



THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF FRENTE TRÊS DE FEVEREIRO COLLECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the anti-racism actions “Monumento Horizontal” (2004), an urban intervention carried out in São Paulo, and “Bandeiras” (2005), a series of flags opened in different soccer matches. Both were carried out by the collective Frente Três de Fevereiro, a São Paulo art and activism group that emerged with the aim of confronting structural racism. Starting from interviews with the group, we try to understand the “poetic character” attributed to collective activism, seeking to underline how it emerges in opposition to political conceptions based on communication. For this purpose, some of the theoretical subsidies of Jacques Rancière, supported by authors like Jean-Luc Nancy, Silvio Almeida and Judith Butler, are mobilized. Thus, we depart from that “poetics” to understand, within the scope of the collective’s political strategies, the intertwining between the notion of dissent and the idea of event, as thought by Jacques Rancière and Michel Foucault. Finally, we juxtapose the expectations of political efficacy, which underlies the collective’s actions, to what Jacques Rancière would call “models for the effectiveness of art” in his aesthetic regime.

Keywords: poetics, event, art and politics, racism, collectives

RESUMO

O presente artigo analisa as ações anti-racismo “Monumento Horizontal” (2004), intervenção urbana realizada na cidade de São Paulo, e “Bandeiras” (2005), série de bandeiras abertas em diversas partidas de futebol. Ambas foram realizadas pelo coletivo Frente Três de Fevereiro, grupo paulistano de arte e ativismo surgido com o intuito de combater o racismo estrutural. Partindo de entrevistas realizadas com o grupo, procuramos compreender o “caráter poético” atribuído ao ativismo do coletivo, sublinhando de que modo ele emerge a contrapelo de concepções políticas baseadas na comunicação. Para tal, mobilizamos os subsídios teóricos de Jacques Rancière, amparados por autores como Jean-Luc Nancy, Silvio Almeida e Judith Butler. Assim, tomamos a “poética” como via de acesso para compreender, no âmbito das estratégias políticas do coletivo, o entrelaçamento entre a noção de dissenso e a ideia de acontecimento, tal como pensada por Jacques Rancière e Michel Foucault. Por fim, juxtapomos as expectativas de eficácia política, subjacentes às ações do coletivo, àquilo que Jacques Rancière chamou de “modelos de eficácia da arte” em seu regime estético.

Palavras-chave: poética, acontecimento, arte e política, racismo, coletivos

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to analyze two actions of *Frente Três de Fevereiro*, an art and activism collective¹ from the city of São Paulo and active in the first decade of the 2000s. The group was established at the invitation of Maurinete Lima, a poet who decided to bring together several artists to think of an action in repudiation of the execution of the afro-descendant dentist Flávio Sant'Ana by the military police. The murder took place on February 3, 2004 in the Santana neighborhood, north of São Paulo. From this date comes the name of the collective, designed to reflect on issues related to structural racism² and formed by a multidisciplinary group. The group moves between the fields of literature, music, performance, and urban and media activism. From the beginning, its actions were marked by the use of the word in multiple media and supports, and they waged a conflict based on the imaginary that uses to marginalize and make black people invisible.

Daniel Lima³, a member of the group, declares how they operate through direct actions to displace this imaginary:

What we do is born out of a dispute over territory. This strategy is born out of a dispute over symbolic territory. How can we symbolically insert ourselves in a society that at all times, in various structures, is completely hegemonic and oppressive? (...) So we really use guerrilla strategy: what can one do more

broadly with the resources at hand? In this case, the strategy of direct action, strategy and intervention, is important to us, because it allows a small group (...), a group of six people, to manifest itself politically, to exist within this symbolic territorial dispute (SCOVINO & RESENDE, 2010, p. 107).

The collective is not engaged in acts that could solve the problem of racism, nor in raising awareness or removing individuals from alienation, but in subversion of regimes of shared visibility. If the phenomenon of racism can be related to processes that occur at the level of consciousness, it is especially linked to the naturalization of certain places assigned and occupied by black people in society, as highlighted by Silvio Almeida. The author explains that “racism, as a political and historical process, is also a process of constitution of subjectivities, of individuals whose consciousness and affections are somehow connected with social practices” (ALMEIDA, 2020, p. 63).

In line with this understanding, *Frente Três de Fevereiro* undertakes interventions that we could characterize as aesthetic-political, whose effectiveness cannot be easily measured in terms of the direct changes they produce in the real world. We understand that the logics of the actions held by the collective are based on the practice of *dissent*, in line with a political thought closely intertwined with aesthetics, as developed by the philosopher Jacques Rancière. They are effected above all as a potentiality, as a virtuality, acting in subjective

¹ According to the theorist and art critic Felipe Scovino, “the gathering and generation of collectives of artists in Brazil took place in a more significantly in the early 2000s” (SCOVINO & REZENDE, 2010, p. 14), a decade that saw the establishment and extinction of dozens of them. Therefore, it is a historically situated form of grupality, consisting of a group of individuals who gather, ephemerally or prolonged, around certain issues – generally of an aesthetic and/or political nature –, with the aim of proposing some kind of joint action. Collectives take on very varied characteristics and experiences, but it is common for them to be imbued with experiments in the ways of creating and being together, generally marked by the tensioning of the dichotomy between unity and fragmentation. Thus, the processes of these collectives are usually combined with horizontal and collaborative decision-making exercises, a concern that can be found in the speech of Daniel Lima, a member of Frente Três de Fevereiro collective. When starting the interview with Felipe Scovino and Renato Rezende, he stated: “this interview is being done with three members of Frente 3 de Fevereiro, and Frente 3 de Fevereiro will not have a unified speech about it. What we will hear are the positions of each of the members. Which, obviously, has a relationship the work we've done together and having an interconnected position” (SCOVINO & REZENDE, 2010, p. 89). However, the effort to dilute individual authorship often clashes with the prominence assumed by certain members of these collectives who, for various reasons, end up becoming their spokespersons. This could be the case of Daniel Lima, the most present member in the interviews we selected for this article.

² As emphasized by the lawyer and philosopher Silvio Almeida (2020), structural racism is not a type of racism, but a way of understanding this phenomenon, in contrast to conceptions centered on the individual or on institutions.

³ Daniel Lima's speeches that make up this article come from interviews conducted with Renato Resende and Felipe Scovino (2010) and André Mesquita (2008).

layers that do not only pass through consciousness, but are committed to the reconfiguration of what the theorist calls the *distribution of the sensible*⁴.

We will see how their actions reject the precepts of the effectiveness of communicational transparency, whether in transmitting messages or denouncing social structures and conflicts. Here, language is not taken as a communicative and transparent medium in which politics relies on, but as a matter that must be carefully elaborated, expressing a rupture between means and ends. As we will see later, the models of efficacy specific to art, in the scope that Rancière calls *aesthetic regime*⁵, undergo a specific rupture in the relationship between means and ends, and imply the refusal of models of a communicational action. The *aesthetic regime* would be precisely the one that is based on the effectiveness of *dissensus*, understood not as a “confrontation of interests or opinions” (RANCIÈRE, 2014, p. 148), but as the manifestation of a distance between sense and sense. Like politics, art in its aesthetic regime would consist of an “activity that reconfigures the sensitive frames within which common objects are defined (...) through the invention of an instance of collective enunciation that redesigns the space of common things” (RANCIÈRE, 2010, p. 90).

We understand this artistic-political contamination as a consequence of the close proximity Frente Três de Fevereiro collective maintains with the art field. Because despite confronting racism, which is a relevant topic for various social movements, the politics it sets in motion can be juxtaposed to some

of the sensible articulation procedures privileged by art. Considering these contaminations between art and activism, we seek to understand the frequent approximations that Daniel Lima establishes between the *politics* of the collective and what he calls *poetic*.

THE POETIC-POLITICS AGAINST RACISM

The collective's first action consisted of a direct response to the execution of Flávio Sant'Ana. The murder instantly generated commotion and revolt, bringing to light a controversy around the incidence or not of racism in the case. At the time, the police tried to forge evidence and withhold information about what happened. By covering up the evidence that the crime was motivated by racism, they sought that the crime was not considered as a voluntary manslaughter⁶, which would increase the sentence.

Frente Três de Fevereiro carried out its first intervention near the place where Flávio was murdered. Accompanied by the victim's family, the collective fixed a plate on the asphalt, which read “Here, Flávio F. Sant'Ana was killed by the Military Police of São Paulo”. Called *Monumento Horizontal (Horizontal Monument)* (2004), the intervention proposed a way to avoid the recurrent oblivion and erasure of violence perpetrated by police officers against black people. In this context, the collective inverts the paradigm of verticality that generally leads to the construction of monuments celebrating wars, battles and historical characters, which provide them with visibility. The

⁴ Rancière calls the “‘distribution of the sensible’ a generally implicit law that defines the forms of partaking by first defining the modes of perception in which they are inscribed(...)”. This ‘partition’ is to be understood in the double sense of the word: on the one hand as that which separates and excludes, on the other as that which allows participation. A partition of the sensible refers to the manner in which a relation between a shared common and the distribution of exclusive parts is determined in sensory experience. This division, which anticipates, by its sensory self-division, the distribution of parts and shares, itself presupposes a sharing of what is visible and what is not, what is heard and what is not heard” (RANCIÈRE, 2014, p. 146).

⁵ Jacques Rancière's asynchronous historiography (2009) denies that the experience of art, and even the forms of its identification, constitute a timeless continuum. Instead of artistic movements, he prefers to circumscribe art under the aegis of three identification regimes, listed according to the chronological order of their appearance: ethical, representative and aesthetic. Roughly speaking, the latter would be the result of political-sensitive reorganizations that emerged in the midst of the historical processes that gave rise to the French Revolution, responsible for inscribing the principles of democracy in the horizons of shared sensibility. This reorganization of the links between what can be seen and what can be said, led to mutations that affected the horizon of possibilities of the experience of art, displacing the paradigms that previously governed its identification and enjoyment.

⁶ Homicide in which there is intent to kill.

Frente Três de
Fevereiro – Horizontal
Monument (2004)
Source: [http://
casadalapa.blogspot.
com/2009/02/
frente-3-de-feverei-
ro-monumento.html](http://casadalapa.blogspot.com/2009/02/frente-3-de-fevereiro-monumento.html)



horizontal feature of this monument, which instantly refers to a tomb, is the same as the dead body lying on the ground. But the plaque would be removed by the police themselves, prompting the group to create a new monument the following week, this time in concrete and paint, which was also destroyed shortly thereafter.

In this sense, the police appear not only as the figure that manages populations or interpellates the individual, it organizes the shared spaces of visibility and invisibility, prescribing what can and cannot be seen. From this perspective, it approaches what Jacques Rancière calls the *police*⁷: “before being a repressive force, the police is a form of intervention which distinguishes the visible from the invisible, the sayable from the unsayable” (RANCIÈRE, 2014, p. 128), it conceives the “law of what appears and what is heard, of what counts and what does not count” (idem).

The philosopher calls the *low police* the one who would have murdered Flávio, understood as a “particular form of a more general order that disposes of the sensible” (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 41). However, it would be *police* weakness, not its strength, which makes *low police* more ostentatious in some states. However, if we look at the structural character of racism in Brazilian society, we see a kind of convergence of these two functions of the police, considering that the repressive aspect of the *low police* is not independent of a more general policing that takes place in the sensitive sphere.

After all, racism depends on a given that presents as a self-evidence to the senses, on a certain distribution of possibilities that ends by subordinating black people. The repressive function of the *low police* does not affect equally the society as a whole, it follows a predetermined cartography that makes certain bodies more vulnerable to death than others, and it is not by

⁷ Henceforth, when referring to the meaning of Jacques Rancière, the terms “police” and “policeman” will be in italics.

chance that the black youth is massively murdered in Brazil⁸. Daniel Lima recognizes that one of the main concerns of *Frente Três de Fevereiro* is to bring the “perspective of ‘racialization’, that is: the perspective of trying to look through this prism, whether or not skin color influences when the police recognize a suspect, the violence against the suspect” (SCOVINO & RESENDE, 2010, pp. 93-94).

If the *police* is a social device that “distributes bodies in the space of their visibility or invisibility” (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 40), which bodies are a priori recognized as suspects and which ones can circulate freely in the streets? This recognition, this identification, goes through historically situated modes of affection, which allows us to understand that racism is permeated by an *aesthetic*. That is, if aesthetics is understood as Jacques Rancière points out, therefore according to the “Kantian sense – eventually revisited by Foucault – as the system of a priori forms determining what presents itself to sense experience” (RANCIÈRE, 2009, p. 16). It is a sensible horizon that establishes the possibilities of time and space, visible or invisible bodies and the distinctions between word and noise. This set of evidences, Jacques Rancière calls the *distribution of the sensible*.

Frente Três de Fevereiro acts precisely in this eminently epidermal layer of incidence of racism. Its actions reveal a set of issues concerning invisible bodies, articulating as a word the discourse of bodies whose speech is recurrently assumed as noise. For Jacques Rancière, the political scene would be above all a scene of words, close to another tactic of taking a speech that is very important to social movements: the *speaking place*. It is about assuming that the conditions of enunciation of a speech and the places

from which it is enunciated affect its horizons of intelligibility and interpretation, so that a speech can never be evaluated in itself.

After all, it is notorious that there is no equitable listening availability for the entire social fabric. Certain subalternized groups, among which we could highlight blacks – to restrict ourselves to the identity figure that concentrates the activism of *Frente Três de Fevereiro* collective – have their speeches recurrently ignored. These are *mimimi* (whining)⁹, as characterized by certain sectors of the Brazilian extreme right. In this sense, we could understand the whining within the strategies that deny certain bodies – namely: minority bodies – the ownership of discourse, linking their claims to unintelligible noises. Jacques Rancière analyzes a similar situation in a nineteenth-century text written by Ballanche, in which the commoners’ ability to speak or not was an object of dissent¹⁰.

If the qualification of certain claims as whining automatically invalidates them, reducing a discourse to the status of noise, the *speaking place* is a political strategy that highlights the distance between the word and its counting, a way of demanding listening to bodies whose voice is not always considered. Conceived from this perspective, this discussion held within contemporary social movements has an unmistakable aesthetic background, a dispute for shared spaces of visibility and invisibility. But if, under some biases, the *speaking place* can give rise to a rupture on the *distribution of the sensible*, constituting an important political force, on the other hand, it can reaffirm a series of pre-established identities and places. It is necessary to understand how this equation is established case by case, how to make a tactical and non-essentializing use of the *speaking place*, and how some of the forms of contiguity between art and activism can be extremely useful.

⁸ According to the Atlas of Violence, published in 2020, “Only in 2018, to cite the most recent example, blacks (sum of blacks and pardos, according to the IBGE classification) represented 75.7% of homicide victims (...) for every non-black individual killed in 2018, 2.7 blacks were killed” (CERQUEIRA & BUENO, 2020, p. 47).

⁹ In this regard, check the text “The whining as a biopolitical category”, by the philosopher Peter Pál Pelbart (2019).

¹⁰ But despite our historical distance from the above-mentioned quarrel, the philosopher understands this type of scene as paradigmatic of the way in which politics articulates noise in a word capable of uttering something as fair: “the names of the actors, the scenery and the accessories can change. But the formula is the same. It consists in creating, around every single conflict, a scene where the equality or inequality of the partners in the conflict as speaking beings is brought into play” (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 62).

It is worth analyzing *Bandeiras (Flags)* (2005), a series of actions carried out by *Frente Três de Fevereiro*, in its capacity to articulate a fine concert between words and muteness, taking the precepts of a univocal communication to a certain state of exhaustion. Even though it does not use a limit language, which would threaten the very possibility of communication, it does not respond to the same regime of transparency prevailing in political pamphlets, based on awareness or on the transmission of a message. If *Horizontal Monument* still seems to remain in this register, in *Flags*, the language issue takes on greater opacity. This action articulates even more powerfully the strategy of taking the floor that we outlined above as the triggering condition of politics.

Just like the *Horizontal Monument*, *Flags* arises from a case of racism, this time against a soccer player of the São Paulo team, nicknamed Grafite. On April 13, 2005, he was insulted during a soccer match by Desábato, a defender of the Argentine team Quilmes. As noted by historian André Mesquita, “soccer, apparently idealized as a collective popular manifestation, as a game where there is no racial prejudice, has become a space for the group’s investigation” (MESQUITA, 2011, p. 252). In response, the collective negotiated with several organized fans the infiltration of flags measuring 20m x 15m in the stands of soccer matches. They were analogous to those that are collectively raised in soccer stadiums, but instead of the traditional shields of teams, they brought phrases that questioned racism, such as: “Brazil black save”, “Where are the blacks?”, “Zumbi are us” etc. Immediately broadcast live on television networks, their invasive words were multiplied infinitely.

This action was carried out for the first time in 2005, but it was repeated several times, in different matches and with different phrases. Daniel Lima tells how the entire process took place:

There was a discovery to know how to enter the stadium with a 20m x 15m flag and about the agreement that has to be made with the fans. The racial issue was also an entry in the

fans who live this, as in the [soccer team] Independente fans, whose president is black. With the acceptance of the fans, we had the approval of the work by the police, who need to approve the content of all the flags that enter the soccer stadium. Then, we moved on to the process of making the flag: the group spread the flag in a stadium and started writing letter by letter, opening and drying. Finally, we discuss the record of this intervention (MESQUITA, 2008, p. 395).

The collective understands intervention as a procedure that aims to “break with logic, with a certain normality that is given. This is a strategy we use to bring the discussion to light and create poetically potent works” (SCOVINO & RESENDE, 2010, p. 95). The action produces a break in the common cadence of facts, in which a soccer game would take place normally and in the stands, we could only see the flags of teams and fans. By inserting a strange element in this soccer match, the collective performs an interruption, a suspension of order, something very close to political activity as conceived by Rancière: “interrupting a logic of supposed natural domination, experienced as natural” (RANCIÈRE, 1996a, p. 370). This punctual rupture opens a crack from which unheard of senses can emerge, untying the knot of repetitions and putting the imagination in a state of becoming.

If the *police* logic states that “there is nothing to see” (RANCIÈRE, 1996a, p. 373), the collective insinuates something atypical in that space, the racial agenda suddenly appears where it would have no reason to emerge and at a time when it was not foreseen. This clash between the foreseen and the unforeseen puts two heterogeneous logics in contact and affirms politics as a change in the order of the sensible. The eminent spectacular character of the sporting event is expropriated: the strangeness of the flag that was raised, forces it to be focused by the cameras as if it attracted the attention of power’s eye. It is noteworthy that the live broadcast itself was appropriated by the collective and became a document of the *Flags* action, shown as a video when displayed in art exhibitions.



Frente Três de Fevereiro – Flags

Source: <http://www.danielclima.com/Zumbi-Somos-Nos>

Frente Três de Fevereiro not only takes the word, it takes advantage of the media that spread it, becoming a powerful instance of collective enunciation. By spreading the word of the collective, its apprehension goes beyond the scope of the game and the act reverberates in the public sphere. Then, if the action takes place inside a soccer stadium, therefore, outside properly public spaces, it becomes effective on a battlefield that is eminently shared, therefore, public. Thus, the activism perpetrated by the collective is also media, it infiltrates and subverts a medium highly regulated by the *police*, where the choreography of the bodies is millimetrically marked.

The videos make evident the disruptive and instantaneous dimension that these actions embody: when the camera focuses on the crowd, the flag is raised

and displayed for a few moments. Then, it suddenly disappears and returns to normal game broadcast. The rapid interruption of order is immediately followed by the return to regularity, an image that incorporates the very eventual notion of politics developed by Jacques Rancière: politics would be “a precarious surplus activity, still on the verge of its collapse” (RANCIÈRE, 2005, p. 19). Soon after being established, the politics collapses and is diluted in the order maintained by the *police*, leaving always some difference, hardly measurable. In this sense, the links between *Flags* action and performance art do not refer only to the choreography of the bodies that perform an action, but to the performative content that is characteristic of the *political scene*, if seen as an event.

Understanding it as an event means opposing the most common conceptions of politics, in which it appears as a means to achieve certain ends. It is true that the actions of *Frente Três de Fevereiro* collective focus on racism, but its fight does not obey pragmatism. By using phrases in the flags that do not seek to raise awareness or inform, the group assumes that politics depends on a suspension of the communicative becoming of language and distance from teleologies. This understanding implies an opening of meanings for activist action.

Thus, through its actions, the collective elaborates a very specific political notion, aware it tensions other assumptions very relevant to social movements and party fronts:

We might think that within a political project this would be very ineffective: where are the blacks? If it were within a traditional political project, of pamphleteering, we would understand: no, this was not effective because the person did not read and said: “The discussion of blacks in the role of Brazilian society...” etc. The reading of a political movement would be this: “No, the content is ambiguous, and does not interest them”. What we want to do is set up another strategy to discuss these issues (SCOVINO & RESENDE, 2010, p. 96).

Although *Horizontal Monument* was still linked to a set of logics based on communication, which made it very susceptible to destruction by the police, *Flags* distanced itself from a purely communicational impulse. The rupture carried out by the action does not take place only in the intellectual field, but at the heart of the sensible dimension, it does not consist in an awareness campaign about racism, nor does it seek to communicate any specific demand. Thus, it breaks a set of expected connections between means and ends, as Daniel Lima's synthesis allows us to suppose: "We know that our work does not have a winner or a loser: it does not have a happy ending (...). What we have are certain works that they perform, but we know that our work will never have an end" (SCOVINO & RESENDE, 2010, p. 108).

This understanding can be approximated to a large effort by Foucault's philosophy to provide a political perspective for history, in contrast to teleological conceptions and Hegelian principles. According to the philosopher Edgardo Castro, Michel Foucault's principles of archaeogenealogy exerted "a constant effort to detach from a conception of history based on Hegel, in terms of dialectical recomposition, of totality, with a unitary subject (the reason, the absolute)" (CASTRO, 2016, p. 198). Thus, it ruined any promises of completion, giving primacy to multiplicity and discontinuity. However, the conceptions of an eventual history, raised by contemporary philosophy and by *Frente Três de Fevereiro* collective, raise a question that cannot be neglected: what guarantees that the political eruption is capable of producing a better world?

Michel Foucault attributes to what he calls the *politics of truth* the function of being an "instrument, a means for a future or a truth that it will not know nor happen to be, it oversees a domain it would want to police and is unable to regulate" (FOUCAULT, 2000, p. 2). When approaching this passage of Foucault's thought, Judith Butler explains that, by proposing a "tearing apart the fabric of our epistemological network" (BUTLER, 2013, p. 164), Foucault would

not be interested in the moral aspects that would determine what "new possibilities or ways of thinking" (BUTLER, 2013, p. 163) should be explored. In this way, the *critical attitude* imagined by the philosopher does not include any prescriptive forms or well-defined purposes. It would be related, above all, to events, to small insurgencies that fracture something of the established subjectivities.

Following the trail left by Michel Foucault, Jacques Rancière had already situated politics as the power of a singular and contingent event, rejecting the "idea of a measure, of a *telos* that served at the same time to judge the political state and to give a purpose to the movement" (RANCIÈRE, 2014, p. 37). It is about claiming politics as a kind of endless purpose, an understanding that permeates the models of the effectiveness of art in the aesthetic regime, as conceived by the philosopher (RANCIÈRE, 2010). This rupture in the expected relationships between certain actions and their direct effects on reality would be, unlike the pamphlet matrices of politicized art, one of the logics that underlie art in its aesthetic regime, as explained by Jacques Rancière:

The aesthetic paradigm of the new community, of men free and equal in their sensible life itself, tends to cut this community off from all the paths that are normally used to reach a goal. No doubt this tendency towards suspended action is constantly resisted. But this very struggle incessantly reproduces the inertia against which it rises up (...). Emancipated movement does not succeed in reintegrating the strategic patterns of causes and effects, ends and means (RANCIÈRE, 2013, pp. XV)

We can observe this immeasurable political action embodying especially in the strategy that *Frente Três de Fevereiro* employs when formulating the phrases that illustrate its flags. The collective avoids informative or affirmative utterances, but prefers those that open up a question, activating a web of meanings to be woven by the spectator. According to Daniel Lima:

The phrase “WHERE ARE THE BLACKS?” brings this challenge of how to carry out a project with a political bias, but that inserts itself within a poetic thought with different interpretations. It has the idea of where black people are as recognition, who recognizes themselves as black, but also where black people are as a social role (MESQUITA, 2008, p. 396).

However, what kind of poetics does Daniel Lima attribute to the collective’s action? It does not seem to be the set of logics established by Aristotle in his book *Poetic* and that compose what Jacques Rancière (2009) calls the representative or poetic regime. This regime presupposes a certain sensitive continuity between the forms of production and reception of the artistic fact, between *poiesis* and *aisthesis*, reducing the range of meanings that art is capable to trigger. We will take a short digression to understand which horizons of *poetic thought* Daniel Lima may be referring to.

For Jacques Rancière, the set of logics of politics depends on a suspension of the “rational order of argument from a poetic, if not irrational, order of commentary and metaphor. It is produced by linguistic acts that are at the same time rational arguments and poetic metaphors” (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 67). According to the philosopher, even mixing language games and heterogeneous sentence regimes, political statements result in understandable arguments: the proper forms of political demonstration must combine an argumentation and the “opening up of a world where argument can be received and have an impact” (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 66).

Jacques Rancière’s refusal to think about art politics based on the messages it conveys is precisely due to the understanding that communicational transparency is contrary to politics. After all, political enunciation would be a situation in which the very possibility of interlocution is in dispute, being first necessary to constitute the argument and the scene in which it can be understood. But like art, politics always runs the risk of collapsing into the mute, the absurd, the innocuous. The philosopher concludes:

Political invention operates in acts that are at once argumentative and poetic, shows of strength that open again and again, as often as necessary, worlds in which such acts of community are acts of community. This is why the “poetic” is not opposed here to argumentative (...). There is politics if the community of argumentative capacity and metaphorical capacity is, at any time and through the action of anyone, likely to occur (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 70).

Rancière understands that the expulsion of poets from Plato’s Republic took place because, in addition to talking about many things they did not know about, the poets did not have a specific function, scrambling the absolutely *policed* order of the *Greek polis*, in which each part of the community would play its own predetermined role. For the Greek philosopher, there would be no pure poetics, so that “while it is an art of composing fables that represent characters and act on characters, poetry belongs to a political experience of the sensible” (RANCIÈRE, 2017, p. 120) and therefore, “poetics is, at first, politics” (idem).

If Daniel Lima understands poetics as an opening to multiple interpretations, we could bring the *Flags* series closer to what Jean-Luc Nancy calls poetry. It would be, for the philosopher, not a literary genre, but a specific modality of formal thought that provides an increasingly absent and postponed meaning for something. For Nancy, the “The sense of ‘poetry’ is a sense always to be made (...). Poetry denies that access to meaning can be confused with any mode of expression or figuration” (NANCY, 2013, pp. 416-417). The philosopher understands that the intentionality of the sense must be abolished in detriment of the finished sense, of the sense as a finishing. This implies the establishment of voids and silences, occasioned by the refusal of the logics of a thought that would become totalizing, once based on the dictates of intentionality. For the theorist, the word “poetry”, from the Greek word *poiesis*, is a doing:

The doing is exhausted both in disposition and in its end. This end that it established as a goal, it is both its end and its negation, because the doing dissolves into its perfection. But what is undone is identically what is arranged, perfect and more than perfect. The doing finishes, each time, something and itself. Its end is its finiteness: in it, it makes itself infinite, each time infinitely beyond its work (NANCY, 2013, p. 420).

Thus, the theorist establishes the character of endless finality as a sign of poetry's completion, which at the same time points to an ephemerality, a contingency of the senses that gets undone and redone. For Jacques Rancière, this attribute would be an important factor in the politicization of artistic and activist forms.

By affirming a space for interpretation for the activism of *Frente Três de Fevereiro*, Daniel Lima seems to affirm the need to break with pre-established positions, without the need to re-establish order. He underlines that, "in many moments, the political project is not interested in duality, doubles, spaces of interpretation. On the contrary, what interests it is a statement, it is reiterating positions. But, for us, this is the game: don't fall for this solution" (SCOVINO & RESENDE, 2010, p. 96). It is about affirming an unfinished margin – which is also the unfinished of art interpretation –, as a political sign of art itself.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Thus, we see how the *poetics*, attributed by Daniel Lima to the actions of *Frente Três de Fevereiro* collective, finds echoes in the conceptions of Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Rancière. Although *Horizontal Monument* was still markedly based on communication, which may have facilitated its apprehension and destruction by the police forces, the privilege of problematic figures, to the detriment of assertions, distances *Flags* from a bet on transparent communication. The collective is based precisely on the production of ambiguities, on the opening of possibilities, where resides the poetic-political potency of its actions. Also according to

Daniel Lima, the collective avoids "the principle of defending a thesis (...), but raises a question that, in the end, is more than a question, it is an opening of interpretations about a fact, idea, symbol, work or action" (SCOVINO & RESENDE, 2010, p. 95).

By opting for phrases that raise a question, *Frente Três de Fevereiro* collective maintains a residue of the unthinkable in the action, mobilizing a dissenting tension that not only characterizes Jacques Rancière's political conceptions, but art itself, if governed by a set of logics that philosopher calls aesthetic regime. As seen, political enunciation cannot only dispense with rational components, very close to the *police* sphere, to what is given. Therefore, the production of new cutouts of the sensible and the tearing of the shared epistemological fabric demand that political subjects have vectors of the unthinkable in their strategies and actions.

This political requirement that the work must be inhabited by something unthinkable establishes a fine balance between intentional and unintentional. It is a coextensiveness that refers to the identity of opposites characteristic of the paradoxical fabric of the aesthetic regime, of "thought that has become foreign to itself: a product identical with something not produced, knowledge transformed into non-knowledge, logos identical with pathos, the intention of the unintentional etc." (RANCIÈRE, 2009, p. 32). According to Jacques Rancière,

The aesthetic revolution establishes this identity of knowledge and ignorance, acting and suffering. Art is identified as the identity, in a sensitive form, of a conscious procedure and an unconscious production, of a willed action and an involuntary process, of a radical passivity of the sensible being (RANCIÈRE, 2012, p. 129).

Despite the enunciative force of *Flags*, its effectiveness is pure becoming, pure virtuality, because there is very little control over its reverberation. The *Flags* are silent as soon as they enunciate, establishing an identity between a fragile enunciation and a very

powerful enunciation. Thus, *Frente Três de Fevereiro* collective mobilizes a certain evental notion of history, which dispenses with certain goals to be achieved and articulates the opening of a margin for interpretations. These questions, aggregated in the group's *poetics*, secrete a form of politics that shares with art the critical promise of placing us in front of the limits of what is sayable and thinkable.

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