

António Nobre: between the Essential loneliness and the Populated loneliness /

António Nobre: entre a Solidão Essencial e a Solidão Povoada

Moisés Carlos Amorim *

Phd student in Literature by Federal University of Mato Grosso-UFMT. Teacher of Portuguese Language in the Education department of the state of Mato Grosso.

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5608-9126>

Diego Pinto de Sousa **

Phd student in Linguistic by State University of Campinas-unicamp, Teacher of Portuguese Language in the Education department of the state of Mato Grosso.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4954-9876>

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ABSTRACT

Loneliness sets before the human being as a paradox. While originating and constitutive (Heidegger) and, wherefore inescapable - for the human being- in his sociability, it can be configured as fearsome and that causes disease. Between these extremes there is a dual vision conceived in the concepts of Loneliness and Solitude (Tillich), negative and positive part of loneliness, respectively. In this article, we reflect the matter of loneliness from the framework of literature. In particular, the work *Só* by António Nobre, published at the end of the 19th century. Supported by Bakhtin, Blanchot, Volochinov and Rilke, a dialogical reading of the nobrean work demonstrates that its poetics presents a loneliness, beyond of the apparent monostatic isolationism, founded in alterity, in "relationship with". This (creative) subjectivity, constituted in the dialogue with the other, establishes a loneliness populated by sayings, subjects and other meanings. Which opposes or reframes the vision of an essential loneliness in literary creation.

KEYWORDS: populated loneliness; Alterity; Dialogic theory; Essential loneliness; António Nobre.

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 moisescarmorim@hotmail.com

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 diegopsousa@hotmail.com

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RESUMO

A solidão coloca-se diante do humano como um paradoxo. Ao passo que originária e constitutiva (Heidegger) e, por isso, inescapável – para o ser humano – em sua sociabilidade, a solidão pode configurar-se como temível e que faz adoecer. Entre estes extremos encontra-se uma visão dual concebida nos conceitos de Solidão e Solitude (Tillich), parte negativa e positiva da solidão, respectivamente. Neste artigo, refletimos a questão da solidão a partir do farol da literatura. Em especial a obra *Só* de Antônio Nobre, publicada no fim do século XIX. Auxiliada por Bakhtin, Blanchot, Volochinov e Rilke, uma leitura dialógica da obra nobreana demonstra que sua poética apresenta uma solidão, para além do aparente isolacionismo monástico, fundada na alteridade, na “relação com”. Essa subjetividade (criadora), constituída no diálogo com o outro, estabelece uma solidão povoada de dizeres, sujeitos e sentidos outros. O que contrapõe ou ressignifica a visão de uma solidão essencial na criação literária.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Solidão povoada; Alteridade; Teoria Dialógica; Solidão Essencial; Antônio Nobre.

Introduction¹

“Who does not know how to populate his loneliness, will also not be able to isolate himself among the people”
C. Baudelaire

About 277 million people are currently living alone worldwide. “One in three people feels alone in the hyperconnected society and in the society of social networks” (CACIOPPO; CACIOPPO, 2016). In Brazil, the number of lonely people is 12.1% and, according to the Brazilian Society of Geriatrics and Gerontology, loneliness is the greatest fear among Brazilian elderly (29%) (ROCHA, 2018). The news reports proclaim and relate it with death: “The disease of loneliness”, “Loneliness, a new epidemic”, “Loneliness can kill ...”, “The surprising effects of loneliness and the impact on health” (NUNES, 2015; CACIOPPO, 2016; VIEIRA, 2017; SETOR SAÚDE, 2017). Approached by the media of symptoms and signs of depression, loneliness generally has an intrinsic relationship with death and unrest. Thinking about loneliness in contemporaneity, Salvelina Silva summarizes:

The notion or feeling of loneliness and exile is the result of existential contingency, as a man is thrown into an unfathomable whirlwind of demands and obligations, in a universe that, according to Sartre, is a shattered totality, a world broken in myriads of consciences, each one, at the same time, an absolute universe. This characteristic of the world is only a reflection of man's situation. In fact, man finds himself, more and more surprised and perplexed, sometimes to the point of real catatonia, on the one hand, of his polyhedral dimension, of the diverse identities of his self, his diaspora and his transformations, and of another, the increasingly visceral relationship of all men that he is (or needs to be). (SILVA, 2000, p. 85).

¹ A free translation of the quotations was made, particularly, of the literary texts, privileging, especially, the meaning of the translated texts.

In a search for how to start this reflection, for example, we are faced with a sad collection of news about the phenomenon of lonely deaths: “Woman is found mummified in an apartment five years after her death”, “Finnish dies at work and colleagues only notice two days later”, “Man found dead lying in a hammock after 1 year and 3 months, he left messages on the wall” (PONTEVEDRA, 2017; BBC BRASIL, 2004; TAVARES, 2014). There is, therefore, a paradigmatic change of social interaction, where individuality, based on the marketing logic of consumption, establishes selfish, volatile and impersonal relationships in which the very idea in relation to/with time has been reframed by principles of regulation and mechanization (ELIAS, 1998). This whole phenomenon of loneliness among the crowd, as well as axiological renewal of the conceptualization of loneliness – although, on a smaller scale, there is contestation (HAMMOND, 2018), they promoted alternatives and public policies such as the creation of the Ministry of Loneliness in the United Kingdom (ROCHA, 2018).

A paradox, well fed by the title of this text, comes from that point: *we are alone and at the same time we are with*. Social beings, for Aristotle, and originally lonely beings, as Heidegger points out (NUNES, 2015). Discussed by a diversity of areas, such as the areas of health and philosophy itself, in our reflection, the phenomenon of loneliness will be studied based on literary esthetics.

Saramago, for instance, gives us a sight of the dual nature of loneliness in *The Year of Death* by Ricardo Reis:

Now, loneliness will still have to learn a lot to know what it is, I have always lived alone, Me too, but loneliness is not living alone, loneliness is not being able to keep company with someone or something that is inside us, loneliness is not a tree in the middle of a plain, it is the distance between the deep sap and the bark, between the leaf and the root, You are talking nonsense, everything you mention is connected, there is no loneliness there, let us leave the tree, look inside you and see the loneliness, As the other said, lonely to walk among the people, Worse than that, lonely to be where, even ourselves, we are not. (SARAMAGO, 2011, p. 249-250).

It is possible to verify a dialogue of the statement above with the interesting perception about the loneliness of the German theologian Paul Tillich, expressed in his dichotomy between loneliness and solitude “Language created the word loneliness to express the pain of being alone. And it created the word solitude to express the glory of being alone” (TILLICH apud SOUZA,



2014, p. 2). For solitude, Silva says (2002), Tillich denominates “[...] this exercise of preserving our unit.” (p. 85), in order to take advantage of elements present in loneliness such as silence, transcendentalism, self-centering, balance and, as we see in art in general, creative reflection.

“The works of art are of infinite loneliness [...]” (RILKE, 2001, p. 36), which are modeled on the feeling and in which, at a certain point in life, outside the social pragmatics, the poet (from those and these times) he (in)voluntarily self-alienates and feels the states of soul common to the current social order. These states of soul are latent, but modern life, with its constant speed, prefers to treat them as sensitive “schizophrenias”. Melancholy, loneliness, madness, incompatibility and other sensations that the artist or any human being experiences provoke the contemplation of exterior/interior landscapes, whose power is cultivated in loneliness. Although they are shared, in loneliness those feelings have more impact, because deep down, whoever owns them recognizes that there is no one in this world with whom they can share them.

A consistent work about loneliness, which appeared in the late 19th century, in Portuguese literature, is the book entitled *Só* (Alone) de António Nobre, whose poetics expresses the states of soul of suffering, sadness, longing, absence, death, etc.; although inserted in the symbolist esthetics, Nobre configures a vision of life and art close to finisecular decadentism. A convalescent nationalistic romantic who suffers because the world, always new, never exhausts. António Nobre is the first Portuguese artist to feel horror at the practical sense of life, especially because life deepens loneliness, anguish, sadness. In a mechanical and rationalistic world, explanations about the interior of man, the convalescence of the soul, do not definitively respond to human pain. For this reason, according to Peyre, “The symbolist literature of the last two decades of the 19th century valued everything that was languor, tiredness of living, isolation from an audience that it wanted to keep away from the arcana, opposition to technological civilization accused of materialistic” (PEYRE, 1983, p. 65).

From loneliness, territory where there is no absence, but where the absence is felt by the non-correspondence of feelings, the poet removes the element for his work:

.....*Só* (Alone)!
Poor Lusiad, poor man,
Who comes from so far, covered in dust
Who does not love, nor is loved,
Lugubrious Autumn, in the month of April! (NOBRE, 2009, p. 73).



It is in the reflection on António Nobre's esthetic-existential scenario, whose architecture and engineering are structured in isolationism, that emerges the objective of this work, that is to investigate how Nobre's poetics, especially his masterpiece *Só (Alone)* (2009), is based on a kind of populated loneliness. As opposed to the essential loneliness. The notions of "population" and "essentiality" are seen here in a dialogic movement with Bakhtin and the Circle (BAKHTIN, 2010; 2011; VOLOCHÍNOV, 2013; 2017), on one hand, and Blanchot (2011) and Rilke (2001) on the other hand. As we will see, the contact with the biographical elements and with the doing and the poetic practice of António Nobre, paradoxically, join "loneliness" and "relationship", which we summarize as populated loneliness. In a Bakhtinian reading: exotopic and chronotopically situated loneliness, a (solitary) singularity poetically conjugated/ forged in/with the alteritarian.

2 *Só (Alone)*: The Essence of Loneliness

The emergence of the work *Só (Alone)*, at the end of the 19th century, had a good reception in the Portuguese literary circles, which saw in António Nobre an heir to Almeida Garrett and popular sources from the Lusitanian tradition. Such a title, in some way, suggests a feature in the book which presents a first-person sentimental confession. As for longing, sadness, melancholy, boredom, absence, loneliness - these are the most significant feelings on each page. However, it is evident that loneliness has become one of the main focus in António Nobre's poetry, considering that solipsism determined the relation between life and art, as a source of writing.

In *Só (Alone)*, a romantic language is perceived, with a popular tone, and an exacerbated sentimentality, being evaluated by critics from two perspectives: romantic and symbolist:

For some, it is a neo-garrettian book and, therefore, a neo-romantic one. They see a feeling of nostalgia, which ends up resulting in a strong idealization of the homeland and childhood, using a colloquial, spontaneous language, besides resorting to an exacerbated drama. [...] Others already consider *Só (Alone)* a symbolist book, seeing in the called neoromantic aspects described above, a Nobre's appropriation, a way of developing, in his way, a symbolist poetics. Such a strategy [...] would highlight the irony and latent criticism in its verses, as well as, from the esthetic-formal point of view, the musicality present in his poems" (NOBRE, 2009, p. 34).



The main theme of Nobre's work is loneliness. One of the modern creators who considered the problem of loneliness was the contemporary of Nobre, Austrian poet, Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926). His work *Letters to a Young Poet* (2001) exemplifies his existentialist/metaphysical poetics in which he establishes a reflection on artistic work as a source of experience and inner knowledge, which emerges from the artist's soul. The letters sent by Rilke, at that time an already important poet in the German literary circle, to Franz Xavier Kappus, a young artist in search of value judgment about his verses, became one of the most profound works of the century, due to the complexity the author of "Sonnets to Orpheus" deals with artistic creation.

Imbued with a free spirit, for whom art is an intimate priesthood, according to Rilke (2001), the artist must have a self-knowledge and seek himself. In Jungian psychology, there is a concept that comes close to the idea of the poet: it is the concept of individuation², that is, becoming what he is, through self-knowledge, this is the great work of the human being, discovering the true world in himself, unique and magnificent of his soul.

The development of the artist, in Rilkean's vision, occurs through the exercise of loneliness, the proximity to nature, the deepening of the individual in himself, who inevitably has a world inside. Only by entering this world, the artist has the sincerity to create; and, in this way, to achieve his purpose, abstaining from life. Rilke's advice to the young poet Kappus goes beyond the relationship between both of them and is perpetuated as a thought that should be done by every young poet in training:

Seek to get into yourself. Investigate the reason why you write, examine whether your roots extend into the deepest corners of your soul; confess to yourself: would you die if you were not allowed to write? This, above all, ask yourself at the quietest time of your night: Am I forced to write? Dig a deep answer within yourself. If the answer is affirmative, if you can answer that severe question with a strong and simple "I am", then build your life according to that necessity. Your life, even in its most indifferent and anodyne hour must become the sign and witness of such pressure. Then come close to nature.

² For Carl Gustav Jung: "Individuation, therefore, can only mean a process of psychological development that facilitates the realization of the individual qualities given; in other words, it is a process by which a man becomes the unique being that he really is. With this he does not become selfish, in the usual meaning of the word, but seeks to realize the peculiarity of his being, and this, as we said, is totally different from selfishness or individualism" (JUNG, 2007, p. 50).



Then seek, as if you were the first man, to say what you see, live, love and lose. (RILKE, 2001, p. 26-27).

The condition for consolidating art is in the fundamental human experience, in the long work of reading works that amplify life. What does the human being's misery consist of, in hours of endless loneliness? For Rilke, it consists in the discovery of the human being, of his true life. This is demonstrated by art, and the reader gradually recognizes it. Loneliness is the essential substance of art, the inexhaustible source of poetry. Inherent substance of existence, which is at the beginning and at the end.

Letters to a Young Poet is a sensitive document in which a master advises a young man to continue on the path of art. There is no similar path that will be followed between them: each one will find himself during the walk. And, finally, the artist's singularity in following his instincts has more value than established ways. The essential sense of artistic talent, together with the learning of the soul, shows that, for the German bard, art has its chosen ones; thus, the artist, whose sensitivity is higher than the others, moves away from society, to follow his path. In this regard, Rilke affirms the romantic characteristic of his creative vision, which departs, mainly, from social reality, showing an aristocratic art:

So, dear sir, love your loneliness and bear with harmonious complaints the pain it causes you. Say that those you feel close are far away. This shows that space is beginning to be made around you. If what is close seems far away, what is far away reaches the stars, they are immense. Rejoice in this immensity, for which you cannot carry anyone with you. Be good to those who are left behind, show them calm and serene without tormenting them with your doubts, nor frightening them with a confidence or a joy that they will not be able to understand. (RILKE, 2001, p. 45-46).

Rilke, therefore, establishes the vital centrality of the artist's loneliness to creation. Its positioning has a deep relation with romantic esthetics, and, in turn, conclusively, with the symbolist esthetics, of which the poet was quite an admirer, especially of the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé. However, it is important to emphasize that, although it has influences of French symbolism, it traces a poetics in which art is a creative mission, a mission that focuses on an essential vision of the world, of the relationship between man and nature, as well as of the very poetic doing.

Another reflective vision about loneliness is that of Maurice Blanchot, philosopher and literary critic of the 20th century. For him, there is an essential loneliness of the work, which is peculiar, inherent. In António Nobre's poetry, from the title, there is an ode to loneliness. In the



first verses, the poet says that it is "[...] the saddest book in Portugal." (NOBRE, 2009, p. 52), where the pages are, so to speak, full of tears of longing and melancholy. These feelings, in the voice of the lyrical subject, communicate a distance from the world, an interiority of the verses, an essential loneliness, according to Maurice Blanchot (BLANCHOT, 2011, p. 11).

Loneliness, not of the artist, but of the work, whose strength lies in the capacity of being. The work "is", in Blanchot's reflection, and is materialized in the assertive absence of finishing or unfinished. On this subject, the book *Só* (Alone) mentioned above is resized due to this absence, touched, in reading, by the inherent vitality of the past. The loneliness of the work demands the loneliness of the reader. There lies a certain danger, considering that, as Fernando Pessoa said, "António Nobre was the face that looks to the Past, and gets sad" (PESSOA, 1980, p. 115). In longing there is a reckless companion - loneliness. This is what the work offers, in addition to "be" infinitely or the sublime feature of words, a state of soul, an indifference to the world from which it emerges. For Blanchot: The work is solitary: it does not mean that it is incommunicable; that the reader is missing. But those who read it enter into this affirmation of the loneliness of the work, just as the one who writes it belongs to the risk of that loneliness. (2011, p. 12-13).

It extends, beyond the work, only through it, as if all reading shone in the existential emptiness, filling it with landscapes and feelings. The inhuman singing of mermaids is poetry. A lonely noise, echoing on the earth. An audible noise echoing in the human soul the burden of incomprehension that the beauty has. (BLANCHOT, 2013).

The poet's music has the gift of beauty and incomprehension. And when it is expressed, it confirms the unshakable loneliness of the work, in such a way that reality diminishes before the states of soul. Poetry is also the voice of feeling! That which the human being is not able to speak, but to feel in the soul or in the heart. Like mermaids, humans sing to suspend life, separate from reality, remaining absent in their own voice. And they express themselves from "him" and not from "me" - this is the loneliness that comes to the writer through the work (BLANCHOT, 2011, p. 19), the absence of the self, the presence of the "otherself", and of the "otherselves". In António Nobre there is the presence of nature, of popular types, of Portugal, of dear people... His voice asserts itself populated with meanings, other voices, times and spaces.

These loneliness, both the loneliness of the artist in Rilke and the loneliness of the work in Blanchot, dialogue with each other because they deal with the same theme. Besides, they point to the reflection between subject (artist) and object (work). We have to point out the



differences between Rilke's, Blanchot's and Bakhtin's, which are opposed to the point of artistic creation, the subject's relation with reality, human reflection from a philosophical perspective, questioning the individual and collective value of work of art. Actually, as we will reflect, loneliness transcends the limits of individuality and of the work, confirming the inescapable presence of alterity in human relationships: a populated loneliness.

3 Só (Alone): Populated Loneliness

Differently from Blanchot's self-centered and isolationist vision, based on the reflection about Essential Loneliness, the vision present in the dialogical theory of the Circle and Bakhtin proposes a subjectivity, both at the esthetic and at the existential level, vitally alteritarian: a populated loneliness, because "Man exists in reality in the forms of the self and the other" (BAKHTIN, 2010, p. 349). This philosophy of language founded on dialogue, and produced on a kind of Philosophy of Reciprocity, goes beyond the limits of analysis of the text. For the Russian theorist, life "[...] is dialogical by nature. Living means participating in the dialogue [...]. In this dialogue, man participates with his whole life [...] It is totally applied in the word, and that word enters the dialogical web of human life, in the universal symposium". (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 348). And this "Dialogical nature of conscience, dialogical nature of human life" (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 348) also, obviously, it constitutes and is expressed in artistic practice. Considering that "The three fields of human culture - science, art and life - only acquire unity in the individual who incorporates them into his own unity." (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. XXXIII).

In this sense, there is no room for monology, even in the field of literary creation, in the Bakhtinian perspective. Neither, for the egotry of human being, closed in on himself, constituted only by the shadow of its corpse. The purest and most solitary distance from reality and social interaction is, like the concrete statements, a link in the dialogical chain of human communication. Since "The inner world and the thought of every individual have a stable social auditorium, and in that environment the inner arguments, inner reasons, evaluations, etc. are formed" (VOLOCHINOV, 2017, p. 205). Still in his criticism of the tendency of philosophical-linguistic thinking called idealistic subjectivism, Volochínov states: "It is possible to say that it is not the expression that adapts to our inner world, but our inner world adapts to the possibilities of our expression and to the possible paths and directions." (2017, p. 213). When raising the enunciated



word as oriented towards “the other”, Bakhtin and the other theorists of the Circle establish that the “[...] organizing center of any statement, of any expression is not inside, but outside: in the social environment that surrounds the individual” (2017, p. 216, italics added by the author).

Which implies to judge loneliness as an answer, a loneliness populated by other senses. In *Só (Alone)*, the reader finds this macroscopic worldview of loneliness, because the lyric voice reflects and refracts in the feeling the presence of the world. António Nobre values listening, which is consolidated in his voice, in which the voice of others resonates: Manoel, Carlota, Alberto de Oliveira etc. The possibility of listening, “Audibility [...] is a dialogical relationship. The word wants to be heard, understood, answered [...] and so *ad infinitum*. It enters the dialogue [...]” (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 334). The creation of a work of art is constituted from the outside, in such a way that the artist does not express only the perception of the subjective: the subject's vision expands from other subjectivities, that is why his language is the social language, united to his peculiar tone:

Nobre was a poet who masterfully incorporated orality, colloquiality and the naturalness of everyday speech into poetic discourse, who knew how to combine those elements and the esthetic options popularly used with erudition, the pompous and the unusual of a few meters [...] (FERNANDES, 1996, p. 120).

Augusto Ponzio explains, with Bakhtin, that “Listening is the [...] art of the word, its doing, its craft, its attitude, its prerogative, its peculiar way of being. [like this] The worst thing that can happen to the word is the absence of listening, the absence of a listener [...]” (PONZIO, 2012, p. 252). The author continues to explain that by “absence of listening” he does not understand *the remain silence* that, in his point of view, is “[...] exactly the condition of listening, above all when it takes the form of literary expression.” (PONZIO, 2012, p. 252), but *the silence*, essentially inert and unresponsive. So that, in writing, loneliness is perhaps a way of masterfully handling meaning. In this creating listening appears vital elements of literary art. By “distancing himself” the writer stimulates his relationship with the world by externalizing it as a mechanism of creation. From it (the world), and his relation with it (the world) and within it (in the world), to express his feelings, his emotions in literary art.

In his existential wanderings, the other is man's greatest need because “selfhood” is the reflection of “otherness”, that is, each one is what the other sees. “I cannot know myself except through the other” [...] because the other



is the mediator between me and myself. (SARTRE, 1997, p. 290 apud SILVA, 2000, p. 87).

Listening is the nerve center of dialogue, the fundamental core of all saying, of all meanings, because nothing is said to not be heard, as well as, for Bakhtin and the Circle, any work has an essential loneliness. Nothing in the human sphere is not indifferent, since there is always a relationship “with”. Music needs to be heard, the picture must be looked at, poetry must be reflected - in short, all art is an individual, solitary confession, and its origin is an endless source of alterities, of other meanings, that populate such loneliness.

This vision of artistic work does not distort the decadent, melancholic, sad face, already pronounced about loneliness - both in social life and in the sphere of art. Actually, it establishes loneliness in its real place of origin (dialogical, populated), because “Seeing and understanding the author of a work means seeing and understanding another conscience, the conscience of the other and his world, that is, another subject [...]” (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 316).

Ponzio, when reflecting on the dysfunctional part of the literary word, argues that:

The literary word offers the possibility to understand the full dialogical structure of the word, which seen from an external point of view of literature, is understood only in a superficial and monotonous way. [...] The word of literary writing leaves the limited context of the predominantly monological orientation, according to which it is used in relation to its object, its function and the restricted purposes of the individuals who use it [...] For this reason, the complexity of the dialogue of the living word can be better studied in the literary configuration of the word and in its internal dialogization. (PONZIO, 2010b, p. 61-62).

In literature, the word emptied, said a thousand times, expands its infinity in saying: it reaches the sovereign ears, destroying the absence. The word that loves loneliness, at the same time contradicts its proud position, showing the impossibility of emptiness. This fascination exists in the work that is intended to be read, it exists in the art that branches out in the eyes of the readers. And it is from this understanding of an atmosphere of subjectivities cultivated in alterity that we propose to (re)read António Nobre's work as coming from a populated loneliness.

4 Populated Loneliness In António Nobre's Poetry

It is true that the sentimentality of António Nobre's poetry, centered on the position of the “I”, is an initial matter for the problem of loneliness, which, in a certain way, was a reason of the



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19th century Symbolist/Decadent esthetic. In that matter, our reflection questions the intrinsic values of artistic creation, and its principle that lies in the subjectivism of sensations, as it is believed in the field of literary analysis. In António Nobre, loneliness is populated by the subjective conscience of being in the world, being fed by experiences with memory, that is, with longing. This is the other aspect that is focused on loneliness:

It is in the expression of longing, a very Portuguese way of referring to absence, that *Só* (Alone) is founded. That is why the poet populates his inner world of voices and presences. He is the one who controls them: questioning them, simply starting to remember them or letting them speak directly. In this way, the polyphonic dimension that he gives to his verses tends to fight the feeling of loneliness and the weight of absence, through a constant search for proximity to a distant environment. Orality and familiarity become two constants in his work, as an attempt to “kill the longing” and fill the absence that caused the separation. (ALMEIDA, 2005, p. 101).

The Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin problematizes that all human interaction of language is materialized in the relationship established between the “I” and the “other”. The meaning, therefore, occurs as a responsive and unrepeatable act, at the moment of the linguistic materialization of the statement, which fundamentally mirrors the “meaning to say” and “listening”. All communicative value concentrates the population of constructions of signs, own and unrelated, a semiotic web of discourse, which extends to the infinite and beyond.

In art, although the fictional characteristic is predominant, the artist's word is never disconnected from reality, it emerges, like an island, from an unlimited discursive ocean (VOLOCHINOV, 2017, p. 221), having the first experience in concrete life. Since “The inspiration that ignores life and is, itself, ignored by life is not inspiration but obsession.” (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. XXXIV). That is why every work of art (inner loneliness) is configured in life (external presence), like the work *Só* by António Nobre, which, at the same time, populates the loneliness of the lyrical subject with elements of the world: the human being, the books, the memories, the Portuguese land, in short, everything. For Guilherme de Castilho, “*Só* is fundamentally the book of painful disillusionment, of the irrevocable longing for things and beings that had been the fuel of a past in which the poet felt happy” (CASTILHO, 1988, p. 18 *apud* MATOS, 2014, p. 29).

Besides individual memory, there is collective memory in the work, honoring the people, colors, light, melancholy and longing. In this way, essential loneliness is an unattainable point, as its landscape is not made up of absences and emptiness, the image of the true desert, but of



presences or concreteness, even remembered in the memory. In “Travels to my land”, we exemplify our reflection:

Travels to my land

Sometimes I spend whole hours
Eyes fixed on these braziers,
Dreaming of the time that goes there;
And I traveled in fantasy
Those journeys that I have made
To the old Douro, plus my Father.

How picturesque the journey was!
So, as it rises in the early morning,
Both ready to go:
- Goodbye! Goodbye! absence is brief,
Goodbye! – the carriage was rolling
With bells ringing!

And day and night, dawn to dawn,
Through this crazy land outside,
Full of Color, Light and Sound,
Accustomed to my room
In everything I saw something new,
How good it was, my God! How nice!
[...]
So, in secret, I had,
In the chest, a book and I read, I read,
Garrett of my passion ...
In a little while the same prayers:
- Don't go to sleep with the light on,
Turn off the light! ... (And I still ... no!)

And I continued, reading, reading ...
It was almost dawn,
Again: - Are you already asleep? Say to me
- Bff! ... and I slept with the idea
Of that aunt Doroteia,
Of whom Júlio Dinis speaks.

Oh Portugal of my childhood,
I don't know what it is, I love you from distance,
I love you more, when I'm alone ...
Which one of you didn't have in Life
A similar journey,
Or so, like me, a Grandmother?
(NOBRE, 2009, p. 121-127).



The lyrical subject's field of memory revives the past: "And I traveled in fantasies/ Those journeys that I have made /To the old Douro, plus my Father". This past, although lived in the absence and loneliness of the present, populates with nature, human beings, words, Portugal, never has the definitive emptiness. The subject's loneliness has the presence of yore: "And day and night, dawn to dawn, / For that crazy land outside / Full of Color, Light and Sound" (NOBRE, 2009, p. 121). In itself, the absence shines in balance with these elements - Light, Color and Sound; and also in balance with the authors and the works, for example, Garrett and Júlio Dinis, who are with the lyrical subject: "Now, in secret, I had/ In the chest, a book and I read, I read / Garrett of my passion" (NOBRE, 2009, p. 127).

For Bakhtin, "I live in a world of words of the other. And my whole life is an orientation in this world; it is a reaction to the words of the other" (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 379), so that "[...] in everything I hear voices and dialogical relations between them" (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 409-410), as the resonant voice of Portuguese people, of the natural environments, of Garrett or Júlio Dinis, in the past of António Nobre's lyrical subject.

Travels to my Land is a poem by Nobre inspired by the homonymous prose of Almeida Garrett, introducer of romanticism in Portugal, that was recognized for its esthetic renewal and political performance. In António Nobre, loneliness expands the human being – the one that emits an elegiac and nostalgic tone - so that the states of soul never nullify the human being. If Rilke believes that the esthetic experience of the artist must occur in loneliness, for Bakhtin, loneliness never closes the human being in the cloister of his own life: it exists in his internal/external population of the organic and cultural movement of reality. Loneliness carries the weight of everything; as well as literature, in its core, brings the experiences of the world of culture and the social world:

Literature is an inalienable part of the integrity of culture, it cannot be studied outside the integral context of culture. It cannot be separated from the rest of the culture and correlated immediately (going over the culture) with socioeconomic and other factors. These factors act on culture in its integrity, and only through it, and with it on literature. The literary process is an inalienable part of the cultural process. (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 375-376).

Besides being an integral part of culture, it can certainly be said that the word of art originates from the word of life, and the force of use, instead of expressing the saturation of the repeatable, always validates as a unique and renewing event. And, in a peculiar way, in literature, meaning transmits its young face, because, according to Volochínov, "[...] the poet [...] does not

choose his words from a dictionary, but from the context of life in which words become solid and impregnated with valuations [...]” (VOLOCHÍNOV, 2013, p. 88).

Longing

Longing, Longing! so sad word,
And listening to it is good:
My dear Garrett, you felt that too,
Better than anyone!

I miss the virgin close to Mondego,
I miss everything:
To hear them falling from the mouth of a Blind man,
From the eyes of a Mute!

I miss the One who, full of threads,
Needle and thimble,
I see embroidering Galleons and swallows
In her trousseau.

Longing! and sings, in the Tower, it was the time
Of the novena:
Look at her! She looks like Our Lady,
When she was little.
[...]
«Teresa's picture, covered with a cape,
There, it passes close to me:
Oh nights of the Road, afternoons of Lapa,
Rows of Poplar trees! and Garden!

«Fallen hair, the face of wax,
The eyes with dark circles!
And Virgílio's voice, sweet as it was,
It is not of this World!

"Longing, longing! What is the worth of praying,
What is the worth of asking!
The candles are still lit on the altar,
But he will not come!

«Poplars have born, poplars have grown,
I'm so grown up!
Poplars have died, and others have born ...
How short Life is!
[...]
(NOBRE, 2009, p. 117-119).

The feeling of absence in the word longing transmits the whole atmosphere of loneliness in the poem. The repetition - "longing, longing" - in most verses confirms the feeling of genuinely

Portuguese melancholy. This feeling, described in a poem by Fernando Pessoa, states that: The Portuguese man is longing/Because he feels the longing/Who has that word/To say that he has it (PESSOA, 2007, p. 372). “Longing”, therefore, constitutes the feeling of lusitanism, being, besides word, a felt absence, as it is impregnated of past life, substantially lived. In António Nobre, the isolation of the lyrical subject face to the present life (the solitary existence) has in mind its population: therefore, populated loneliness - I miss the One who, full of threads,/With needle and thimble, / I see embroidering Galleons and Swallows/In her clothing.” (NOBRE, 2009, p. 117).

Artistic creativity, therefore, is driven by loneliness, but is materialized in the alterity of a lonely feeling. What is true about creativity is this fictional power, which reappears as the dream lived in the world. The external reality emerges from the bottom of the memories: Oh nights of the Road, afternoons of Lapa,/ Rows of Poplar trees! and Garden” (NOBRE, 2009, p. 119). The loneliness of the lyrical subject is populated with loves, landscapes, feelings, images, people etc., going beyond the remembrance shadow, being revived again through art. Citing biographer Guilherme de Castilho, Fernandes states that António Nobre's poetic world is constituted through self-mythification - evident in his "transformation" into Anto -, of the people, things and places that surrounded him. Thus, *Só* would be made based on this mythological world created by the poet from his universe, but it would be, mainly, the conscience of the collapse, caused by the poet's stay in the French capital [...] (1996, p. 26).

Away from homeland, longing affected the poet, who lived in his intimate universe, remembering his past life in Portugal. For this reason, his writing transmits a populated loneliness, being the source of the artistic process. Even in hours of endless loneliness, the poet confines himself, but opens himself up to the intimate objects of nature. There is no greater presence at this moment, all its magnitude occurs from the experience of what he lived, from the wonder of what was dreamed. Mikhail Bakhtin recognizes that, in art, the ethical is perpetuated in the esthetic, life connects with art, since “Art and life are not the same thing, but must become something unique in me, in the unity of my responsibility” (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. XXXIV).

What loneliness is there in the intimacy of memory? It can be recognized that the extra-artistic horizon, in the reflection of Bakhtin, enables the connection between life and art. Longing, in António Nobre's poetry, consolidates a life experience, framed by the poetic - a portrait on the wall where the lyrical subject was lonely, next to his memories, but, actually, was in the company

of everything. This reflection allows us to understand that, although there was a desire for avoidance characteristic of romantic literature, the elements of the outside that constitute the inside of the human being are present in the words of the poet, with enormous feeling.

Every feeling like feeling of longing, sadness, loneliness, boredom, absence, pain has the abundance of life; it has an external cause. It is not full of emptiness, as nihilists believe. The feeling consolidates our fundamental human strangeness, of those who lived incapable of belonging to the objective world. As states of soul, each feeling proliferates in a peculiar way internally, extending like a landscape that grows continuously. This ability to feel life, despite all its hardships, causes a feeling of *spleen* and unsuitability on the lyrical subject, which leads him to desire death, to recognize the other side, beyond existential boundaries. According to Fernandes, who illustrates in the voice of Guilherme de Castilho:

[...] Death, obsessive subject of *Só*, appears in this collection under the mythical dimension, because it is considered as a journey, despite constituting a trans it from the profane world to the sacred space, it does not involve destruction nor detachment from everyday experiences [...] (CASTILHO, 1992, p. 45 apud FERNANDES, 1996, p. 28).

In the last poem of the book *Só*, the essential aspects of António Nobre's sentimentality were cultivated to, in a way, express the subject's perception of his world. This world is populated with opposite sensations - lived and dreamed experiences, hate and love, sadness and joy, all the passions of the soul. Below is a fragment of the poem:

Maladies of Antó
In the air of a village

When I arrived, here, Holy God! how I came!
I don't even know what my illness was,
Because they were all, I don't know! from hate to boredom.
Soul diseases for which there is no medicine.
Nothing composed! Nothing, nothing. What a torment!
It might be said that I had lost my talent:
However, sometimes, my consumed nerves, old,
Convulsed us, Red lightning,
That they were, how I felt, moments of Camões!
I know my afflictions by heart: [...]

And later on (I still remember: on a shortcut,
Near the fountain) there was a lot of gravel
With a wooden cross, arms to the south and north,
To show that there was a death:
So (it's a custom) when someone goes for a long walk,



Seeing that cross, which looks like a sword,
Put a stone: each stone is a prayer.
Oh unusual prayers, never shut up, no!
Perpetually, there are the Our Father,
Stone prayers, praying, praying for those bones! ...
I, like the others, put a stone, too,
Saying to me: "if someone killed me ..."
But I followed my walk, roads beyond,
And nobody killed me ... [...]
Further on, I found the miller's wife,
She was going to fill the vase at the *Fonte do Salgueiro*,
Beautiful dusty hair from flour:
It was a flower, but it looked like an old lady ...
- Are you better? - So ... I'm going, I'm going better ...
- For the Five Wounds of the Lord ...

And a little further, in the place of Couple,
In a thatched house, seated at the portal,
There was a blind man, and his mother was weaving beside him,
And he barely felt someone's footsteps in the distance,
He cried out in his vibrant voice of little blind man:
"My noble sir! look at this unfortunate man!"
Poor me! Poor me! as he does not see who passes by,
He draws attention to his misfortune!
[...]
(NOBRE, 2009, p. 247-252).

In *Males de Anto* (Maladies of Anto), the lyrical subject confesses all his pains – hate and boredom - that he feels about the world, due to his position as a poet, as he exotopically absorbs the hardships of others, unlike the poetic genius fated with ingenuity and art, in himself there are instants of Camões's, which make him write and express himself singularly. António Nobre recognizes himself in the voice of the lyrical subject, as a minor poet, who feels life in a schizoid manner.

The first verses point out that suffering, the desire to remain alone, the cultivation of anguish and sadness define the poet's lyricism. He is an heir of Almeida Garrett precisely for the Lusitanian sentimentality, which is presented in his poetic work, and which, in the first reading, can be seen in the poem *Males de Anto* (Maladies of Anto). But there is something bigger, that justifies all his poetic production, even in *Farewells* and *First Verses* - loneliness. António Nobre is a loner by nature, who loves his loneliness. (FERNANDES, 1996).

In loneliness, small memories continue, the fear in front of the desire for emptiness: the loner in Nobre's voice contemplates the beauty of the world, experiences the terrible emotion of



suffering, is never essentially alone - his presence is full of the presence of the other. In a part of the poem, which is not transcribed in the above excerpt, the lyrical subject murmurs: “[...] Often I took the Malheiros road, / Our house is just around the road, / Where the villagers walk along [...]” (NOBRE, 2009, p. 251).

And, sad, in his inevitable loneliness, the voice of the one who dictates his misfortune is constituted in the voice of the simple people, who want to know if he is healthy, who wishes him well so that he gets better: “Later, I found the woman of the miller, / She was going to fill the vase at the *Fonte do Salgueiro* [...] /-Are you better? - So ... I'm going, I'm going better ... / -For the Five Wounds of the Lord” (NOBRE, 2009, p. 252). This effusion of people, feelings, art and nature configures all the poetry of Nobre. As previously mentioned, loneliness receives the perennial substance of memory, so that memory and life come together in the esthetic of Nobre.

For Bakhtin:

The other's word places before the individual the special task of understanding it (this task does not exist in relation to my own word or it exists in its other sense). For each individual, this disintegration of all the expressed in the word in a small world of his words (felt as his own) and the immense and infinite world of the other's words are the primary fact of human conscience and human life, which, like everything that is primary and natural, until today has been little studied (made aware), at least it was not made aware of its immense essential meaning. (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 379).

The other populates António's loneliness. In first person, he confesses his desire for the desert, his affirmation of longing, but also his integration with Portugal - full of Color, Light, Sound. Nationalist, in Nobre the homeland is enlightened, the Portuguese language meets its speech in the speech of the simple people, who live in the humility of the huts. Through language, memory, existence, the reader discovers that there was a lot of loneliness in his personality. However, the lonely poet, in external life, did not materialize the essential loneliness in the work: Só carries the abundant landscape of beauty, the memory of the Poplars and the moonlit night, the work of the villagers of Póvoa de Varzim, in Portugal, the rapture of joy, the familiar intimacy, Carlota and everyone in the family.

“Carlota! Carlota!/Good old lady, she is sweet and devout! It would be fine, if it worth praying/And in the oratory there are two candles lit / Night and day, calling upon Lady of Sorrows” (NOBRE, 2009, p. 255). In this fragment, the figure of Carlota, employed by the Nobre's family, populates the loneliness of the confessional lyrical subject, who remembers her with a feeling of



longing: Carlota wishes Anto to recover from tuberculosis, from the sadness of living, from his inflexible taste for death. The nostalgia removes the Past lived from the rubble, emerges in a simple way.

In absence, the lyrical subject fills his existential emptiness with memories, so that, solitary, the images of yore are alive. Therefore, Nobre's poems, although they have the feeling of absence, affirm our thesis that the human being fills his life, especially, with the exterior; in the case of António, his loneliness populates itself with all experience, consolidating art with life, with the substance of what was lived, but also of what was dreamed.

Final Considerations

The essential loneliness (of the artist and the work) is sheltered in the dialogical alterity of the great time of the human meanings. "The meaning is potentially infinite, but it can be updated only in contact with another meaning (of the other) [...]" (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 382). From this perspective Só the "saddest work in Portugal" - more than the translation of a monastic, anomic attitude separated from social reality - marks the responsive, and therefore dialogical, signature of the poet António Nobre.

From his romantic-symbolist enclosure, on the esthetic level, the poet agonizes over his longing and suffering. In the social reality, it has an isolationist and melancholic temperament. Such a scenario leads us to attribute to Nobre a decadent predicate: total and irreparable loneliness. Both in life and in art.

From dialogues with Bakhtin, Blanchot and Rilke we did not find a Nobre so far from the dark and inconsolable loneliness. However, as in search not of attributes, but of the origin and essence of that loneliness, we did not find the devastated land, but a loneliness founded and fertilized in the babelic relation with another word. Since, as Bakhtin advocates: "There cannot be 'meaning itself'" - it only exists for another meaning, that is, it only exists with it [...] there cannot be the first nor the last meaning, it is [...] between the meanings, it is a link in the chain of meaning, the only one that can exist [...] in its entirety" (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 382).

Listing, under the dialogic prism, the esthetic and biographical characteristics of Nobre, we perceive that, both in Art and in Life, "The moment of the practice of thought, feeling, word, action, is precisely a disposition of mine that is actively responsible - emotional-volitional in

relation to the situation in its entirety, in the context of my real, unitary and singular life” (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 91-92). It is precisely, as stated by Ponzio in the spiral of Lévinas, “[...] the possibility of discovering identity inside the heart of alterity.” (2010a, p. 15). In short: a dialogically populated loneliness. In description, we follow Lévinas' reflection:

Introspection is conceived as the fundamental procedure of the writer. [...] We believe, on the contrary, that an external view - of total exteriority, in which the subject himself is external to himself - is the true vision of the writer. Even the psychologist writer sees his inner life from the outside, not necessarily through the eyes of another, but as a participant of a rhythm or a dream. All the power of contemporary romance, its artistic magic, perhaps, it comes from this way of seeing interiority from the outside, totally differentiating itself [...] (LÉVINAS, 1982, p. 114 *apud* PONZIO, 2012, p. 191).

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