

APOLOGETICS AND POETICS: A TRANSLATOR'S  
REFLECTIONS ON JUDITH TEIXEIRA'S USE OF HER  
OWN POETRY IN THE PUBLIC LECTURE *DE MIM*

APOLOGÉTICA E POÉTICA: REFLEXÕES  
TRADUTOLÓGICAS SOBRE O USO, POR JUDITH  
TEIXEIRA, DE SUA PRÓPRIA POESIA NA  
CONFERÊNCIA DE *MIM*

CHRIS GERRY<sup>1</sup>

---

1 Investigador no Instituto de Literatura Comparada Margarida Losa da faculdade de letras da Universidade do Porto, Portugal.

**Abstract:** This article is structured around my translation into English of two of Judith Teixeira's most iconic poems. When she published *De mim* in 1926 in defense of her work and aesthetics, she chose two of her own poems to exemplify and elucidate her poetics and, implicitly, her sexual politics. I begin by briefly contextualizing *De mim*, which was written in the style of a literary apologia and intended to be given as a public lecture. The poems are then described in a bilingual format. Based upon the experience of translating these poems, I conclude by assessing how well they support Teixeira's call for artists to be allowed to create unencumbered by hypocritical bourgeois moralization.

**Keywords:** Judith Teixeira, literary apologia, Portuguese modernist poetry, futurism, literature of Sodom.

**Resumo:** O artigo estrutura-se em torno de minha tradução para o inglês de dois dos poemas mais emblemáticos de Judith Teixeira. Quando publicou *De mim* em 1926 em defesa de sua obra e estética, escolheu dois poemas para exemplificar e elucidar a sua poética e, implicitamente, a sua política sexual. Começo por colocar sinteticamente *De mim* em contexto, tratando-se de uma apologia literária destinada a ser proferida como palestra pública. A seguir, apresentam-se os dois poemas em formato bilingue. Para concluir, com base na experiência de traduzir os poemas, avalio até que ponto eles sustentam com sucesso os argumentos de Teixeira em favor de uma criatividade artística livre de moralizações burguesas hipócritas.

**Palavras chave:** Judith Teixeira, apologias literárias, poesia modernista portuguesa, futurismo, literatura de Sodoma.

# 1 AN APOLOGIA-MANIFESTO-LECTURE

In 1920s Portugal, the word “conferência” referred, as it does today, to an address or lecture given either to an assembly of like-minded individuals by a guest or one of their own members on a theme of common interest or proffered with a view to transmit knowledge to students (for example) or to disseminate new ideas to the public at large to further educational, cultural, or political aims. By the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, lectures outside the university context, rather than being purely verbal, may have been accompanied by images projected on a screen or ‘live’ demonstrations of a scientific or other nature. Increasingly, transcripts of the proceedings would have been printed for the benefit of close collaborators and distributed for educational, publicity and recruitment purposes and to validate the mission and endeavours of those organizing such events. *De mim*, published in Lisbon in 1926, rather than having been written as a preamble to one of the projects on which Judith Teixeira was then working, seems to have been written as an address; probably one in her planned series of “Lectures on Art” advertised paratextually in 1923 in her second collection of poems *Castelo de sombras* [*Castle of Shadows*].

Today, the word “apologia” (from the Ancient Greek ἀπολογία, or “speaking in someone’s defense”) tends to be used almost exclusively in a derogatory

sense, signifying a work that provides controversial ideas with undeserved praise or bogus legitimacy. However, before being subsumed into the pedagogical and evangelical purposes of the Christian church, theological apologias were often written and presented 'after the fact' by authors who were suspected, denounced, or even formally accused of harboring heretical views. In contrast, literary apologias were more often pre-emptive and precautionary texts written to preface a work the author, publisher, or indeed translator believed might attract public or official censure.

At the beginning of her text, Teixeira addresses her audience, summarizing the events that have led a poet to publicly lay bare the details of her own poetics and aesthetics:

Ladies and gentlemen, it is vanity on my part and an irritation for you perhaps that I come here to talk to you of myself, of my inner life. Nonetheless, ever since my book *Decadência* was confiscated some years past [...] I have felt an enormous and all-consuming desire to share with intellectuals of my own epoch the ever-green emotional arguments that live in the souls of all those who regard, as I do, artistic creativity as the noblest of reasons to live! (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 281).<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of her text she refers again to those for whom her remarks were intended, hinting at the type of audience she hoped would be listening:

---

2 All translations from Judith Teixeira's *De mim* are mine.

Indeed, it was in consultation with my soul that I resolved to come here to address you youngsters and your youthful intelligence on the subject of my art (which is young too!) and my notions of beauty that are often so poorly understood by those who can taste only the small portion of life that their diminished objectivity feeds them (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 193).

Teixeira's impenitent text is far from being apologetic in the usual sense of the term and takes every opportunity to chide the bourgeois critics of the modernist aesthetic. Given its hybrid character — part literary apologia, part aesthetic manifesto — it is no surprise that the lecture offers the reader a Janus face (BARBOSA, 2014, p. 9). Since its main aim was to explain the principles upon which Teixeira had written *Decadência* (her first published poems), it inevitably harks back to the denunciation and official seizure in 1923 of examples of what is known as the “Literatura de Sodoma” [“Literature of Sodom”]<sup>3</sup> and to the vituperation her second and third collections had attracted from literary critics. Nevertheless, since the text also has the propagandist and programmatic aim of an aesthetic manifesto, *De mim* also looks forwards, providing Teixeira's readers with a guide to her current and future projects and advising her fellow artists on how to portray the world as it really is, with beauty, sincerity and truth.

---

3 Raul Leal was denounced for his explicit defense of male homosexuality in *Sodoma divinizada* [Sodom deified] and António Botto's poems *Canções* [Songs] were condemned for their nuanced homoerotic content.

Teixeira makes her purpose explicit in the full subtitle of her lecture, *Conferência em que se explicam as minhas razões sobre a vida, sobre a estética e sobre moralidade* [literally, *A Lecture in which I explain my arguments on life, on aesthetics and on morality*]. Without reading the subtitle, the title *De mim* could be legitimately interpreted as either an epistolary message “From Me”, a general autobiographical overview “About Me” or a more specific reflexive exercise “On Me”, all of which identify Teixeira and her heterodox views as the subject of the text. An alternative translation option would be to use such phrases as “In my Regard” or “Concerning Me”: while not quite reproducing the pithiness of the original Portuguese, do manage to exude a similar whiff of ambiguity.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, both phrases have the advantage of hinting at a subtext: the former because it suggests Teixeira has her detractors in her sights, and the latter as it stresses the author’s concern that her readers may have misconstrued her work and that her explanations will clear up any misunderstandings.

In the lecture’s subtitle, rather than using what for her would have been the prevailing orthography (i.e., *razões*), Teixeira opts to use the older spelling (*rasões*) which, in addition to signifying the human faculty of reasoning, had other meanings, some narrower yet cognate (e.g., the grounds for a legal indictment and

---

<sup>4</sup> An annotated English translation of *De mim* will be published later this year in *Entheoria: Cadernos de Letras e Humanas* (Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco).

entries in a commercial ledger), others quite etymologically distinct (both a pre-metric measure of volume and a woodworking tool). Her decision to use such an archaism is unlikely to have been due to the idiosyncrasies of her own spelling or an atavistic attitude to orthographic reforms; a more plausible explanation is that she wanted her public to know that there were solid grounds for writing the way she did. The preposition *sobre* in the lecture subtitle has long been used to indicate a thematic focus, as in the subject-matter of a treatise, lecture, debate or conversation,<sup>5</sup> and clearly advertised the fact that she would be presenting her arguments about life, aesthetics and morality. It seems safe to conclude that she used the phrase *razões sobre* to signify either “my reasoning with regard to” and/or “my arguments concerning”. Furthermore, in Portuguese the verb *explicar* has both a pedagogical meaning (as in the explanation of something hitherto unknown or obscure) and an expository one (as in the presentation or setting out of a plan or project).

Teixeira’s careful choice of words suggests that she conceived *De mim* less as a standard literary apologia designed to explain her views in the broadest of terms and more as a formally-structured defense of her aesthetic perspectives, moral imperatives and

---

5 The equally commonplace expression “the reason for” would typically use either the preposition *por* (suitably elided) as in *a razão pela qual insisti* (literally, “the reason for which I insisted”) or the preposition *de* as in *a razão da minha insistência* (the reason for my insistence).

what today would be called her sexual politics. Furthermore, since *De mim* also provides a spirited attack on the bourgeois values on whose basis she, Leal and Botto were charged with outraging public decency, the more affirmative phrase “in which I set out my arguments...” also underlines the propagandistic and programmatic dimensions of her work.

## 2 DE MIM: THE MAIN ARGUMENTS

What then are the main arguments Teixeira (2015) advances in *De mim* in favor of absolute artistic freedom and against the constraints imposed on artists by the “Majority”, i.e., those who, out of conviction or blind conformity, share the same bourgeois morality and whom she variously derides in the text as *fixo* [hide-bound] (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 284, 286 and 293-294), *pequeno* [little/petty] (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 285), *limitado* [narrow-minded] (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 285 and 294), *equilibrado* [an ironic reference to the bourgeois fetishization of so-called “balance”] (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 292), *ingénuo* [naïve/easily-led] (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 293 and 295), *reduzido* [diminished] (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 293) and *bera*<sup>6</sup> [fake/hyp-

---

6 In the original, Teixeira calls her critics *beras* (beasts), the verb form of which literally means to bellow and figuratively to chide or rebuke. There is another layer to this name-calling, which takes the form of a pun: in 1908, after a German counterfeiter had flooded Lisbon and Oporto with fake gems, his surname (Baer, rendered jokingly in Portuguese as *bera*) came to signify anything or anyone whose immaculate exterior concealed the worthlessness, malice or putrefaction that lay within i.e., a fake, in

ocritical] (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 295)? As a representative of the elect, or initiates [*iniciados*], as she calls them — a category which, for her, closely corresponded to the futurist movement as a whole — her thesis can be summarized in the following six points:

1. The Creator fashioned the elect in every sense in his own image, endowing them with enlightenment.
2. The peculiar nature of this enlightenment enables them to observe, see, sense and understand life objectively as it really is and express beauty and truth accordingly. All have this potential and the freedom to choose another life, should they so wish. However, shackled by the norms of bourgeois society, most people deny what lies both within and outside them, thereby remaining entrenched, their vision diminished, strangers to what life is and could be.
3. To most people, members of the elect seem outrageous, unmoored, unbalanced, even insane and, as a threat to the only life “the Majority” knows, should be marginalized and, if necessary, attacked.
4. A few among “the Majority” with artistic inclinations try to parrot the ideas of the elect but when exposed for the fakes and hypocrites they are, they quickly repudiate their own words and acts and publicly denounce those whose ranks they have tried to infiltrate. In the face of all this hostility, true artists will remain serene for they are part of the complex mechanism of the *Great Machine*; everyone else is just chaff spilling off its wheels as it whirls in the Unconscious.

To support and illustrate her thesis on artistic freedom, Teixeira not only reproduces in full two of her own poems but makes frequent and extensive ref-

---

the case of luxury items such as jewels or, in the case of people, a ‘whited sepulcher’ or hypocrite.

erence to other artists, in some instances providing quotations.<sup>7</sup> To assess how well she deploys her poetry in support of key aspects of her argument, a more detailed examination needs to be made of

1. the text immediately preceding the first poem “Cactus flowers”, in which Teixeira begins to explain how artists such as herself perceive beauty and truth and why this produces imagery that seems “bizarre” to the uninitiated;
2. the short section that separates the two poems, in which she comments on a description by Francisco Lagreca<sup>8</sup> of the very same mechanism; and
3. the text immediately following the second poem (“Illusion”), which precedes Teixeira’s closing tirade against “the Majority”.

Aside from using her own poems as examples of her poetics and resisting the temptation to personalize her attack by naming and shaming her detractors, a further feature of the lecture *De mim* is the extent to which Teixeira has recourse to often extensive quotations from authors she considers sympathetic authorities on the subject and how frequently she ‘name-checks’ (usually contemporary) writers in

---

7 Teixeira mentions Francisco Lagreca, Pierre Louÿs, Marie Bashkirtseff, Henry-Marx (from whom she takes her epigraph), as well as Luigi Pirandello, Oscar Wilde, V. I. Lenin, the Medicis, Renée Vivien and Isadora Duncan.

8 The Brazilian writer Francisco de Castro Lagreca (1883-1944) was born in Piracicaba in the São Paulo rural hinterland. He was part of a group of intellectuals who came to prominence as a result of São Paulo’s 1922 *Semana de Arte Moderna* [The Week of Modern Arts], publishing *Apologia de arte moderna* in 1923, a path-breaking survey of new trends in the Brazilian arts, and the probable source of Teixeira’s quote.

support of her arguments. In part, this may have been a question of confidence as she had little or no experience at the time of writing prose, least of all in a rhetorical, deductive style.<sup>9</sup> However, most of the names to which she refers either would have meant nothing to the general public and/or mentioning them would have merely confirmed the bad intellectual company she had been keeping and consolidated her pariah status. This tells us something about her intended audience, for she clearly intended the names to resonate with people who shared, or at least were susceptible to, the aesthetics she was defending, namely those whom she addresses as the “young intellectuals” of her day (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 281, 293). Moreover, the pedagogical and propagandistic purposes of her essay were better served by her referencing and recommending writers whose ideas were compatible with her own.

---

9 Teixeira was not the first to have had misgivings about her own prose style. Freya Johnston (2021, p. 29) reminds us that Mary Wollstonecraft “sometimes described her [own] associative, digressive style as ‘desultory’ and ascribed it partly to the gaps in her education. Systematic argument remained a challenge, and — in view of her continued insistence on the need for reason and logic — its absence left her vulnerable to mockery from opponents”.

### 3 HOW WELL DO JUDITH TEIXEIRA'S TWO POEMS EXEMPLIFY HER POETICS AND AESTHETICS?

#### 3.1 *A paean to women's autonomy?*

Before presenting the first example of her own poetics, the work entitled “Cactus flowers”, Teixeira approvingly quotes Francisco Lagreca on the futurist approach to the arts;

Futurist Art, with its unique and peculiar way of describing things and of translating in a most original manner the sensations that come to us from the outside world, is ennobled by those souls who, rather than enjoying the privilege of feeling only approved sensations, remain open to every unpredictability and mutability that contemporary life affords” (LAGRECA, 1923, my translation).

Teixeira suggests that in her own poetics she deploys both objectivity (i.e., seeing the world as it really is) and subjectivity (letting subconscious images flood unbidden into her conscious thoughts and words). To develop and exercise these twin skills, she says, requires true artists to cultivate a *duplicidade*, a “twofold consciousness” capable of disturbing even their own senses and of maintaining a “fatal imbalance” that will keep them forever at odds with the bourgeois attachment to fixity and equilibrium. On

the “exceptional plane” true artists come to inhabit, they are able to “feel, pulsate, suffer and want” with a refinement that is wholly beyond the experience and comprehension of others, using their peculiar sense of beauty to transform light, color, form, space and all that hitherto was held to be true and endowing their fantasies with as much truth as possible.

And this was why, with the eyes of a true artist, able to penetrate more deeply than the sight of others, in the gleaming coral red of the cactus flower Teixeira saw the Bacchanalian orgies of old.

#### Flores de cactus

Flores de cactus resplandecentes,  
 espelhantes, encarnadas!  
 Rubras gargalhadas  
 de cortesãs...  
 Embriagam-se de sol,  
 pelas doiradas manhãs,  
 viçosas e ardentes!

Bela flor impudente!  
 Brilha melhor o sol rutilante  
 nas suas pétalas vermelhas...  
 É sugestivo  
 o ar insolente  
 e petulante,  
 como se deixam morder  
 pelas doiradas abelhas!

Nascem para ser beijadas  
 e possuídas  
 pelo sol abrasador...  
 Lascivas,  
 predestinadas  
 para os mistérios do amor!

#### Cactus flowers

Cactus flowers, your skin so blameless  
 mirror-bright incarnations  
 Scarlet cachinnations  
 Of concubines...  
 Rendered tipsy by the sun,  
 on golden mornings you shine,  
 luxuriant and shameless!

A fine bloom and so impudent!  
 The light of the sun more brilliant  
 in the vermilion of your petals...  
 Suggesting perhaps  
 A touch of insolence,  
 even petulance,  
 as you grant a grudging bite  
 to each golden bee that settles!

Born to feel the sun's every kiss  
 and even when possessed  
 by its torrid searing rays  
 You're wanton,  
 destined just for this —  
 to taste love's mysteries in every way!

Eu gosto desta flor pagã  
e sensual,  
que num místico ritual,  
se entrega toda aberta  
aos beijos fulvos do sol!

I like a flower that's pagan  
and sensual,  
that in some mystic ritual  
yields, unabashed, its charms so fully  
to the sun's amber embrace!

Oh! Flor do cactus enrubescida!  
No teu vermelho, há sangue, há vida...  
— E eu tenho uma enorme sede de viver!

In your ruby blush, O cactus flower,  
lies your life's blood, your vitality and power...  
— And I, like you have such a great thirst for life!

Academics have paid considerable attention to Teixeira's use of color in her poetry (see OLIVEIRA, 2013, p. 81-97), often in contrast to the paler hues that she associated, with predictable contrariness, not only with the unimaginative bourgeois art and literature she so detested, but also with the innocent candor and resplendent beauty of her idealized partners. Her particular predilection was for reds and purples, symbolizing the dialectic between love/passion and pain/suffering. Throughout the five stanzas of this first poem, she variously describes the particular hue of the cactus flower as *encarnada* [fleshy pink], *rubra* [blood-red]), *enrubescida* [crimson/ruby red] and *vermelho* [vermillion/cochineal red], the aptness of which would depend on the variety of the succulent in question.

What type of cactus might have stimulated Teixeira to write this poem and what image did the title conjure up in the minds of its readers? Since references to cacti are scarce in Portuguese poetry, we might conclude that these lines exemplify the exoticism for which Teixeira was well-known. And yet, this aspect

of her poetics was typically inspired by the arts and crafts of the Orient rather than the flora and fauna of the Americas where cacti are endemic. For most urban Portuguese in the 1920s, a cactus of *any* type would have seemed exotic and a flowering one even more so unless they had been migrants (to Brazil, for example) or had chanced to see one in a shady garden or park at Sintra or Buçaco. Initially, Teixeira's imagery might evoke the *Schlumbergera*, widely-known in its native Brazil as the *Flor de Maio* due to the season in which it flowers<sup>10</sup> and whose petals are often bright red with a brilliant sheen. The natural habitat of these plants, however, is the subtropical forest, where they cling to trees and wait to be pollinated by hummingbirds, and would therefore shun the attentions of the sun and bees that figure prominently in this poem's imagery. However, one cactus variety would have been familiar to those living in Portugal's rural hinterlands — for example, in Florbela Espanca's Alentejo or in the Beira province around Viseu in which Teixeira was born and raised —, namely the *Opuntia ficus-indica*, known in Portugal as *Figueira da Índia* [the Indian fig tree], and elsewhere as the "prickly pear". These massive cacti with their red, yellow or white flowers and edible fruit were introduced to the Iberian Peninsula from the Americas as early as the 16th century, first as "monstrous exotic curiosi-

---

10 In Europe and North America, the *Schlumbergera russelliana* is known as the Christmas cactus, while the *truncata* and *gaertneri* varieties are referred to as Easter cacti.

ties, adorning the gardens of nobles and the estates of the bourgeoisie” (VELÁZQUEZ, 1998, my translation), then on large commercial farms as hedging, fodder for animals and, finally, as homes for the cochineal beetles used to produce natural red dyes.

Teixeira provides us with an eloquent example of her multisensorial imagery when she likens these flowers, as imagined against the background of the cactus pads they adorn, to an explosion of courtesans’ laughter — *Rubras gargalhadas/de cortesãs* [Scarlet cachinnations/of concubines”. She then employs a pun, for *encarnada* means both “red” and “made flesh”, to shift her emphasis from the color to the glossiness (*flores... espelhantes*) and sumptuous texture (*flores... viçosas*) of the petals of the cactus flower and the passionate emotions they express, *ardente* signifying “fiery” both literally and metaphorically.

Admittedly, the poem does have unusual imagery (usually noun-adjective combinations that clash, evoking images that jar readers’ senses). Thus, as already mentioned, a courtesan’s laugh has its own scarlet color, the kisses of the sun have a tawny hue and flowers are variously described as being pagan and luxurious, lascivious and ardent, as well as impudent, insolent and petulant. The entire poem consists of a sustained, unambiguously sexual metaphor in which the time-honored rituals of power, as manifested by the blazing sun and the insistent bees, despite being foregrounded, are ultimately subverted

by the cactus flowers, which Teixeira refuses to portray as mere objects of the desire of others. Beneath the surface, her imagery reveals a deep concern over women's autonomy in romantic relationships. For example, in the second stanza, in the poet's imagination, the gleaming surface of the petals has the capacity to *amplify* sunlight, providing the flower with agency and emboldening it so that when the age-old rites are performed, it receives each bee not with passive gratitude but with the honest air of "insolence" and "petulance" that the enforced transaction deserves.

The tension between the powerlessness that destiny had apparently conferred on women and the greater agency they still pursue continues into the third stanza. We are told that, though the cactus flower was designed to receive the embrace of the sun, it has been empowered to enjoy every aspect of its fate in full, needing neither displays of feigned reluctance nor any self-imposed or inherited inhibitions. Thus, paradoxically, when the flower (here symbolizing all women) offers itself "so fully/to the sun's amber embrace", while it may appear to be yielding to its fate, it is also declaring its *right to enjoy* — in the abstract political and concrete carnal senses of the term — as well as the *duty to multiply* the freedoms hitherto achieved. As if to cement this connection between flower and womanhood, Teixeira ends the poem by proclaiming the gleaming red of the cactus flower a

symbol of its vitality and power and herself as one who shares the same aspirations.

### 3.2 “*But just before the dawn, I awake and find you gone*”<sup>11</sup>

While in Teixeira’s first illustration of her poetics, the most prominent device is the repeated use of a limited color palette to cumulatively build a multifaceted impression of the cactus flower, in her second illustration, it is the dense use of unexpected imagery that is most striking. Before presenting her poem “Illusion”, the poet turns once more to Lagreca, who draws on his own writings<sup>12</sup> to provide two further examples — one tactile, the other, visual — of how futurist poets craft their images:

When I describe the contours of a Gip design,<sup>13</sup> when I caress their surfaces and can sense that the body beneath the silk is naked, it is the mysterious sensibility of my soul that is at work and I experience the sensation of nudity just as if I had been stroking the velvety surface of real flesh through real fabric. When I write that the depths of the night are charcoal-smudged, it is my soul that is sketching out the very ether, dusted

---

11 From the lyrics of the 1963 Roy Orbison song “In dreams”.

12 It is unclear from which of his publications this quote is drawn but it is likely to have been his *Apologia de Arte Moderna*, a path-breaking survey of new trends in the Brazilian arts, published in 1923.

13 “GIP” was the signature used by Georges Pierre, a prominent French Art Nouveau designer, known above all for his jewelry.

with black powder. These are subtle, magnetic sensations that only those with a modern artist's soul can comprehend (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 288, my translation).

Teixeira now attempts to specify the workings of the “mysterious sensibility” to which Lagreca has alluded by adding further detail to her previous description of how modern poetics should function and by stressing that it is fundamentally dishonest for poets to self-censor their imaginations: “if in the *unquiet mind* of true artists the ordinary aspect of things is made bizarre, [and] is transmuted by their peculiar sensibilities, then to conform to the true artist's conception of beauty, those things must be portrayed with the *utmost truthfulness* (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 288, my translation and emphasis). In her view, the imagery she produces has its roots both in her passionate convictions and in the disquiet her spirit suffers as a result of being permanently at odds with bourgeois values, constantly subject to attacks from moralizing critics and running the risk of becoming a social pariah. To further illustrate what she considers the “bizarre” nature of her imagery, how it comes about, and how the modern poet's febrile imagination may reveal new truths, Teixeira presents “Illusion”, a longer, more intimate and more explicitly homoerotic poem from her second collection *Núa: poemas de Bysancio*, in which the liminal world between dreams and reality provides ample scope for unusual imagery.

## Ilusão

Vens todas as madrugadas  
prender-te nos meus sonhos  
- estátua de Bisancio  
esculpida em neve! -  
e poisas a tua mão  
macia e leve  
nas minhas pálpebras magoadas...

Vens toda nua, recortada em graça  
rebrilhante, iluminada!  
Vejo-te chegar  
como uma alvorada  
de sol!...  
E o meu corpo freme,  
e a minha alma canta  
como um enamorado rouxinol!

Sobre a nudez moça do teu corpo  
dois cisnes erectos  
quedam-se cismando em brancas  
[estusias  
e na seda roxa  
do meu leito,  
em rúbidos clarões,  
nascem, maceradas,  
as orquídeas vermelhas  
das minhas sensações!...

És linda assim; toda nua,  
no minuto doce  
em que me trazes  
a clara oferta do teu corpo  
e reclamas firmemente  
a minha posse!...

Quero prender-me à mentira loira  
do teu grácil recorte...  
E os teus beijos perfumados,  
nenúfares desfolhados  
pela rajada dominante e forte  
das minhas cristações,  
tombam sobre os meus nervos  
partidos... estilhaçados!

## Illusion

You come at each day's dawning  
to embed yourself in my dreams  
— Byzantine statue  
hewn from a snowdrift! —  
A weightless hand you  
tenderly lift  
towards my eyelids so bruised by  
[mourning...

You come quite naked, a bright halo of light  
silhouetting your graceful lines!  
Your arrival, like  
the sun as it shows its first signs  
at dawn!...  
And my body trembles  
and my soul sings  
like a nightingale in whom love is reborn!

Over the naked girlishness of your body  
two swans, heads rearing up,  
pause in blank amazement at the  
[joy they're feeling  
while in the purple silks  
of my alcove bed,  
in ruby scintillations,  
from their plump buds are born,  
the vermilion orchid flowers  
of my own sensations!...

You are beautiful like this; quite naked,  
paying your sweet dues  
as you offer me,  
unmistakably, the gift of your body  
and insistently demand  
I possess you...!

I want to cling to the bright illusion  
of your elegant form...  
For each and every perfumed caress  
— water lilies stripped bare, undressed  
by the overwhelming force of the storm  
that my convulsions raised —  
to pour balm upon my shattered nerves  
That lie in pieces, seeking rest.

.....

Acordo. E os teus braços,  
muito ao longe,  
desfiam ainda  
a cabeleira fulva  
do sol  
por sobre os oiros adormecidos  
da minha alcova...

Visão bendita! Repetida e nova!

Loira Salomé  
de ritmos esculturais!  
Vens mais nua  
esta madrugada!  
Vem esconder-te na sombra dos  
[meus olhos  
e não queiras deixar-me...  
ai nunca. nunca mais!

.....

Awake now, I see your far-off arms,  
stretching upwards  
as you disentangle  
one last tousled golden tress  
of sun  
that playfully, across my alcove's  
drowsing bounty, you'll strew...

O blessèd vision! And each and every  
[time so new!

A blonde Salome  
dancing your sculptural measure!  
Your nakedness  
this morn is more complete!  
Come hide yourself in the deepest  
[shadows of my eyes  
and pray never more leave me...  
Never again, not ever!

In this second example, Teixeira reiterates her contention that what “the Majority” considers the “bizarre” imagery of modernism and futurism can only originate in and radiate from the minds of true poets, filtered by their very particular artistic sensibilities, which she summarises as being their capacity to see the world *as it really is*. To support her argument further, she quotes from the preface that Pierre Louÿs<sup>14</sup> wrote for his erotic novel *Aphrodite: mœurs antiques*, in which he condemns the hypocrisy of those who

---

14 Pierre Louÿs (1870-1925) was a Belgian writer who aimed to blend pagan sensuality with stylistic perfection in his erotic evocations of the Ancient World. He was the dedicatee of the original French version of Oscar Wilde's play *Salomé*, Josef von Sternberg (*The devil is woman*) and Luis Buñuel (*That obscure object of desire*) adapted his short story “La femme et le pantin” [The woman and the puppet] for the screen and his poetry was set to music by Debussy and Sorabji.

prohibit — or, indeed, promote — carnal acts of which they have no personal experience:

Those who have not experienced the demands of the flesh to the very limit, whether in devotion to them or in repudiation of them, are [...] incapable of fully understanding the demands of the spirit. Just as the beauty of the soul illuminates a whole face, it is virility<sup>15</sup> that renders the mind more fertile (LOUÏS, 1896, p. x).

Although her translation into Portuguese closely follows the original text, Teixeira surprisingly omits the phrase that immediately precedes the passage she quotes, in which Louÿs succinctly describes the interaction of the physical and mental aspects of human existence in the following terms: “Sensuality is the mysterious but necessary and creative condition for intellectual development” [*La sensualité est la condition mystérieuse, mais nécessaire et créatrice, du développement intellectuel*] (LOUÏS, 1896, p. x, my translation).

---

15 Here, the term “virility” is used in the same sense that Valentine de Saint-Point had used it, namely, to denote an attribute shared by both men and women, by communities and by all historical periods. In her *Manifeste de la femme futuriste* (SAINT-POINT, 1912, p. 8-9) she says: “An individual who is exclusively virile is just a brute; an individual who is exclusively feminine is only a vessel [...] Fertile periods in which [...] a culture throws up most heroes and geniuses, are rich in both masculinity and femininity. Periods which have only wars [...] are exclusively virile. Those in which the heroic instinct is denied and which, turning towards the past, are destroyed by dreams of peace, are periods in which femininity is dominant. Today, we are living at the end of one of these periods. *What women lack most, as well as men, is virility*” (my translation; emphasis in the original).

In her own attempt to portray the interplay between the carnal and the cognitive, Teixeira turns for support to Marie Bashkirtseff,<sup>16</sup> although she seems to misremember or misunderstand what she had read in the young Ukrainian painter's diaries. Although Bashkirtseff often discussed the physical and moral dimensions of human existence (albeit in general rather than philosophical terms), she wrote more frequently of the life of luxury to which she aspired to return, rarely (if ever) recording her most intimate thoughts and deeds. The journal entry Teixeira quotes is dated January 5, 1877, and clearly concerns luxury [*luxe*] rather than lust [*luxure*]. "Physical luxury is necessary for moral luxury", she says [*le luxe physique est nécessaire au luxe moral*] (BASHKIRTSEFF, 1925, p. 7, my translation), suggesting that material

---

16 Marie Bashkirtseff was a painter, sculptor and diarist who was born near Karkhiv in what is today the Ukraine but who spent much of her time in Paris, on the Riviera and at various resorts and spas throughout Europe. Although of noble birth, her life seems to have been comfortable rather than luxurious due in part to the social ostracism her family suffered as a result of her uncle's arrest and deportation from France for "drunkenness, gambling and whoring" (AUPEIX, 2013, p. 70, my translation). And yet, notwithstanding her exclusion from the social circles in which potential suitors might have been encountered, she continued to hope for marriage to someone willing to support not only her well-documented love of fashionable clothes (CHASSEGUET-SMIRGEL, 1973, p. 716) but also her many creative projects, ranging from painting and sculpture to historical research and feminist journalism. However, it was her unshakeable commitment to art and her growing disdain for the conventions that ruled the lives of her contemporaries that kept her moored to the margins of the Paris elite. Ultimately, her hopes of a life dedicated to art remained unfulfilled: she died of tuberculosis aged only 25, having found no suitor endowed with the physical and moral perfection she considered essential in a husband.

deprivation is the enemy of spiritual perfection.<sup>17</sup> Six months earlier, in her entry for July 10th 1876, she had written something similar and with even greater clarity: “Perfect moral well-being can only exist when the material side of life has been satisfied and one is not obliged to think of oneself as just an empty stomach” [*Le parfait bonheur moral ne peut exister que lorsque le côté matériel est satisfait et n’oblige pas à songer à soi comme un estomac vide*] (BASHKIRTSEFF, 1890, p. 212-213).

In *De mim*, Teixeira ‘name-checks’ Bashkirtseff — along with other ‘infamous luminaries’ of the European arts such as Luigi Pirandello, Oscar Wilde, Renée Vivien and Isadora Duncan — less for the relevance of the painter’s thoughts on life, love and art and more out of admiration for one of the few women who, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had the courage to write with the sincerity Teixeira valued so highly. However, by conflating luxury and lust in this quote, Teixeira momentarily distracts her readers’ attention from her core argument in favor of artistic freedom

---

17 Luxury, seen variously as sinful ostentation, the cause and corollary of mass poverty, a significant provider of employment or an act of transgressive liberation, has occupied the minds of philosophers from Plato and Socrates, through Mandeville, Voltaire and Rousseau, to Bataille and Foucault. Of course, luxury and lust are not unconnected: if we were to stand at what would be conventionally regarded as the ‘virtuous’ pole of a continuum stretching from total frugality to unbridled excess, then lust — that is, the unrestrained pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh that Teixeira had been discussing in her lecture and what she stood accused of promoting through her writing — would be situated on the far horizon, whereas luxury (i.e., the occasional or habitual enjoyment of extravagance) would occupy the middle distance.

and against the hypocrisy and banality of bourgeois society.

Teixeira continues her reflections on the poetics that separate futurist from conventional writers by exploring why, in her case, the imagery she creates turns out to be so “bizarre”:

At the end of the artistic process of writing those red incendiary poems — in which I carved beauty into bodies that were posed so bizarrely that they dazzled even my own senses — if I had wanted to find the real source of my creations, I would have been obliged to descend to my own inner world and interrogate my “unconscious self”. At such moments, in the particular state of beauty I find myself experiencing, certain psychological motifs from my inner world unconsciously stir themselves inside my conscious rational mind (TEIXEIRA 2015, p. 291).

To what extent, then, do the images in this second poem correspond to the osmotic process described above by Teixeira? Those which OLIVEIRA (2013, p. 86-87) finds particularly striking are the whiteness of the statue (“hewn out of snow”) and its state of undress (“you come quite naked”), as well as the depiction of breasts shaped like “two erect swans” (TEIXEIRA 2015, p. 136-137). From the translator’s perspective, the first image is surprising less because of the contrast between the whiteness of the snow and the richness and diversity of color evoked by the adjective “Byzantine” and more because it was rare in the empire’s pictorial art and sculpture to find the

human form portrayed completely without clothes [*toda nua*]. Moreover, ivory miniatures — such as figurines, reliquaries and book covers often carved in bas-relief — were far more common than life-size statuary and, when large items were sculpted, they were often colorfully decorated rather than being left as monochrome stone. If Teixeira was knowledgeable about the art of the Ancient World, then it is the very singularity of a plain white Byzantine statue repeatedly appearing naked in her dreams that makes for an unusual image, albeit one that only would have resonated with readers who were also privy to such esoteric knowledge.

Of course, from an aesthetic standpoint, the naked female body was itself pleasing to the dreamer's eye but, more importantly, it produced an erotic thrill in her mind and stimulated her physical desire. Yet there is far more to the visual impact on the dreamer than just the *form* taken by her visitor: in the second image, the halo of light surrounding the statue transforms it into something exceptional: "You come quite naked, a bright halo of light/silhouetting your graceful lines!/Your arrival like/the sun, as it shows its first signs/at dawn!" [*Recortada em graça/rebrilhante, iluminada!/Vejo-te chegar/como uma alvorada/de sol!*]. More plausibly, the dream-visitor, far from being an inert statue — nor one magically animated such as the milk-white Galatea of Greek mythology or Prosper Merimee's *La Vénus d'Ille* — is surely only *remi-*

*niscent* of a statue which, due to the aura around it, evokes in Teixeira's mind some otherworldly being: a pagan goddess, perhaps, or a transgressive Christian saint.

Nevertheless, the third image — that of breasts, which Teixeira likens to swans rearing up out of the water — does seem genuinely strange for it departs so radically from even the most imaginative depictions of the female body as seen by the male heterosexual gaze (OLIVEIRA 2013, p. 86-87 apud GARAY, 2001) or, indeed through the lens that poetesses often hold up to their own gender.<sup>18</sup> This strangeness is enhanced by the ambiguity of the lines containing this image for we are never entirely sure where the swans are nor even to whom they belong. If we visualize the body of each swan as a breast and the extended neck and head as an arm and hand and then duplicate the birds in mirror image, together they suggest the form of a woman, standing or reclining, arms raised above her head, rather like the shape of an amphora.<sup>19</sup> And it is worth recalling that once a pair of swans has mated, they rise out of the water in unison, their necks

---

18 In Florbela Espanca's unfinished novella "Mulher de perdição" [literally, Woman of doom] (ESPANCA, 2019, p. 113-114), an exotic dancer is described as having "breasts like two rosebuds about to open" (my translation) [*seios como duas rosas a abrir*].

19 A similar image appears in Florbela Espanca's short story "The Aviator" (ESPANCA, 2015, p.122): "A languid siren, divinely pale, raises amphora-like the white velvet of her arms" (my translation) [*Em volta fremem mais fundo as ondas dos seios; as mãos abrem os dedos como faúlhas de estrelas; uma lânguida sereia, divinamente branca, eleva o veludo branco dos braços como duas ânforas cheias*].

extended and their breasts touching, also forming the outline of a Grecian urn.<sup>20</sup>

Assuming that the swan image was evoked by the disposition of the dream-visitor's limbs and torso, we could imagine the dreamer observing from afar what still appears to be a statue, silhouetted by the morning sun, arms aloft in greeting. Alternatively, from a closer vantage point, the dreamer could be admiring what is no longer a distantly "bright illusion" but the body of a young woman lying beside her, unabashed among the silks, hands behind her head. A third possibility, were we to allow the dark-haired dreamer a paler complexion than that typical of Portuguese southern provinces, we could imagine her towering over a recumbent form, arms aloft in a display of passion and power, accepting her blonde visitor's unambiguous invitation.

The nightingale is a bird more common than the swan both in poetry and in Portugal. It may therefore seem appropriate for this bird to be present in what, after all, is a love poem, symbolizing not only love and the coming of spring but also nightfall and mourning and, indeed, poetic creativity itself. And yet it is unexpected, to say the least, in the midst of Teixeira's futurist imagery, to find the dreamer uttering such an uncharacteristically clichéd metaphor — namely, that

---

20 Swans are relatively rare in Portugal but they can be found in some public parks and gardens and on some private estates. Undoubtedly, Teixeira would have observed or at least read descriptions of their mating rituals.

the daily approach of her visitor makes her soul sing like an impassioned nightingale [*E a minha alma canta / como um enamorado rouxinol*] (TEIXEIRA 2015, p. 289). While it may seem that Teixeira has used a phrase replete with romantic symbolism to “disturb” or “dazzle” the reader’s senses, its strangeness lies neither in the pairing of incongruous nouns and adjectives (or vice versa) to which her devotees would have become accustomed, nor in her use of an extended and bizarre phrase (as in the case of the swans) to evoke the desired image, but rather in the insertion of an entirely inappropriate phrase, seemingly with a view to creating a momentary sense of ironic dissonance, just as if, with a wink to the audience, a concert pianist had deliberately struck a wrong chord. Furthermore, the jarring juxtaposition of romantic and futurist imagery would have had the subsidiary effect of helping to normalize the literary expression of female homoeroticism that, at the time, was as challenging as it was rare.

On a number of occasions in her books of poems, Teixeira uses the adjectival form of the verb *macerar*, often applied to eyes and faces but not always with the same effect in mind. It is a word with multiple meanings, ranging from the culinary (literally, to soften by soaking or steeping) to the punitive (metaphorically, to bruise or castigate). This said, the translator’s solution is either to identify a series of distinct words in English, each of which conveys the sense of

the original in its particular context or to employ the unfamiliar word “macerate” repeatedly. The former option effaces the original word from the translation, whereas the latter neutralizes the subtle differences between its various meanings.

In Teixeira’s sonnet “Fim” [The End], she speaks of *olhos macerados* i.e., eyes that have been drained and/or darkened by some bitter experience and can no longer appreciate beauty as before. In “Sonetinho”<sup>21</sup> she describes eyes as “impudent dark circles, purple as violets” and in “Noite dolorosa” [Painful night] they are “saddened and violet, as if bruised”. In “A pobre mais pobrezinha” [The poorest girl of all], poverty has given a young girl’s face a maddened, tortured look [*sombre de locura / no teu rosto macerado*] and, similarly, in “Aos pés da cruz” [At the foot of the Cross], the poetic subject hides her tortured flesh and sunken eyes from her lover’s gaze [*não vejas minha carne macerada, / nem os meus olhos de tão fundos traços*]. In “Estranha dor” [Strange suffering] the verb *macerar* is used to describe the optical illusion — or hallucinatory experience — of purple spots fading before the insomniac’s eyes [*a sua cor destingir em sulcos fundos, macerados*], whereas in “Volúpia” [Voluptuousness], passion is rekindled as the dissipating dreams [*sonhos macerados*] of the drowsing lovers disappear as if scorched by red-hot lava (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 65, 196, 218-219, 193, 185, 101, 164, respectively).

---

21 I.e., a sonnet consisting of short lines.

In the first stanza of “Ilusão”, Teixeira prefigures the word *maceradas* by describing quite literally as *pálpebras magoadas*, eyelids made sore by tiredness or crying, a phrase that resonates and rhymes with the as-yet unspoken *pálpebras maceradas* of the third stanza, the latter term, suggesting bruised eyelids, had also come into use regarding the darker colors of eye shadow that became popular in the 1920s as theatre and cinema transformed cosmetics from preparations employed to disguise the ravages of age into products used by those wishing to brashly proclaim their youth and independence. Though by that time Teixeira was in her forties, she had earned herself a reputation for her somewhat vampish style: “Her third book of poems *Núa: poemas de Bysancio* contains a sketch of the author by Guilherme Filipe [...] portraying the face of a beautiful woman, her eyes heavily made-up and her hair worn short, a style that had only recently become the fashion” (VIANA, 1977, p. 198-208).

In the third stanza, the adjective *maceradas* now appears explicitly, not to describe eyes but in a phrase that acts as the corollary of the swan image discussed above. With the dreamer still asleep, all her senses signal the presence of her visitor with “ruby scintillations” and her feelings begin to blossom like orchid buds coming into flower. Teixeira’s passion elevates her visitor’s perfumed kisses above mere sensuality, distilling from them their essence, like “water lilies

stripped bare, undressed/by the overwhelming force of the storm/raised by my convulsions [*nenúfares desfolhados/pela rajada dominante e forte/das minhas cristações*],<sup>22</sup> leaving only pure beauty to provide the balm that will calm the dreamer's spirit, which has been all but broken by the prejudice of others.

And although the sleeper awakes, she wants to keep hold of the image of her dream-visitor's first appearance, the "bright illusion" [*mentira loira*, literally "blonde lie"] that occurred when a trick of the light transformed her elegant form [*grácil recorte*] into the statue, perhaps of a goddess, saint or madonna. But why does the poet describe the illusion as *loira*, a term associated more with hair and skin color and not words such as *dourada* or *áurea* [golden], that would better describe the halo cast by the rising sun around the visitor's figure? Since, in the closing lines of the poem, Teixeira addresses "blonde Salome", the choice of adjective may indeed refer to the color of her visitor's hair. Is this another one of the poet's deliberately unsettling images for Salome was surely a dark-haired, olive-skinned, levantine princess? While that may be so in the modern — or modernist — imaginary, earlier artists as varied as Botticelli, Titian and Caravaggio, Füssli, and even Corinth and Mucha (both of whom experienced the onset of mod-

---

22 Florbela Espanca uses a similar metaphor in her 1927 short story "The Aviator" (ESPANCA, 2015, p. 121): like bare-stemmed flowers around a dark funeral bier (my translation) [*como flores defolhadas em redor de um esquife negro*].

ernism), had portrayed Salome as pale-skinned with blonde, auburn or chestnut hair. It was only after Aubrey Beardsley provided the illustrations for the 1894 English translation of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* that she began to accrue many of the visual and symbolic attributes of the oriental *femme fatale* she is still portrayed as today.

Hitherto, the Judean princess had been projected as a passive object, a victim both of the lust of her stepfather Herod Antipas and of the plotting of her vengeful mother Herodias. Soon, however, painters and writers would begin to endow her with agency, a shift that was reflected in new pictorial representations that emphasized her decadence and alterity: her dress became more exotic, her hair much darker, her conduct less compliant and her intentions more autonomous. If Teixeira was aware of the conventional imagery, mentioning the color of Salome's hair would have been as redundant as stressing Othello's Moorish or Atila's Hunnic antecedents. Her insistence on using the adjective "blonde" could only be considered bizarre if her own imaginary — and, indeed, that of her intended readership — had also been strongly influenced by the Salome whom foreign modernists such as Oscar Wilde, Richard Strauss, Gustav Klimt and Florent Schmitt had popularized<sup>23</sup> and whom, in

---

23 For example, by Wilde in his 1891 symbolist play *Salome*, Richard Strauss in his eponymous 1905 opera and Gustav Klimt in his painting *Judith II* of 1909. However, Florent Schmitt's 1907 orchestral music *La Tragédie de Salomé*, written for Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, returned

Portugal, Sá Carneiro (1996, p. 86-87) and Florbela Espanca (2019, p. 113-114) had incorporated into their own poetic universes.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps, by insisting on a blonde Salome — from her vantage point in mid-1920s Lisbon and with the benefit of the protofeminism and sexual politics that her own personal experiences and the writings of Valentine de Saint-Point, Renée Vivien and others had endowed her — Teixeira is saying “To me, this is the Salome of old, who still feels the tension between youthful compliance and a rebellious yearning to become her own person”.<sup>25</sup> Could it be that, in her dream state, Teixeira — a woman of a certain age<sup>26</sup> when she

---

to the earlier portrayal of Salome as the innocent tool of her parents’ ambition and depravity.

24 Mário Sá Carneiro evokes this ‘new’ Salome in his description of a dancer he had seen in Montmartre: “[H]is eyes fell upon a half-naked dancer — a splendid figure, strikingly beautiful, a wild muscular body, small tremulous breasts, dark red lips, wide eyes, black hair — and her flesh, her luminous flesh, golden brown, born to be covered in emeralds. It could well have been [...] the triumphal body of Salome”.

25 Florbela Espanca even managed to capture the tension between the sensuality and sensitivity of a *femme fatale malgré soi* who is eager to break free of the tyranny of others but unaccustomed to establishing relationships on any other basis. João Eduardo recognizes that the dancer Reine Dupré was not “the Salomé of the previous evening, all but naked, tragic and voluptuous against the bloody backdrop of a Judean palace. She was just a woman, a woman like any other — but beautiful, more beautiful than any other! He hadn’t thought her so beautiful: her skin was as white as the palest satin with the faintest blush of pink; her hair, very dark, almost black, smooth as silk, framing her camellia-hued cheeks; the narrow, cruel, somewhat overdone red gash of the lips belying the kindness, sincerity and innocence of her eyes, eyes like Ophelia” (my translation).

26 In contrast to the conventional meaning in English, referring to spinsterhood, i.e., the condition of a woman beyond marriageable age, the expression *une femme d’un certain âge* has “a long history in French, where it refers to women of fortyish and thereabouts who are able to initiate boys and young men into the beauties of sexual encounters. The [...] French meaning has nothing to do with marriage.” (RUBIN, 1979 apud SAFIRE, 1995).

published her first poems — was imagining herself a latter-day Sappho, mentor to younger women in matters social, cultural and sexual and therefore as much of the consummate aesthete as Pessoa had claimed António Botto to be?<sup>27</sup>

As her visitor's figure recedes into the dawn, raising her arms again as if to disentangle a last braid of sunlight and toss it onto the bed, the dreamer awakes and silently prays that next time her lover will stay and nevermore leave her side.

#### 4 BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION.

Trying to assess, from an early 21<sup>st</sup> century vantage point, any “strangeness” that, a century before, the public may have detected in a particular piece of poetic imagery, is of course an exercise in well-informed speculation. Readers are reminded that the remarks made here regarding the poetic imagery that Judith Teixeira offer in her lecture-apologia-manifesto *De mim* as illustrations of her method and aesthetics are not those of a literary critic but of a translator, whose principal aim has been to make two of her most iconic poems available for the first time to an English-speaking readership. Furthermore, the com-

---

27 The claim that António Botto's sexual predilections were proof of his status as a true aesthete constituted the main argument of Pessoa's public defense of his friend and fellow poet against accusations of homosexuality.

ments accompanying the poems are selective and reflect only the imagery that appeared to the translator most strikingly 'Judithian' and which were seemingly intended to exemplify her poetics, aesthetics and sexual politics. Searching for the 'right' word and the 'correct' register, as well as identifying the 'optimum trade-off' between fidelity to the original text and the comprehensibility of the translation, require considerable research not only into the meanings of particular words and phrases but also into the context in which the works under scrutiny were first created. Such contextual investigation informs the choices the translator makes, sometimes leading to better (or at least different) outcomes, which in turn may necessitate further contextual research, producing further refinements in the translation. Of course, the process cannot be prolonged indefinitely, deadlines have to be met, other projects progressed, new projects initiated. And other translations of the same work may be commissioned in the future, based on new research, new paradigms, and even new technologies. In this sense, translations are always a sort of work-in-progress, as are most of the original works of literature whose appreciation they seek to widen.

From the translator's perspective, while many of Teixeira's images in these two poems are indeed startling, some are less so than they initially seem, whereas others yet provide the overall solidity of atmosphere and meaning that even the most practiced

and enthusiastic of readers requires. Nevertheless, by taking the unusual step of including examples of her own poetry in her lecture-apologia-manifesto *De mim*, Teixeira partially succeeded in exemplifying the process by which her imagery — and perhaps much modernist imagery — is produced and explaining why it may have proven “bizarre” and incomprehensible to those lacking her honesty and openness. Despite the rather oratorical style of her prose and the fact that she allowed her poems to ‘speak for themselves’, those listening to or reading her words would have felt in a better position to appreciate her work, but perhaps not as well-prepared as they might have been if she had dissected her imagery a little more. Then, as now, there are limits to self-revelation and Teixeira’s earlier transgressions had already been severely punished. And while being a devotee of Teixeira’s work gave her readers the opportunity to enter her inner world, it was the artist who claimed the right to be its gatekeeper.

## REFERENCES

AUPEIX. Anaïs. *Expositions de soi: journal intime et reconfiguration de l'intimité à l'heure d'internet*. 2013. Thèse (Doctorat en Sciences de l'information et de la communication) – Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail (Toulouse II), Toulouse, 2013.

BARBOSA, Sara Marina. Quem tramou Judith Teixeira?: Uma história com fantasmas. *Estrema: Revista Interdisciplinar de Humanidades*, Lisboa, n. 4, outono 2014.

BASHKIRTSEFF, Marie. *Cahiers intimes inédits de Marie Bashkirtseff*. Ed. by Pierre Borel. Paris: Aux Éditeurs Associés: Les Éditions du Monde Moderne, 1925. v. 1.

BASHKIRTSEFF, Marie. *Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff*. Paris: Charpentier, 1890. v. 1.

BOTTO, António. *Canções*. Lisboa: Imprensa Libânio da Silva, 1921.

CHASSEGUET-SMIRGEL Janine. Essai sur l'idéal du moi: contribution à l'étude psychanalytique de la maladie d'idéalité. *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, v. 36, sept./déc. 1973.

ESPANCA, Florbela. Mulher de perdição. In: ESPANCA, Florbela. *Diário e O dominó preto*. Ed. by Fabio Mario da Silva. Lisboa: Esgotadas, 2019. p. 87-125.

ESPANCA, Florbela. The Aviator. In: ESPANCA, Florbela. *As máscaras do destino*. Ed. by Cláudia Pazos Alonso and Fabio Mario da Silva. Lisboa: Estampa, 2015. p.117-124.

GARAY, René P. Sexus sequor: Judite Teixeira e o discurso modernista português. *Faces de Eva*, Lisboa, n. 5, p. 53-74, 2001.

JOHNSTON, Freya. Marks of Inferiority. *London Review of Books*, London, v. 43, n. 3, p. 29, 4 Feb. 2021. Review of: TOMASELLI, Sylvana. *Wollstonecraft: Philosophy, Passion and Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020.

LAGRECA, Francisco de Castro. Apologia de arte moderna. Pref. by António Ferro. São Paulo: Estabelecimento Graphico Rossetti and Cia., 1923.

LEAL, Raul [Henoch]. *Sodoma divinizada: leves reflexões teometafísicas sobre um artigo [de Álvaro Maia] [Sodom Made Divine: Some Initial Theo-Metaphysical Reflections on an Article (by Álvaro Maia)]*. Lisbon: Olisipo, 1923.

LOUÏS, Pierre, Aphrodite. *Moeurs antiques*. Author's Preface. Paris: Société du Mercure de France; Librairie Borel, 1896. Disponível em: <https://www.hellenicaworld.com/>

[Greece/Literature/PierreLouys/en/AncientManners.html#authors\\_preface](http://Greece/Literature/PierreLouys/en/AncientManners.html#authors_preface). Acesso em: 15 dez. 2015.

OLIVEIRA Boia; FRAGATA, Andreia. *Que o desejo me desça ao corpo: Judith Teixeira e a literatura sáfica*. 2013. Dissertação (Mestrado em Estudos Literários, Culturais e Interartes) – Universidade do Porto, Porto, 2013.

RUBIN, Lillian B. *Women of a certain age: The midlife search for self*. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.

SÁ CARNEIRO, Mário. *The Great Shadow and other stories*. Trans. by Margaret Jull Costa. Cambridge: Dedalus, 1996. Originally published as one of the works in *Céu em fogo: oito novelas* [The sky ablaze: eight novellas]. Lisboa: Livraria Brasileira, Monteiro e Companhia, 1915.

SAFIRE William. In *Language: A Woman of a Certain Age*. *The New York Times Magazine*, New York, 2 July 1995.

TEIXEIRA, Judith. De mim. In: TEIXEIRA, Judith. *Poesia e prosa*. Ed. by Cláudia Pazos Alonso and Fabio Mario da Silva. Lisboa: Dom Quixote, 2015.

TEIXEIRA, Judith. *Castelo de sombras*. Lisboa: Imprensa Libânio da Silva, 1923.

TEIXEIRA, Judith. *Decadência*. Lisboa: Imprensa Libânio da Silva, 1923.

TEIXEIRA, Judith. *De mim: conferência em que se explicam as minhas rasões sobre a vida, sobre a estética e sobre moralidade*. Lisboa: Centro Tipográfico Colonial, 1926.

TEIXEIRA, Judith. *Núa: poemas de Bysancio: escritos que foram por Judith Teixeira*. Lisboa: J. Rodrigues e Companhia, 1926.

VELÁZQUEZ, E. *El nopal y su historia*. Ciudad de México: Clio, 1998.

VIANA, António Manuel Couto. *Coração arquivista*. Pref. by David Mourão Ferreira. Lisboa: Verbo, 1977.