

Introductory Note

The dossier presented in this issue of *Interlitteraria* analyzes the complex relation between literary and artistic practices, and the situations of censorship and political repression suffered, opposed or responded to, in Lusophone and Hispanophone contexts during the 20th and 21st centuries. Even if many of the case studies deal with Iberian and Ibero-American dictatorships, with this special issue we want to reflect on the concepts of “repression” and “censorship” beyond the scope of authoritarian regimes, for these are processes that manifest themselves in different forms and also in apparently or superficially democratic scenarios. In fact, Iberian and Latin American contexts offer good examples of the persistence of patterns of rejection, repression and censorship in recent times, as well as of the range and potentialities of artistic and creative responses to these patterns. In both cases, we find models and manifestations of “direct violence”, but also more complex and concealed articulations leading to more subtle, and sometimes more dangerous ways, of censorship. From that viewpoint, this special issue discusses topics such as the individual construction of memories of political violence; the reflection of the artists’ own role in a context of repression, or the possibilities of artistic creation as self-affirmation against censorship.

The texts gathered under this dossier summarize the discussions held during an international colloquium around the same topic organized in Lisbon in October 2015. Although the event attempted to cover a wide variety of approaches and contexts, it found a strong referent in the figure of José Saramago, whose foundation hosted the meeting. Saramago’s literary and personal trajectories were strongly influenced by the refusal of evident and not-so-evident forms of political violence and oppression. His work questioned the possibilities and limits of verbalization and creativity against situations of pain and rejection, something that is at stake in all the contributions presented in this special issue.

It is not by mere chance, then, that the first section of this special issue, devoted to “Literature against oppression”, begins with two works devoted to the work of José Saramago, in comparison with two other Hispanic authors: Julio Cortázar and Miguel Delibes. Both works analyze the textual configurations that allow for this writers, in different linguistic, social and political context, to construct a criticism of economic disparity and political repression. The same comparative spirit also animates the next article, by Antonio Rivero Machina, which deals with the myth of Don Quixote and its use in the poetry engaged with the opposition to Francoism and to Estado Novo; paradoxically, it

is not Don Quixote the character that inspires poets, but the more “proletariat” Sancho Panza. The last text in this first block or articles is devoted to Javier Egea’s poetic work, which is understood as a fight against oppression not only in the context of Iberian dictatorships, but also in the “free” capitalistic world.

The second section of this issue deals with examples of censorship in Spain and Portugal. Studies on censorship within the Iberian context have experienced a notable increase in the last decades, with projects and publications devoted to literature, theatre or cinema and their relationship with the censors; the texts included in this section offer valuable contributions to this trend. For instance, Zsófia Gombar and Luís Carlos Pimenta Gonçalves’s articles are devoted, respectively, to English and French books which suffered censorship during Francoism and Estado Novo. Pilar Arnau offers a somewhat similar case study, by analyzing the confrontations that one author from Mallorca, Antoni Serra, had with Francoist censors because of his political involvement and his role as a cultural agitator in the island. Ana Bela Morais’s work, on the other hand, compares the last years of both Iberian dictatorships and the way they tried to control and limit the distribution of Latin-American films with erotic or political content. This second part of the issue closes with the contribution of Luísa Duarte Santos, which deals with the Second General Exhibition of Plastic Arts, held in Portugal in 1947, which became a symbol of repression and resistance against repression.

This last text serves as a link with the third block of articles, which deals with visual and performative inquiries on political violence. The inclusion of a critical voice within visual manifestations have been a central concern for contemporary artistic practice. There has been an interest in transcending representational and discursive issues in order to address topics related to audience participation, the social relevance of cultural criticism, and the subversive capacity of public artistic interventions. Alba Saura Clares’s approximation to Argentinian tradition of *Teatro Abierto* shares that viewpoint, attempting to analyze the whole set of agencies that can be triggered by performative practices. While anchored in literary criticism, Alejandro Urrutia’s contribution also shares this concern for exploring in which ways contemporary creative practices arising from post-dictatorial contexts can redefine individual authorship and collective commitment. In order to do that, he examines the activity of the Chilean writer Pedro Lemebel, whose work arises from an identification with marginal and subaltern communities and from a challenge of the limitations of traditional representative means. The exploration of how creativity can bear witness of collective processes of resistance and activism centers Isabel Seguí’s article. Seguí analyzes the life and political action of Domitila Barrios de Chungara, a Bolivian activist opposing dictatorship, by confronting two different

narratives: a testimonial narrative and a performative documentary. Through this approximation, Seguí stresses the importance of rejecting the commodification of political causes and actors by creative industries, assessing the potential of collaborative practices in the process of reconstructing collective traumatic memories.

Stephanie Hontang's reading of Carlos Saura's *Tango* also deals with trauma and remembering, but it does so by approaching the cinematic recreation of gestural memory. *Tango*, Hontang argues, challenges the division between aesthetic and political commentary by incardinating both in the concatenation of movements and the tension between bodily expressivity and denial. In a similar way, Gabriela Rivera approaches Uruguayan carnival as a platform for political resistance. In this case, the focus is placed on the potential of vernacular creativity to challenge censorship. Rivera stresses the role played by carnival as a space of active engagement, where, in her words, "political and social context could be confronted and the official discourses defied". Finally, Esperanza Guillén analyzes the role of intellectuals, and more specifically visual artists and writers, in the creation of chains of solidarity during and in the years preceding the Spanish Civil War. Guillén shows how the bonds of hospitality and friendship developed through times of conflict were over political and personal rivalries. Whereas most of the articles of this special issue stress the conflictive relationship between individual and collective creators and repressive powers, Guillén develops an interesting approximation to the potential of mutual recognition and cultural empathy.

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