of the constructions that regulate these concepts and has demonstrated the endless possibilities that would be open to us if they were to be removed. All of this, Luiza Neto Jorge has achieved nearly a decade before the rise of third wave feminism and of gender theorists such as Judith Butler who brought the performative nature of gender and sexuality to the world's attention in the 1990s, and Neto Jorge did it under a strict, conservative dictatorship in a society where many women were not even aware of the fact that sex can be pleasurable for women.

Compared to *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta, Luiza Neto Jorge's approach to challenging taboo and the regulation of sexuality is years ahead in terms of gender theory and advances in feminism especially. Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry seems to go much further in terms of subverting repressive discourse's of gender (something that didn't come to the forefront of feminist theory until the 1990s with Juith Butler) than *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta which focuss more on the subversion of specific symptoms of patriarchal discourse. In fact, despite the fact that the texts analysed in this chapter have come from the same, or similar, contexts and can all be read as significant challenges to the patriarchal hierarchisation of sexuality, it is remarkable how varied they are in terms of approach and effect. *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* aimed at the heart of the fiercely patriarchal political institution that systematically oppressed women using conservative values to regulate women's knowledge and experience of sexuality with taboo as the main weapon in its arsenal. Maria Teresa Horta, on the other hand, proudly shouted women's sexuality and bodies from the rooftops, defying taboos and encouraging women to value what has long been deemed impure and disgusting according to patriarchal perceptions of sexuality. And finally, Luiza Neto Jorge has deftly unpicked the social concepts of gender and sexuality to show

exactly how superficial and limited our understanding of the body as a social entity is, eventually demonstrating the possibility of a completely free experience of sexuality with the removal of the bodily boundaries and limits that restrict us. Each of the texts that appear in this chapter have been created in such a way as to deconstruct and invalidate the reign of taboo in Portuguese and Western society, underlining the inadequacy of such a limited model of sexuality and highlighting the ways in which taboo and the regulation of sexuality in patriarchy has systematically oppressed women into a position of complete inferiority.

Conclusion

> The moment when a feeling enters the body *is political. This touch is political.*
>
> Adrienne Rich

This study has brought to light, not only the crucial role of the female body and female sexuality in Portuguese women writers' understanding of liberation, but also the way in which our perceptions of the body and of our sexuality permeate almost every aspect of our lives. Testament to this is the huge number of theoretical approaches that can be taken when analysing these central motifs in Portuguese women's writing. This thesis has shown, through *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta, how women's writing can bring often abstract philosophical, feminist, sociological, semiological, literary, and psychoanalytic theory into contact with real-world and political issues.

These incredible, ground-breaking Portuguese women writers have used women's sexuality and the female body as vehicles of resistance against the whole spectrum of patriarchal oppression. The approach taken in this study has, however, been structured so as not to fall into the trap of ignoring the important theoretical questions that are often bypassed in favour of the political when studying women's writing. A reading of these texts that avoids the banalisation that can occur when studying women's writing by limiting analysis to a consideration of social and political "women's issues", has allowed us to dig deeper into the literary and theoretical merit of these texts which not only call for women's liberation but also strike at the heart of the phallocentric, patriarchal structures that form the basis of our entire world-view and system of knowledge. It has become clear just how crucial the link between language, power and sexuality is in the way that sexuality and the body are expressed, and in the way that the dominant forces that control the way in which we express our sexuality can completely alter our identity, our social status and our experience of the world. Consequently, the undeniably central role of discourse in defining feminine sexual and corporeal identity has been essential to this study and has necessitated a large spectrum of theoretical approaches to fully understand the methods used in *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta to challenge patriarchal

definitions of femininity and to build a new concept of sexuality that makes room for, and often prioritises, the "feminine" or the female perspective.

The challenge of using a corpus of literary and critical texts where the majority was written in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, however, is that one can lose sight of their continued relevance. This is especially true in the case of the works of Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva, who have often been misread and criticised for being essentialist[72]. The use of these feminist theories, however, is justified by their continued influence today and the fact that their writings (like the literary texts analysed in this thesis) still play an important role in the elaboration of current feminist and literary theory on an international level, including (but not limited to) the development of queer and gender studies. The New French Feminists, and Foucault, despite at times seeming dated, are crucial to current theory (Judith Butler's work, for example) on the materialism of the body and changing conceptions of sexuality.

What is also important to remember, despite criticism of New French Feminism, is that they propose strategies for the creation of a specific discourse for women – a project that is also still pertinent today as women still find themselves under-represented in culture, and restricted by prevailing notions of femininity and the female body. Furthermore, the at times 'essentialist' nature of the feminist (and to some extent the philosophical) theories used in this thesis can be an advantage as it encourages a focus on discursive and textual elements of literary texts, which helps to understand the link between language, the body and sexuality, thus avoiding the pitfall of ignoring the textual in favour of the socio-political siginificance of literature.

The choice to limit the theoretical input of the New French Feminists to only three theorists – Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva – instead of others such as Simone de Beauvoir (who was contacted by the Three Marias after the publication of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*) and Monique Wittig (who provided the French translation of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*) was partially a question of timing, but was also a question of theoretical suitability. Considering the constraints of this study, it seemed more pertinent to prioritise theoretical texts based more closely on the notion of a 'women's discourse' or *l'écriture féminine* so as to better

[72] Despite the fact that many criticize the New French Feminists for essentialism, post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak defends essentialism as strategic in the way that certain strategic employments of essentialism – when used by minority, oppressed, or subaltern group – can be used to facilitate the creation of a group consciousness which gives the minority more power against the majority group or oppressors. In subaltern studies, for example, Spivak recognises "a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visibly political interest." (Spivak, 1987: 205). For more information on strategic essentialism see Spivak's essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" in *In Other Words* (Spivak, 1987: 197-221).

understand the contribution of Portuguese women's writing to this cause. Moving forward from this study, however, it would be particularly interesting to consider the stance of Portuguese women writers (those included in this study and others) on the questions raised by Wittig concerning sexual difference, the advantages of a universalist approach to literature and the aspects of literature and language that allow for liberation from restrictive gender categories.[73]

Another possible limit of this study is the scope of Portuguese literary texts which has been restricted to writers who started publishing predominantly in the 1960s and 1970s. This decision means that this thesis does not take into account the effects of changing dynamics of Portuguese politics on the female body and sexuality and how these motifs have been represented in Portuguese women's literary output. Again, this would make an interesting future project as it would allow for a more complete analysis of the effects of patriarchal discourse and socio-political elements on the material, female body and on perceptions of sexuality – especially given the relatively rapid political transitional periods experienced in Portugal during the twentieth century.

Having looked closely at the ways in which the Three Marias, Maria Teresa Horta and Luiza Neto Jorge have challenged the monopoly of power and control held by patriarchal forces in the Western world, it has been just as enlightening to understand the differences between them as they approach essentially the same battle. All of these writers have sought, and worked towards creating, a women's discourse and a language in which to more accurately express a woman's experience of the world, at the centre of which is the concept of sexuality. Using as a starting point the works and theories of the New French Feminists (Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva) this thesis has highlighted the importance firstly of language in the expression of the body and of sexuality, and secondly of sexuality in defining a woman's socio-political status, gendered identity, and world-view. It has become clear that *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetic works of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta all constitute a significant and effective resistance to the phallocentric discourse that has historically and consistently acted to restrict and limit the practice and expression of women's sexuality, but that their writing of the body and sexuality is expressed very differently.

[73] Monique Wittig explores notions of sexual difference and lesbianism in *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (1992). On the question of sexual difference her essay from this volume "The Category of Sex" is of particular interest.

The poetry of Maria Teresa Horta consistently celebrates the body as a source of liberation for women by boldly claiming the female body for itself. Her politicisation of the body (politicisation in terms of Kate Millett's definition of the 'political', which emphasises the role of power) recalls the revolutionary furvor of her contemporaries from around the world and the slogan "The Personal is Politcal" in the tone of her writing and her militant reappropriation of the female body as a liberatory vehicle for sexual revolution. The co-authored text *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* however, whilst it is also acted as a powerful political force against the local, Portuguese oppression under the *Estado Novo,* has used the central motif of the female body in such a way as to pose poignant questions as to the validity of existing models of subjectivity and authorship, as well as to the political oppression of the body. *Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* rather than militant, seems more revelatory of the possibility of a specifically Portuguese herstory and of an alternative model of authorship that allows women to realise their sexualities through language and to be able to express and identify with their bodies as individuals as well as part of a socio-political sisterhood of sorts. Luiza Neto Jorge's poetry, on the other hand, distinguishes itself from other, more distinctly feminist texts, by introducing a kind of tension in the experience of one's body which also stems from the oppressive nature of the historical understanding of gender that relies on a whole system of repressive limits, gestures, and habits. In the work of Luiza Neto Jorge, the body is at the centre of a struggle between brief moments of resistance and liberation, and a materialism that highlights the perpetual violence of restrictive corporeal representations that suffocates the body-as-subject.

Each of the works included in this thesis, therefore, contribute towards a discourse that allows for new definitions of the body and sexuality. To do this, each of the writers analysed here have used innovative writing styles that break away from literary tradition as well as from patriarchal discourse. Excess and transgression are key elements that mark each of these works as innovative, but also we have seen the use of neologisms that engage in a process of renaming and respeaking bodily and sexual realities, the systematic breaking or subversion of syntactical 'rules' that challenge the authority of phallocentric language, and a formal hybridisation that introduces a plethora of new, previously unheard voices.

In each chapter of this study, the motifs of silence, voice and language have emerged as key concerns of these women writers who yearn for a freer expression of their bodies and of sexuality. In chapter one, for example, we saw how dichotomous thinking in Western culture has consistently relegated women to an inferior position, thus invalidating and silencing their

voices. Moving into the second chapter, we saw how *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Luiza Neto Jorge and Maria Teresa Horta challenge the prioritisation of the male gaze in Western representation and have used their literary works to develop new forms of representation that give space to an active female erotic body that is no longer dominated and objectified by the male gaze. Part Two of this thesis then moved on to show how female sexuality has been traditionally silenced in Portuguese (and Western) society by patriarchal organisation and definitions of sexuality and the erotic, including the development of social taboos. Here, it became clear that a key concern for these Portuguese women writers was the unsilencing and unveiling of the erotic female voice that allows for the further development and freer expression of women's sexual desire and identity.

The centrality of the motifs of speaking and breaking silence ties into the statements we saw from ex-prime minister Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo at the very beginning of this thesis, highlighting language and the ability to speak their own specific Portuguese, "feminine" language as the primary concern for Portuguese women in their quest for liberation. Language and voice, as tools and as motifs, have thus been exploited by these Portuguese women writers as vehicles for the creation of new definitions of gender, femininity and of a specific corporeal and sexual identity for Portuguese women. What has become clear over the course of this study is that, despite the ability to trace and apply a myriad of international theoretical approaches and texts to the analysis of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* and the poetry of Maria Teresa Horta and Luiza Neto Jorge, it is impossible to escape the Portuguese-ness of these writers' literary challenges against the patriarchy.

That is not to say, of course, that the need for a feminine sexual and corporeal identity is a solely localised concern. Rather, the way in which these Portuguese women writers have constructed identity and transgressed boundaries becomes even more pertinent and gains higher levels of discursive, literary and social meaning in the context of the *Estado Novo* and a society that, even after the Carnation revolution, remained largely governed by a moral and social religious conservatism. It is in this context, therefore, that the unveiling of a corporeal and sexual voice and the claim for a new gender identity for Portuguese women is truly necessary and poignant. In a society where women have been so consistently and violently silenced, the voices of the Three Marias and their Marianas, of Maria Teresa Horta and her shout-it-from-the-rooftops eroticism, and of the erotically innovative Luiza Neto Jorge sing more clearly and more beautifully than they could from anywhere else in the world.

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