

# THE ART OF BARING IT ALL: A READING OF JUDITH TEIXEIRA'S "SATÂNIA"

A ARTE DO DESVENDAMENTO: UMA LEITURA DE  
"SATÂNIA" DE JUDITH TEIXEIRA

CLÁUDIA PAZOS-ALONSO<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Professora de Estudos Portugueses e de Género na Universidade de Oxford.

**Abstract:** This article considers Judith Teixeira's focus on heterosexual relationships in "Satânia." In the light of an emerging military dictatorship and backlash after *Nua* and *De mim*, the writer seeks to uncover the double standards that required women to repress their carnal desires outside marriage. The article alludes to the scandal caused by Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha's affair with her young chauffeur, publicly played out in the press, which may have sparked Teixeira's tale of forbidden lust. Taking its cue from Saint-Point's *Manifeste futuriste de la luxure* (1912), the demise of the protagonist, Maria Margarida, becomes a barely veiled criticism of social prohibitions around female sexuality.

**Keywords:** Judith Teixeira, Valentine de Saint-Point, female sexuality, Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha, scandal.

**Resumo:** Este artigo debruça-se sobre o conto “Satânia” de Judith Teixeira. Na sequência do escândalo em torno de *Nua* e *De mim* e da emergência de uma ditadura militar, a escritora tenta desvendar a desigualdade dos costumes que exigia a repressão da sexualidade feminina fora do casamento. O artigo alude ao escândalo provocado pelo adultério de Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha com o seu jovem chofer, amplamente noticiado na imprensa, o qual pode estar na base deste conto sobre um desejo interdito. Em diálogo com o *Manifeste futuriste de la luxure* (1912) de Saint-Point, a morte da protagonista, Maria Margarida, torna-se uma crítica pouco velada às proibições sociais no tocante à sexualidade feminina.

**Palavras-chave:** Judith Teixeira, Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha, Valentine de Saint-Point, sexualidade feminina, escândalo.

*Sobre a nudez forte da Verdade,  
o manto diáfano da Fantasia.*  
Eça de Queirós

In March 1923, three works, authored by António Botto, Raul Leal, and Judith Teixeira, were targeted in a controversy about the morality of art. As São José Almeida (2017, p. 389-90) reminds us, it was *Decadência* that triggered the Literatura de Sodoma scandal. Teixeira's collection was effectively scapegoated as the monstrously visible site of social disorder, seized by the Governo Civil de Lisboa, and destroyed. The writer stood accused of immorality.

Such was Teixeira's controversial notoriety that, in the very same year, her verse made a cameo appearance in Ramon Gomez de la Serna's 1923 novel, *La quinta de Palmyra*.<sup>2</sup> The novel takes place in Portugal and charts Palmyra's sexual liaisons. After five male lovers, in the penultimate chapter, the protagonist decides on a lesbian relationship with Lucinda, cemented over the reading of a range of homoerotic poetry. Gomez de la Serna's portrayal of seduction includes a dismissive reference to lesbian poets, describing their sexual preferences as "versos de esas poetisas portuguesas dañadas por el mal insaciable." It is supported by a collage of nine citations, all of which can

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2 Sections of the novel were published in a magazine in 1923, but actual publication in book-form occurred in 1925 only.

be identified as belonging to *Decadência* (KLOBUCKA, 2013, p. 39). If, to quote Oscar Wilde, there is no such thing as bad publicity, then Gomez de la Serna's public outing of Teixeira proves that her first collection, in spite of censorship, had not gone entirely unnoticed, at least in some cosmopolitan literary milieus.<sup>3</sup>

The "Literatura de Sodoma," however, was not the only sexual scandal to shake postwar Portugal in the roaring 1920s. Preceding it, the case of a love triangle involving Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha and Alfredo da Cunha, a Lisbon upper-class couple, came to light in 1920, and was played out in the public eye. Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha, the daughter of the founder of the *Diário de Notícias*, a paper that her husband now directed, had eloped with her much younger chauffeur at the age of 48, with their twenty-year age difference compounding the 'crime' of adultery.<sup>4</sup> Her husband enlisted the leading psychiatrists of the time, Júlio de Matos, António Egas Moniz, and José Sobral Cid, and had her promptly sectioned in a mental institution. The diagnosis of madness represented a shocking attempt to curb her freedom of movement and her financial rights. To contest the appraisal, she published *Doida, não!* in 1920. Alfredo da Cunha countered with the claim that she really was *Infelizmente louca*. In response, she defended herself, firstly in the press, and later in the volume *Doi-*

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3 For a discussion of the wider Iberian landscape, see Klobucka (2021).

4 For a full account of this saga, see Gonzaga (2009).

*da, não e não!* in 1923. It is entirely possible that this well-publicized high-society case may have provided inspiration for the first short story of Teixeira's collection *Satânia*, published in 1927.

For her part, like Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha before her, Teixeira had remained undaunted by the 1923 scandal. In fact, the year of 1926 witnessed two further interventions in quick succession, through which she knowingly continued to court public controversy: a collection of poetry with the eye-catching title of *Nua*, followed by the lecture, *De mim*. The lecture reveals her familiarity with Valentine de Saint-Point's *Manifeste futuriste de la luxure* (1912), published in an unsigned Portuguese translation in the 1917 *Portugal futurista*, significantly the sole contribution by a woman in an otherwise all-male cast. In *De mim*, Teixeira cites the latter's closing statement, repeated four times across *Manifeste futuriste* that "**La Luxure est une force**" (SAINT-POINT, 1996, p. 29-30, in bold in the original text), expanding on it as follows: "na verdade, a luxúria é uma força. Vive em todos nós, comanda os todos os nossos gestos! Inconsciente e por isso torpe nos inconscientes, sagrada, ordenadora e directiva nos responsáveis, nos iluminados!" (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 283). In other words, lust may be experienced on an instinctive, primitive level but, whenever channeled by artistic inspiration, it allows heightened understanding.

As Saint-Point (1996, p. 28) explained, ‘il faut faire de la luxure une oeuvre d’art, faite, comme toute oeuvre d’art, d’instinct et de conscience’. In the Portuguese context, this artistic quest through the means of heightened sexuality had already been most memorably encapsulated by Sá-Carneiro, in his earlier *A confissão de Lúcio* (1914), through the character of a nameless American woman. Her bold *avant-garde* artistic manifesto was simply but provocatively articulated as “A voluptuosidade é uma arte” (SÁ-CARNEIRO, 1973, p. 28), in a way that echoes Saint-Point’s injunction.

Teixeira had professed her admiration for Sá-Carneiro’s work in an interview;<sup>5</sup> similarly to his nameless protagonist, she eschews a stereotypical feminine stance: “Não sei cantar os amores débeis. Adoro o Sol, amo a Cor, quero a Chama, bendigo a Força, exalta-me o Sangue, embriaga-me a Violência, deliro com a Luta, sonho com os gritos rebeldes do Mar!” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 283). These assertions chime with Saint-Point (1996, p. 27) who urged “Détruisons les sinistres guenilles romantiques, marguerites effeuillées, duos sous la lune, fausses pudeurs hypocrites”. And it is worth noting that, in the preceding paragraph of her manifesto, Saint-Point (1996, p. 27) had gone as far as placing homosexual and heterosexual desires on an equal footing “Qu’on cesse de bafouer le Désir,

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5 Teixeira lists Sá Carneiro amongst her favourite writers in the course of an interview (José Dias Sancho, *Revista Portuguesa*, n. 3, 24 mar. 1923, p. 16-18. In: Maria Jorge, “Scriptorium” in Teixeira”, 1996, p. 237).

cette attirance à la foi subtile e brutale de deux chairs quells que soient leurs sexes.” This sentence had surely provided further impetus for Teixeira’s artistic exploration of homoerotic desire in her poetry, for which she had been so completely vilified.

It is against the background of Saint-Point’s contentious theories and her own *succès de scandale* that, in 1927, Teixeira published *Satânia*, a collection comprising two short stories,<sup>6</sup> where she continued to explore, once more, the vexed question of the (im) possibility of regulating female sexuality. This time, however, she did so through the medium of prose-fiction and, furthermore, in the context of primarily heterosexual relationships. Her relative caution in terms of subject-matter is perhaps hardly surprising, given the violent critical backlash that *Nua* and *De mim* had experienced just the previous year, most notably in an article by Marcelo Caetano, “‘Arte’, sem moral nenhuma” in *Revista Ordem Nova*.<sup>7</sup> Virtually coinciding with the start of the military dictatorship, his conservative

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6 The book was announced in 1926, in the inside cover of *Nua*. A short note in *Satânia* explained that Teixeira had been out of the country, and therefore unable to proofread the book before it went to press, asking for the reader’s indulgence for the many typos. Her absence may shed light on why the first short story does not feature a title, whereas the second one does. The consensus among critics, myself included, has been to ascribe the eponymous title ‘Satânia’ to the first tale.

7 Caetano’s article was transcribed by Maria Jorge in Judith Teixeira, *Poemas*. Lisbon: & Etc, 1996, p. 249-251. As Mônica Sant’Anna (2009, p. 121, footnote 9) reminds us, the front cover of his monthly periodical summarized itself as follows: “Revista anti-moderna, anti-liberal, anti-democrática, anti-bolchevista e anti-burguesa. Ordem Nova, contra-revolucionária; reaccionária; católica, apostólica e romana; monárquica; intolerante e intransigente; insolidária com escritores, jornalistas e quaisquer profissionais das letras, das artes e da imprensa”.

perspective heralded the beginning of a new order indeed, one characterized by an assault on women's freedoms, soon to be formalized from the early 1930s onwards with the advent of Salazar's Estado Novo.

In the eponymous tale, the protagonist, Maria Margarida, a refined upper-class woman, is utterly divided between her platonic love for António, her Paris-educated fiancé (perfect on paper and hand-picked for her by her father on his deathbed), and an overwhelming sexual desire for Manuel, one of the lowly workers on her estate, described as “filho do caseiro.”<sup>8</sup> Perhaps not coincidentally, Manuel shares a name with Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha's lover.

In the first part, both Maria Margarida's desire for Manuel, who is objectified as a “visão de beleza forte e máscula” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 302), and her disquiet regarding her own erotic feelings, come to the fore:

— Sim, eu, a mulher superior com toda a minha mentalidade esclarecida, sou afinal como todas as fêmeas, sucumbindo à necessidade genésica do macho!...

Um nojo imenso de si própria e uma tristeza profunda vieram envolvê-la. E o seu raciocínio claro vibrava angustiadamente...

Reconhecia agora a inutilidade de toda a sua vida mental para a libertar das exigências da natureza. — Era afinal a natureza que a vencia! (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 303).

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8 As various critics have noted, the basic plot line shares similarities with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, by D.H. Lawrence, although it predated it. A similar theme would be subsequently developed by Carlos de Oliveira in *Uma abelha na chuva* (1953).

Given expectations of female decorum, the protagonist is plagued by shame and “nojo imenso”. Yet, the lexical choices pertaining to the domain of biology (“fêmeas,” “macho”) emphasize the natural dimension of female sexuality, underlined by the repetition of the word “natureza.” And soon after, in a context where internalized social taboos continue to tear her apart, the omniscient narrator echoes Saint-Point’s defence of the healthy legitimacy of women’s sexuality, through the insertion of the qualifier “sadia,” in order to highlight the non-negotiable essence of sexual expression: “Maria Margarida torturava-se, e as rebeldias da sua carne sadia morriam queimadas por uma cerebração intensa numa luta de domínio” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 313).

In fact, a few pages later, overwhelmed by desire, Maria Margarida kisses Manuel passionately (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 316). Her actions illustrate Saint-Point’s core argument about sexuality asserting itself over spiritual love: “Chez un être sain et jeune, chaque fois que la luxure est en opposition avec la sentimentalité, c’est la luxure qui l’emporte” (SAINT-POINT, 1996, p. 29). Metaphorically speaking at least, sexual consummation is narrated:

Erguera-se um vento clamoroso. As árvores de recortes longos e esguios oscilavam agora endoidecidas parecendo estreitar-se freneticamente.

Ao fundo do vale, o campanário sonolento dividia em quartos lentos e soluçados aquela hora de mistério, tantas vezes repetida através dos séculos... E as silhuetas de frades capuchos debandavam, fugindo numa vertigem de loucura e de blasfémia! (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 316-317).

The transgression, however, is depicted in a way that conveys the prospect of a terrifying social disorder, encapsulated by the ghostly monks running away. Accordingly, a hasty marriage to António ensues, indicating her willingness to bow to social pressures (SILVA, 2015, p.273). Given the social interdiction over Maria Margarida's fling with Manuel, this outcome also seems like an expedient self-imposed mean to ward off what she had internalized as a form of socially abject desire. Despite this, the protagonist cannot find a way of reconciling physical and mental fulfillment.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the story ends tragically with her suicide, but not before readers have experienced her tortuous and ongoing inner struggle.

Indeed, the second part charts her struggle to resist to what she regards as a primitive sexual instinct, through a series of nineteen letters sent to her best friend, Cristina. Despite describing marriage as "O desabafo legal dos seus nervos de mulher!" (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 311) and indicating that she despised soci-

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<sup>9</sup> For this reason, finding sexual satisfaction with her husband seems impossible. Ana Luísa Vilela (2017, p. 22) alludes to a "paralisante frigidez" within the marriage, evidenced in a letter to Cristina (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 323).

ety and social conventions: “— Ah, sim; a sociedade? [...] Ora que lhe importava essa sociedade hipócrita e cheia de vícios?!” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 312), the fight between virtue and desire dilacerates her. As she confides to Cristina: “Ando estrangeira dentro de mim própria. Não regresso, não consigo regressar à razão da minha consciência!” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 341).

Ultimately, however, despite (or because of) her intellectual sophistication, an affair with someone that Maria Margarida considers her inferior remains unacceptable to her conscious mind:

A minha sensibilidade coada através de gerações de *elite*, adelgada e estilizada em requintes de elegância, revolta-se contra a verdade da minha carne, contra esta comunhão de afinidades genésicas, contra esta insaciedade de dois corpos que saudavelmente se buscam e brutalmente se enlaçam e se possuem. (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p.327).

Although she is forced to recognize that intellectual compatibility is not enough to satisfy her, Maria Margarida cannot come to terms with her unregulated sexuality and internalized social prejudices compounded by the issue of class difference. This is precisely why she reacts so strongly against what Butler, talking about the taboo of homosexual desire, describes as “an imaginary threat, imaginary and forceful, forceful precisely because it is imaginary” (BUTLER, 2003, p. 100). The fact that the threat was

forcefully internalized and, therefore, seemed real, although it was not, is conveyed in the adverb “saúavelmente,” echoing the earlier “sadia.”

Therefore, since Maria Margarida’s mind is at violent odds with her body, the only way out of this dilemma for her is suicide: “Sinto a ânsia torturante de me despir desta matéria vil... de me libertar desta negra escravidão!” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 341). As she goes to meet her death at sea, she becomes but a shadow of her former self, being described as a ghostly Ophelia-like figure:

a figura espectral de Maria Margarida [...] o vulto delgado de Maria Margarida, todo de branco, [...] vulto nas sombras densas da noite, iluminado pelo clarão dos relâmpagos, dirigir-se para o mar, tão linda e tão pálida que, [os pescadores] supersticiosos julgaram tratar-se de uma aparição (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 345).

The colour white, with its historic associations to purity and virginity, becomes integral to the portrayal of Maria Margarida as a disembodied Marian figure. As Connellan reminds us “The words ‘light’ and ‘white’ are prevalent in both Old and New Testaments and are synonymous with God. Distinct binaries are set up between darkness and light that clothe goodness in white and evil in black” (CONNELLAN, 2009, p. 31). The novella’s closing description features two different hues, the black night and, in the subsequent

light of day, a green (rather than white) item of clothing. It reads as follows:

Na manhã seguinte, na esteira de sol que iluminava a praia foi encontrada rolando ao sabor do vento a capa verde e macia de Maria Margarida como se fora uma grande alga marinha trazida pela ressaca nessa noite de tempestade misteriosa e negra (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 345).

Crucially, on a symbolic level, it could be argued that, since her body is not recovered, what she called her “matéria vil” has become spiritualized through a self-willed death. On one level, the demise of the adulterous heroine is conventionally seen in mainstream western realist tradition as an act of necessary, ritual punishment, as explained by Bronfen:

woman can come to stand for the complete negation of the ruling norm, for the element which disrupts the bonds of normal convention [...] Over her dead body, cultural norms are reconfirmed or secured [...] because a sacrifice of the dangerous woman reestablishes an order that has momentarily suspended (BRONFEN, 1992, p.181).

The death of the woman reestablishes the social order, but the irony here is, firstly, that António had appeared to take in his stride the loss of her socially-prized virginity when she confessed her lapse to him before their wedding; and secondly, that he did not seek to curtail her freedom when he became

aware of her attraction to Manuel. Thus, what her suicide interrogates is the need for extreme self-censorship. As such, the core issue may be prevailing double standards: although it is never explicitly articulated in such terms, the truth of the matter is that an upper-class man enjoying recreational sex with the daughter of a *caseiro* before settling down (or indeed even after) would hardly raise any eyebrows at the time. It certainly would not have warranted ongoing shame and self-immolation.

Indeed, the image of Maria Margarida's cloak, windswept along the beach, represents the splitting that occurred within the protagonist and acts as a tangible reminder of her absent body. Moreover, the item of clothing, which on the surface belongs to culture, links Maria Margarida to her innermost being, ultimately un-covered thanks to a suggestive comparison: "a capa verde e macia de Maria Margarida como se fora uma grande alga marinha." The green hue of the algae evokes an irreducible nature. Notably, the colour green had featured at the outset of the story, in an opening scene that naturalized sensuality, unfolding into glowing "rubras emanações":

A primavera chegara mais cedo numa abundância de seiva. [...] A folhagem trémula, nova, dum verde tenro e claro, balançava-se sob a pressão genésica dos insectos na ânsia de se multiplicarem, mordendo-se frementes e insaciados. A terra abria as suas entranhas em rubras emanações, fecundada pelo sol (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 301).

In this passage, as Andreia Oliveira Boia points out “a Natureza, que se revela quase uma personagem, funciona como espelho das vivências da protagonista, para além de catalisadora do excesso erótico” (BOIA, 2013, p. 101). For his part, Gouveia de Sousa sees in this tale “um indenegável pan-erotismo, um secreto acordo entre a natureza exterior e o interior individual e humano de uma personagem feminina” (SOUSA, 2004, p. 198).

Teixeira’s poetry repeatedly uses the colour red to encode sensuality,<sup>10</sup> but green seems to evoke a more profound and organic form of being in the world, symbolizing a timeless harmonization with nature. At the end of the tale, then, such a visceral bond is un-covered and amplified to suggest that the green seaweed stands for the return of the repressed body. Indeed, according to the *Dictionnaire des symboles*, “l’algue symbolise une vie sans limite et que rien ne peut anéantir, la vie élémentaire, la nourriture primordiale” (CHEVALIER; GHEERBRANT, 1982, v. 1, p. 39). Therefore, it becomes a figuration of an irrepressible material corporeality, lurking beneath the layers of social and cultural dressing up, a return to a prelapsarian world.

From the outset, the title “Satânia,” alluding perhaps to the protagonist as a female fallen angel, foregrounds the long-standing cultural association of

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10 For an analysis of the motif of the woman in red, see Silva (forthcoming).

women with sin. If we compare and contrast it with José Régio's famous "Cântico Negro," included in his first collection, *Poemas de Deus e do Diabo* (1925), where the poet defiantly proclaimed his freedom to go in whatever direction he fancied with complete disregard for instituted social norms, then what Teixeira's story flags up is that women did not have equal access to transgression. Hence the need for the story to conclude with Maria Margarida's stylized, hyperbolic death.

However, even more telling is the fact that the title "Satânia" mirrors, whether consciously or not, the title of one of Olavo Bilac's most overtly erotic poems, first published in 1888.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it seems reasonable to posit the possibility of an intertextual response on Teixeira's part. If so, what might her re-writing achieve?

Bilac's piece had depicted the eponymous female, daydreaming in her bedroom, her senses fully awake after being lovingly caressed by the midday sun. The opening lines "Nua, de pé, solto o cabelo às costas/Sorri" (BILAC, 1954, p. 97) immediately set the scene for musings that were then evoked in graphic detail. Her body, metonymically seen through her arms, breasts, and mouth, in turn, calls for a "corpo amado", in a chorus that the writer describes:

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11 Although we do not have cast-iron proof that Teixeira was familiar with Bilac's production, Arnaldo Saraiva (2004, p. 192-193) indicates that the Brazilian pre-modernist had achieved a significant visibility in Portugal, highlighting *inter alia* his influence on Pessoa.

*É a voz da Carne, é a voz da Mocidade,  
— Canto vivo de força e de beleza,  
Que sobe desse corpo iluminado (BILAC, 1954, p. 99).*

The poem ends with Satânia, perhaps Eve-like, realizing that she is naked, and belatedly covering up to preserve her modesty:

*Mas, quando, enfim, das regiões descendo  
Que, errante, em sonhos percorreu, Satânia  
Olha-se, e vê-se nua, e, estremecendo,  
Veste-se, e aos olhos ávidos do dia  
Vela os encantos  
[...]  
E, sob as roupas que a sufocam, inda  
Por largo tempo, a soluçar, se escuta  
Num longo choro a entrecortada queixa  
Das deslumbrantes carnes escondidas (BILAC, 1954,  
p. 100).*

Bilac's poem was markedly voyeuristic in its male gaze; by contrast, the theme of uncontrollable female sexual longing, followed by painful self-censoring, takes on a different complexion in Teixeira's tale.<sup>12</sup> Bilac's young woman dressed herself up at the end — albeit only in order to hide an unacceptable aspect of herself (sexuality) since the gesture of covering up was presented as being tantamount to suffocation (“sob as roupas que a sufocam”). In other words, repression leads to metaphorical death. Conversely,

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12 For a start, her *Satânia* is named Maria Margarida, a rather more wholesome choice, linking the protagonist to both virginity and nature.

Maria Margarida's suicide involved shedding layers of clothing. While Bilac thereby signaled conformity and (traumatic) reintegration into the symbolic order, Maria Margarida's discarded cape (whether it was washed on the shore or deliberately left behind, the argument remains the same) is a forceful reminder of the lethal consequences of internalizing certain social prohibitions—namely that women should not have sex with social inferiors and/or that, for women, unchecked desire is unacceptable. Yet, unavoidably, it simultaneously doubles up as an indelible trace that necessarily points to physical matter, where the seaweed becomes a symbol of the body that matters and, arguably, could even be read as a figuration of the female sexual organ.

How can we reconcile the apparently unsolvable sexual dilemma of Maria Margarida, and ensuing suicide, with the fact that over the preceding years Teixeira had been so very willing to *épater le bourgeois* with her various transgressions, proclaiming her right to love freely and distancing herself from normative conceptions of (hetero)-sexuality in her poetry? Or, to put it more bluntly, why did Teixeira not choose to carry out a homoerotic rewriting of Bilac's poem, as she had previously done in the case of Camilo Pessanha and Afonso Duarte's imaginings of male heterosexual lust (Pazos Alonso, 2015, p. 31-32)?

There may be multiple explanations concurrently at play here. Firstly, the sexual liaison with a socially

inferior man would have been widely seen as nearly as improper as a lesbian relationship at the time of writing, judging by the repercussions of the unfortunate case of Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha, which entailed her husband's (and the medical establishment's) misogynistic attempts to control her. In this context, it is not a coincidence that one article published in reaction to the collection *Nua*, in *A Revolução Nacional*, on 2nd July 1926, was symptomatically titled "Casa d'Orates. Doida sim e porque sim!" (JORGE, 1996, p. 248-249). The reference to the title of the second book that Coelho da Cunha had brought out in self-defense could not be clearer. The article, signed by the pseudonym Ariel, further linked Teixeira and Coelho da Cunha, asserting in the conclusion: "V. Ex<sup>a</sup> está doida sim, infelizmente louca". The allusion to the title of Alfredo da Cunha's counterattack in print reinforced the patriarchal interpretation of the scandal, thereby visibly de-authorizing Teixeira.

This vicious article may have given Judith Teixeira the impetus to tackle the social prohibition concerning the relationship between an upper-class woman and a working-class man. That said, her plot differed from the life-story of Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha since, in "Satânia," the fictional sexual liaison began before marriage (and thus was not technically adulterous). More crucially, it happened between two young adults thereby removing any sizeable age difference. However, given the distress experienced by

Maria Margarida in practice and bleakness of the outcome, Teixeira's narrative broadens her searing critique against entrenched value-systems, by alerting her readers to the limited agency of (heterosexual) women in the light of prevailing social mores.

Secondly, there is a case for arguing that the excessive self-annihilation with which readers are faced in the first story may, in fact, point to a Butlerian interrogation of gender performativity *avant la lettre*. Certainly, by virtue of its very exaggeration, the disjunction between mind and body in "Satânia" turns out to anything but "natural." Therefore, it arguably serves the purpose of denaturalizing gender (and class) expectations. In short, it is so hyperbolic that it leads the reader to interrogate afresh instituted social norms. To quote from *Bodies That Matter*:

"Performance" is not a singular "act" or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death, controlling and compelling the shape of the production but not, I will insist, fully determining it in advance (BUTLER, 1993, p. 95).

Maria Margarida's discarded "capa" suggests the impossibility of continuing to perform socially. Thus, it ultimately serves as the visible reminder of the return of the repressed and the inevitable disintegration of supposedly fixed social norms.

Thirdly, we cannot fail to note that “Insaciada,” the second short story published in *Satânia*, in fact offers an altogether different outcome, following the death of a male poet, when the distraught upper-class Clara is consoled by her friend Maria Eduarda:

Clara, sob as carícias doces de Maria Eduarda, rompe em soluços, e numa voz quebrada pela sua angústia interior, despedaçada:  
— Oh! o amor impossível!... [...] Ai, a minha carne terá de gritar eternamente!... e todo esse clamor terá de passar através do meu espírito faminto... insaciado! ... E sempre o mesmo tédio a fartar-me, a vencer-me! (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 359).

Unlike the representation of Gomes de la Serna in *La quinta de Palmyra*, Teixeira falls short of staging the consummation of a lesbian relationship; but there is clearly a growing physical and intellectual proximity between the two women. This trajectory points to a lesbian continuum, famously theorized by Adrienne Rich in a 1980 article. According to the critic, only by seeking to embrace

mais formas de intensidade primária entre mulheres, inclusive o compartilhamento de uma vida interior mais rica, um vínculo contra a tirania masculina, o dar e receber de apoio prático e político [...] começaremos a compreender a abrangência da história e da psicologia feminina que permaneceu fora de alcance como consequência de definições mais limitadas, na maioria clínicas, de *lesbianismo* (RICH, 2010, p. 36).

In *La quinta de Palmyra*, Gomes de la Serna had disparagingly qualified female homosexuality as “el mal insaciable”. Teixeira, however, titled her story “Insaciada,” a subtle difference in wording, which suggests that homosexual desire *can* be satiated; but that *it is not*, in this particular context, where a hardening towards dictatorship is already underway.

In the final analysis, it is worth noting that the word “capa” has a double meaning in Portuguese, signifying both an item of clothing (cloak) and more generally any type of cover. The removal of her cloak leaves Maria Margarida metaphorically naked. Her body, having shed various internalised prohibitions, is now free, albeit only in death. Her nudity from beyond the grave suggests the type of authenticity that Teixeira was prepared to fight for, as can be seen from an unfinished poem featured in the manuscript of *Decadência*, which proclaimed, in the opening line, “Ergo-me / Para viver enfim” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 243). The second stanza of the fragment in question featured an apostrophe from Teixeira to her male peers, urging them to throw caution to the wind:<sup>13</sup>

*Oh! poetas da minha raça  
Meus irmãos na decadência  
Sacudi o falso manto da prudência  
Cantai comigo uma marcha rubra e triunfal*

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13 A sentiment also echoed in “Regressar à Verdade”, which talks about “falso preconceito” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 235).

Yet, for a woman, the act of “sacudi[r] o falso manto da prudência” so as to be true to herself, whatever her sexual preferences, could have fatal consequences, as the death of Maria Margarida illustrates. And For Teixeira, the exploration in print of a wide spectrum of female desire would lead to metaphorical social death.

By way of conclusion, in order to understand Teixeira’s artistic project, it is necessary to return to her thoughts about the fraught relationship between artistic geniuses and society, theorized in her lecture-manifesto “De Mim.” Her opening lines allude openly to the scandal caused by her three volumes of poetry, but only in order to reverse the table on her detractors: as far as she is concerned, appalled reactions are merely a measure of her superior worth. Therefore, she remains resolute in her refusal of any limitations that society may seek to impose on artists. In fact, Teixeira’s poetic practice seems to blossom from an uncensored artistic *id*, fueled by an almost surrealist abandon:

Se eu quisesse encontrar o motivo real dessas concepções teria de descer ao meu mundo interior e interrogar o meu «eu inconsciente».

Nesses momentos encontro-me num estado de beleza particular em que certos motivos psíquicos do meu mundo interior se agitam inconscientes dentro da minha razão lúcida e consciente (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 291).

In a Portuguese context, this artistic license to expand creative imagination placed her on a collision course with feminine propriety. Indeed, it is necessary:

to avoid falling into too ready a belief that women have historically enjoyed access on equal terms with men to [...] aesthetic transgression of the sexual symbolic. [...] Neither does the connection between gender transgression or “deviance” and genius work equally for men and women’ (OWEN; PAZOS ALONSO, 2011, p. 17).

Abundant proof of double standards is to be found in the canonical recognition granted to Pessoa’s versatile embodiments, including an earlier critical acceptance of Álvaro de Campos’ bisexual identity, which allowed him to “sentir tudo de todas as maneiras.”<sup>14</sup> Conversely, Teixeira’s name remained almost completely exorcised from the Portuguese literary canon until after the return to democracy in 1974.

As she perceptively noted, her “singular lealdade de ‘afirmar’” led the “desacordo entre mim e a *Maio-ria*” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 282). “Sâtania” was arguably her last-ditch attempt to “afirmar,” to make her voice

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14 Some of Teixeira’s assertions in *De Mim*, such as “bendigo a Força” (TEIXEIRA, 2015, p. 283), align her closely with Álvaro de Campos’ reflections in “Apontamentos para uma Estética Não-Aristotélica”. First published in the literary magazine *Athena* only a couple of years previously (1924-1925), the piece argued for the central importance of “força” over traditional beauty in modernist aesthetics. Teixeira would have been familiar with Campos, given that his provocative “Ultimato” had appeared in *Portugal Futurista*, directed by her friend Carlos Porfirio (PAZOS ALONSO, 2015, p. 24).

heard. The short story explores the mindset of upper-class women, both those in real life, such as Maria Adelaide Coelho da Cunha, and those in fiction, such as Maria Margarida, in their attempts to reconcile themselves with the right to “viver enfim.” History tells us that Coelho da Cunha managed to do this successfully (GONZAGA, 2009), but at the time, this result must have seemed a highly unlikely prospect. By contrast, Teixeira’s tale offers a premonitory warning that the incoming dictatorship would not only repress LGBTQ+ sexualities but indeed step up the policing of heteronormative female sexuality too, indoctrinating countless women into continuing to believe that they had no right to enjoy their own body.

The 1923 censorship of *Decadência* anticipates the case of *Novas cartas portuguesas* (1972) almost half a century later. As far as the history of ideas is concerned, together these two texts fittingly bookend the rise and fall of the Estado Novo. Around the Três Marias there was enormous public solidarity, at home and transnationally. Around Judith Teixeira, judging by the almost universal silence that quickly fell on her at the time, the general impression is, firstly, that male critics had little interest in applauding women’s experimental writing; and, secondly, that it would have been far too risky for any of Teixeira’s female peers to shake the “falso manto da prudência” and attempt to retrieve her from the perceived impropriety of baring it all.

Only after the return to democracy, then, did a re-valuation of her artistic practice gradually gather momentum; simultaneously, as an “apparitional lesbian”, Teixeira began to generate references in contemporary prose-fiction (BARBOSA, 2014, p. 12-13). Following the publication of Dom Quixote’s new edition of her works in 2015, critical readings have multiplied exponentially, both nationally and internationally.<sup>15</sup> Another gratifying outcome of this belated reappraisal is that, from March 2023 onwards, the manuscript that originally prompted the publication of *Obras de Judith Teixeira: poesia e prosa* will be housed in the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, freely available to all and preserved for posterity. One century after the Literatura de Sodoma scandal, almost exactly to the day, the time is ripe for the next chapter in Judith Teixeira’s afterlife.

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<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, translation into the Anglosphere is forthcoming, with a poetry anthology by Samantha Pious for the American publisher Headmistress, while Chris Gerry has undertaken an English version of Teixeira’s prose. Moreover, a full-length monograph on Teixeira, *Judith Teixeira: múltiplos olhares*, by Fabio Mario da Silva, is also forthcoming.

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