

“New Poetics of Resistance: the Twenty-First Century in Portugal”

This project takes the word “poetics” at its etymological root: the first making of the first form — to form from the root at the root of sound. Using the words of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E School main theoretician and poet, Charles Bernstein, language is “the first forging”, the first making of form: a copy and a form of deceiving. From that first step what we call the real is nothing but a humanly and socially “forged” real: an artifice whose artificiality becomes “phantom objectivity” (Michael Taussig).

Focusing on these “forms of forging the world”, we will search for counter-hegemonic forms of this making in language. This means that we will focus on the politics of language, namely by looking at some discourses that, from the margins, produce the centre whilst, paradoxically, resisting and challenging it: “serving what is not” (Dante), re-inventing and investigating the violent territories of excess (Jean-Jacques Lecercle) where the whole of the disapproved, unproved or yet-to-be-proved forms of language are (Susan Howe). The “new poetics of resistance” lie in this foundational territory and its infinite possibilities: experimental and technologically transformed literary forms; the inevitably impossible efforts of translation; the knowledge of incompleteness in a dia(multi)topic hermeneutics (Sousa Santos) demanded by multiculturalism, bilingualism, migration and multi-ethnic trajectories; an epistemological research based on a permanent search for lines of escape (Deleuze e Guattari) leading to nomadic and decentering practices, and to the deterritorializing of words and of the identities forged by them.

Biographical memory is an event of the “body writing”, historical reference and mover of hybrid identities where multicultural beliefs and “saudade” (nostalgia) enlighten the imagination and become significant elements of a dynamic Portuguese culture nowadays facing different exchanges and challenges imposed by globalization.

We thus try to participate in an epistemology of absences and emergences (Sousa Santos) which can only be offered by transversality and diversified forms of knowledge.

This interdisciplinary project crosses 4 areas (Literary Studies, Sociology, Translation Studies and Linguistics) in 9 sub-projects: (a) "Poetics for the New Worlds", (b) "Observatory of Portuguese Electronic Poetry", (c) "Poetry Movements and Magazines in Portugal", (d) "To Resist Language: Translation", (e) "Towards a Sociology of the Author: the Audio-Visual", (f) "Fernando Lemos' Poetry and Design: politics, exile and immigration", (g) "Identity Semantics in the Migrant Word of Portuguese Emigrant Women Authors in Paris and Montreal", (h) "Poetics of Resistance and Oral Literature — Voices of Jewish Women in the Communities of Belmonte (Portugal) and Bom Fim (Brasil)", (i) "Letters, Identities and Contexts: discursive recycling, development and identity transformation in two contexts of reading and writing".

Poetry is the thematic nucleus (resistance as "error" and "malformation" in experimentalism with voice, body, image, and by new technologies), but the analytical field includes a comparative dimension with other contextualizing and problematizing outputs concerning language and discourse in Portugal (resistance as "error" and "malformation" related to exile, migration, ethnicity, therapy).

"Poetics for the New Worlds" will be part of a network with the project "pennsound", <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/> (audio and video) and with the "Electronic Poetry Center", <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bernstein/blog/> (text and links), both directed by Charles Bernstein from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA, as well as with a group in S. Paulo, Brazil, around poet Régis Bonvicino and the poetry magazine Sibila, <http://lgpessoa.web.br.com/sibila2/> .

The popularization of electronic technologies in the production and circulation of images has increased the importance of the material dimension of images in the social practices with them connected. Does the internet create more democratic cultural practices? Considering the poet as social agent and the human experience of visualization as an experience situated by the materiality of images and its power, what are the social impacts of these cultural practices?

We will try to observe how dominant language and ideology can be deterritorialized through new poetic makings that introduce malformation and error as a possibility for a citizenship in the becoming — in uses of the word that aim, not only at referring to, but mainly at interfering in the order of the world.

48 years of silence — and a visual poem was then seen as subversive — still have implications in the Portuguese cultural practices. Those years meant the impossibility of debate, of a real democratic exchange in the fields of culture, of literature and of thought on the Portuguese language — a language whose diversity and potential for transgression still remain to be discovered.