

## Towards the History of the Portuguese Political Periodical Journalism (19<sup>th</sup> Century)

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### Abstract

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It is essential to start this text with a reference to Portuguese culture, which has overlooked the phenomenon of periodical journalism, and seen it as a poor relation when it is, in my view, the richest melting pot of knowledge about the people in the nineteenth century. We must remember, revisit, and breathe life into this memory so that it is not definitively erased. It is within this perspective that I wish here to highlight the journal *O Movimento: periodico semanal (1835-1836)*, which also arises from the need to bring to light figures in the shadows of the history manuals, a situation which is aggravated when it comes to addressing notable figures in the writing of periodicals, such as the editor of the aforementioned periodical. Using periodicals to enter the daily political life of the penultimate decade of the first half of the nineteenth century is a wonderful experience because it enables us to see many of the reasons why the Revolution did not have the success desired by many. However, rather than making history, this involves bringing to light and life a political culture and a world that has been reproduced, with other epistemological assumptions, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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### Introduction

It is essential to start this text with a reference to Portuguese culture, which has overlooked the phenomenon of periodical journalism, and see it as a poor relation when it is, in my view, the richest melting pot of knowledge about people in the nineteenth century. We must remember, revisit, and breathe life into this memory so that it is not definitively erased.

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In this sense, it is vital to revisit the forgotten generation of the *Vintistas*, *Setembristas* and the *Regeneradores*, those individuals who fervently and emotionally wished for another country, to be able to assess the influence they had in the publishing of journals, which should be an object of study.

It is within this perspective that I wish here to highlight the journal *O Movimento: periodico semanal (1835-1836)*<sup>2</sup>, which also arises from the need to bring to light figures in the shadows of the history manuals, a situation which is aggravated when it comes to addressing notable figures involved in the writing of periodicals, such as the editor of the aforementioned periodical, José Vitorino Barreto Feio<sup>3</sup>.

Using periodicals to enter the daily political life of the penultimate decade of the first half of the nineteenth century is a wonderful experience because it enables us to see many of the reasons why the Revolution did not have the success desired by many.

This failure marked the *vintista* liberals, and the heirs of *Vintismo*, who were divided, and created the results that could be witnessed until the *Regeneração*, when they managed to create their hegemony and govern, albeit ephemerally. Indeed, the policy of the *Rodrigo/Fontista* regenerative ministry met with opposition from periodicals, which can be placed within the area of democratic liberalism.

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<sup>2</sup> *O Movimento: periodico semanal*. Lisbon, Typ. by Antonio Sebastiao Coelho 1835-1836. The publication started on 1 November 1835 and continued until 28 August 1836. It was published without a statement from the author. The forty-four published issues together make up a volume consisting of 366 pages.

<sup>3</sup> José Vitorino Barreto Feio (1782-1850). Initially having decided upon a monastic life, he abandoned this before taking his vows. He came to Lisbon and joined the former regiment of the Royal Marine Brigade. He then moved to the army, and served during the Peninsular War, reaching the rank of captain in cavalry regiment No. 3 on 28 January 1813. He was elected deputy for the Alentejo to the 1821 Constituent Assembly, in which he distinguished himself through his eminently liberal opinions which were favourable to democracy (cf. Gorjão & Moniz, 1822, pp. 276-279). He was in London, when the Charter was proclaimed in 1826, electing him as Deputy to the new Assemblies, and the Government reinstated his rank of major. He emigrated from 1828 to 1834, living in England, Brazil and in Hamburg, until circumstances allowed him to return to Portugal. In 1827 he submitted a resignation request to the army. Unable to carry out the duties of deputy due to a lack of legal funds, a friend sorted this situation out by assigning him an annual donation through public deed of four hundred thousand *reis* (cf. *Chronica de Lisboa*. N.º 145 (21 de Junho-1834). He was elected member of the 1834 Assemblies, and after the 1837 Constituent Assemblies, he soon abandoned the preparatory sessions, following the example of his colleague, João Bernardo Rocha Loureiro, at the same time and for the same reason (cf. *infra* nrp # 22). His place in the Assemblies was always on the opposition benches, even during the period when his closest friends were part of the ministry! He died after a lengthy period of suffering on 21 February 1850 (cf. Silva, 1860, t. V, pp. 154-156; Sines, 1852).

However, rather than making history, this involves bringing to light a political culture, a living world that has been reproduced, with other epistemological assumptions, within the present day. What is more, this enables us to state the clear contemporary nature of the political criticism made by the editor of *O Movimento*, which indisputably leads us to reflect on twenty-first century politics.

### **The Periodical Journal in Act: Theorised Practice**

Barreto Feio, after quoting Camões's axiom that "the whole world is composed of change", states the objectives of the periodical in the editorial of the issue that inaugurated its publication:

"For the love of the *patria*, the public good, justice, freedom, virtues that appear to have been erased within the spirit of the Portuguese [...], to the political movement, both internal and external, will be how the first columns of this our journal will be dedicated [...]. Soon after this, the industrial, literary and commercial movement will follow"<sup>4</sup>.

He further clarifies these intentions in the editorial of the same issue when he addresses a seminal issue within the area of communication and information, with a text dedicated "To Opinion":

"In Portugal there is no opinion, [...] one of the speakers from the ministry stated [...]. This famous orator [...], knowing that opinion is against him [...], said in a fit of rage, «there is no opinion». We are demonstrating here its existence [...] and will show its features. Opinion is the life of Governments and the soul of States. Dead one can call a government that does not benefit from it, lost the State that has lost it [...]. There is no individual who does not work for it [...]. If Napoleon had not disregarded the opinion and will of the French [...], never would the expelled Bourbons have returned to sit on the throne [...]. Charles X lost that opinion and soon after his crown [...]. In view of these examples [...], how dare our Statesmen defy public opinion? [...]. They came into power, against the expectation of all [...]. Their moral degradation was dissipated in thick salaries, in large donations, in bonuses, in forages, etc. then they threw themselves into loans [...].

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<sup>4</sup> *O Movimento*..., 1, 1835, p. 1.

And all of this we owe to the six wise alchemists, who make up the ministry [...]. God keep this ministry! [...]. Looking at each of these gentlemen [...] they had come from nowhere [...]. What a sudden metamorphosis. Yesterday poorer than Job, now rich..."<sup>5</sup>.

The huge irony that permeates this discourse mourns the hallucination of the *Devoristas*<sup>6</sup> and *Chamorros*<sup>7</sup>, who placed the kingdom on the edge of bankruptcy. This press may switch tone, but it does not vary its accent. It may be more to the centre or more to the left, even radical, but remains consistent with the principles that formed and helped promote it. There may be varying levels, from passion to justice, from balance to greater tolerance, but it does not run the political gambit from one extreme to the other extreme.

Furthermore, with regard to public opinion, character and communication, Barreto Feio provides a notion of instrumental publicity, linked to political propaganda, which is surprisingly up-to-date. This contribution is as follows:

"The ancient system, so characteristic of a barman when the number of clients dwindles, has always been to have his premises painted, and a new sign put up in golden capital letters, and to take on a new clerk. The public, who are drunk on the news, once again head for the *bodega* and for some time make good use of the coffee grains, the spirit distilled from figs christened in France, until, in proportion to the aging of the painting, they come to realise the sham and that, while the store may have changed its colour, it has not changed its true nature [...]. This is, more or less, a tactic that the *devorista* party has just adopted [...]. The *Revista*, long since discredited due to its furious diatribes, was not enough, [...] and now the *Independente* has appeared! [...]. The preamble [...] soon reveals the spirit that should govern its content, because it begins by *telling us that our press is not a body of public opinion*.

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<sup>5</sup> *O Movimento...*, 1, 1835, pp. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Devorista* (squanderer) was the name given to the political faction that came to power after the Liberal victory in the Portuguese Civil War, particularly in the period between 24 September 1834 and 9 September 1836, with the Constitutional Charter of 1826 in force. The term *Devorista* stems from a Legal Charter dated 15 April 1835 which placed national goods in an auction sale, thus making these goods more accessible to the liberal leaders.

<sup>7</sup>Derogatory epithet given to supporters of the 1826's Charter. In the ideological battle between the *Movimento* on the one hand, the *Revista*, the *Artilheiro* and the *Independente*, on the other hand, the so-called "*Chamorros*" were the subject of complaint, involving suspicions of treason, that left at the gates of Lisbon the intrigue and sinuousness surrounding the 1820 Revolution (cf. *O Movimento...*, 37, 1836, pp. 302-304).

To know whether this proposition is true or false, it would be necessary to know what the *Independente* calls *public opinion* [...]. Of all the newspapers, we know, there is only the *Revista*, the *Ecco* and the *Interessante* which can wear this cap [...].

Hate for the free press is a cry of alarm, and what is written in the flags of the *devorista* faction [...]. They are like dogs that bark at night and follow everyone, but when the whip is cracked, they yelp [sic] and flee ..."<sup>8</sup>.

The writer knows what he is writing about, including knowledge of the reactions of the public to commercial novelty, a kind of psychosomatic dependence on the new, like "Pavlov's bell" and the role of conditioning in behavioural psychology.

The metaphor of the "barman" to deconstruct the *Independente* (1836), a conservative periodical, is entirely appropriate here, since the aforementioned journal utilised "transvestite" mannerisms, full of trickery, to create illusions, which it then denied, as indeed was the practice of the targeted conservative media. This reflection is primarily an insight into the political press of the Portuguese right, liberals and conservatives, which included conservative liberals and the fringes of the old order, heirs of the spirit of absolutism, and *Miguelista* supporters, especially at a time of a government with a *Setembrista* flavour. This is a devastating document, violent in its aggression, concerning a rather broad grouping from the conservative press, which enables us to see the contradictions and personal conflicts which beset the Portuguese social character, after the end of the civil war. What was previously consensus and unity, was now fractured and disunited, which would be reflected in the unfolding of the liberal process, to the point of allowing the emergence of *Cabralismo*<sup>9</sup> which, in other circumstances, would have had little chance of success.

Deviances and variations, sometimes the result of in-depth reflections without major concessions, which were appropriate to the times, were acceptable, but never cynicism or political opportunism.

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<sup>8</sup> *O Movimento*... , 14, 1836, pp. 105-108.

<sup>9</sup> *Cabralismo* is the name given to the period between 1842-1846, in which António Bernardo da Costa Cabral dominated Portuguese politics, through tactless bias and violent exercise of power, frenzied arrogance, a lack of ethical scruples in governance (*e.g.* elections) and authoritarianism disguised as liberalism.

Only in this way was it possible for the historical block to arise at key moments which would enable substantive changes that would see political opponents acting through consensus. Thus it was in 1820, thus it was in the *Regeneração*. Respecting the editorial line, the editor concerns himself with agriculture and dissemination of useful knowledge<sup>10</sup>, the improvement of the woods<sup>11</sup> as well as the arts, and the indication of new materials.

But it went further into other fields of activity, involving the coordination of all productive activities related to trade and industry.

As he stated, various reasons had caused the backwardness of industry and the arts in Portugal:

“We have neither industry nor arts. And although this is due in large part to the stupidity and ignorance of despotic governments, who have governed us, the truth requires us to confess that the nature of the Portuguese has helped little to see the whining misery [...]. The whole economic and commercial system of the Portuguese can be reduced to two principles: working as little as possible and profiting as much as possible. Any means are good for them, provided that they correspond to these ideas and the future is never considered in any prudent calculation. Why did the ministry have so many co-workers involved in the ruin of the country? Because it led to an increase in profitable jobs [...], and as such they defended it [...]. In order to work in trade from Brazil, which gave huge immediate profits without work, we abandoned agriculture, which can only achieve results through the direct use of labour [...]. It is therefore clear, in all ways [...], that rather than dynamise its industry and promote its welfare, it has only served to foster their laziness ...”<sup>12</sup>.

Rather than a scourge, this is a complaint regarding the idiosyncratic national character, and the lax nature of the exercise of power for centuries, in which this level of malpractice carried out by the ruling class, was not unusual. The individuals involved in *Vintismo* lacked the capacity, and especially the time, to internalize, in terms of their awareness, the moral and spiritual refinement necessary for change, and to create such a feeling and a new national broth using the ingredients of change.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. *O Movimento...*, 6, 1835, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *O Movimento...*, 7, 1835, pp. 53-55.

<sup>12</sup> *O Movimento...*, 11, 1836, pp. 84-85.

In continuing his presentation of the distinct reasons, mentioned above, that contributed to the backwardness of industry and the arts in Portugal, Barreto Feio listed other reasons for this:

“When the various levels of the State have been corrupted, it is very difficult, if not completely impossible, to regenerate a people [...]. Chiefly, the [...] thirst for gold, the same volition to command, the same forgetting of the *patria*, the contempt for the laws [...] by the magistrates and civil servants, the same venality, the same discontent in the people and the wish for novelty [...]. In other words, everywhere the fuel for a new civil war can be found, perhaps more fierce and ferocious than that from which we have just emerged [...]. Is there any other remedy? Yes [...].

The dissolution of the elective Chamber [...], and the sacking of all removable employees [...]. This is a violent, but necessary measure”<sup>13</sup>.

The archetypes of merit, ethics and virtue lose their legitimizing potential, when the exercise of power, made in violation of a minimum level of general interest, is incompatible with the normal and valid functioning of institutions. One can sense the radical desire of the editor. He knows that the measure he is proposing is impossible, but he also knows that the “Press Campaign” that he has been carrying out with other opposition periodicals, will successfully, within his idealized perspective, lead to his longing for transformation, within the context of the cultural values of the *Vintista* generation which continued very much in evidence, as would be shown with the acclamation of the 1822 Constitution, in 1836.

It is in this sense that he belies the minister Silva Carvalho<sup>14</sup>, a fellow companion, not well seen and not welcome, after dubious shifts and political attitudes, as being incompatible with that faction of radical liberalism. Speaking in Parliament in January 1836, Carvalho stated that the press that rebuked him had done it for money, which provoked Barreto Feio’s anger and criticism:

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<sup>13</sup> *O Movimento...*, 13, 1836, p. 97.

<sup>14</sup> José da Silva Carvalho (1782-1856) was one of the architects of the 1820 Revolution. First President of the Supreme Court, deputy in the Assemblies, he was minister under João VI, Pedro IV and Maria II. After Maria II ascended the throne, Silva Carvalho was appointed tenured Councillor of State. During this reign he was also given the post of Finance in 1834, 1835 and 1836.

“And who is this mighty hand, this incognito who is so opulent, who hires so many journalists in Lisbon, Porto, Madeira and the Azores to write their criticisms of all the financial transactions of Sr. Silva Carvalho? [...] How wrong they are! There are still men who prefer freedom to jobs [...] in short, men who dare to have an opinion of their own [...]. Here's an indulgence that we do not nor never have had from the Carvalho-Rodrigo administration, nor any other administration that deviates from the constitutional path of serving the public good and honour”<sup>15</sup>.

In his direct manner, Barreto Feio leaves no doubt about his feelings and the corruption which the government of Silva Carvalho and Rodrigo Magalhães harboured<sup>16</sup>, who, with their dubious political journeys, and as political predators, marked, and not always positively, their path and the draining of the illusion created by many in 1820. Of course, they did not escape the critical eloquence of all the periodicals from the liberal left. It can therefore be said that the work of the periodical was developed on two main fronts, namely its productive and its political activity.

The elections<sup>17</sup> and political indifference were a concern that led him to appeal for participation. Hence the desire that resulted in escaping from “a vile and criminal apathy” and a reflection on the concept of “governing”, which he developed at length in a four page reflection:

“To govern is to manage [...], it is to direct public affairs and the actions of each individual for the common good of all [...]. Governments themselves are either republics or limited monarchies, that is, constitutional, since an absolute monarchy, with unlimited power, usurped by violence or for no particular reason conferred on a single individual, to dispose of, at his discretion, life and the activity of all and the committing [...] of any crime with impunity, is not what one can call government [...]. Elections are either direct or indirect [...]. The former is that most compatible with the nature of representative government.

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<sup>15</sup> *O Movimento...*, 13, 1836, pp. 101-102.

<sup>16</sup> Rodrigo da Fonseca Magalhães (1787-1858) was a figure linked to *Devorismo* and the *Regeneração* movement. He went to Brazil after 1817. Having emigrated to England (1828), he returned to Portugal after the Mindelo landing. He then started a political career that led him to be a Deputy, Minister and Head of the Government which did not stop an unknown author (supposedly the Baron Ribeira de Sabrosa) from falling into forgetfulness due to the venality of Fonseca Magalhães (cf. [CARVALHAIS], 1838, p. 107).

<sup>17</sup> On 16 November 1835 – Supplementary Elections.

The latter is vicious, because being [...] the essence of this government, that the law is the will of all or the majority of citizens, those who are to express that wish should possess the confidence of all, or the greater number [...]. The people (say the counsellors) are ignorant and unsuitable for political things [...]. But standing against these reptiles is the father of modern politicians, the subtle and profound Machiavelli. Let us hear [...]: *«I do not believe that it is a crime to defend an opinion with reasons, without wishing to use either force or authority. I say then, that the accusation of this same defect which the writers accuse the crowd of having, can individually be made of all men and maxime, the princes [...]. I conclude, therefore, against common opinion, which says that the people, when they are sovereign, are various, changeable and ungrateful [...]. A people in charge, when it is well ordered, will be stable, prudent and grateful, and much more so than a prince [...]. What cannot be born from the princes but to be the best governments of the people»?*

Here [...] counsellors, is the judgment that this great politician made of the ability and aptitude of the people, not only to elect their representatives, but even to govern themselves ...”<sup>18</sup>.

Educator and counsellor, without using inflated rhetoric, he attempts to elucidate, in an accessible manner, what are indeed government, monarchy, constitutional or absolute, and Republic. By process of elimination he is defining *ratio* and *voluntas*, while seeking the conservative faction and the centrist part of liberalism.

This shows, in my opinion, a high level of scholarship through resorting to Niccolò Machiavelli, «the father of modern politics» as he utilises him in support of his argument: people are able to participate in political life, contrary to what the *Devorista* faction would wish you to believe, supported by the social fringes in which it found itself. In another passage, he denounces the wickedness of indirect elections that transform the majority into an insignificant minority.

There is, therefore, on the part of the editor, a normative interest in deepening the conceptualization of the functioning of the Liberal Public Space, which places face to face the practice of secrecy, attendant to the perpetuation of a power founded on will (*voluntas*), and critical publicity, in the service of a law that is to be imposed, using as defence reason (*ratio*). Reason and criticism are constants that will transform the nature of power, henceforth called to appear before the public forum.

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<sup>18</sup> *O Movimento...*, 2, 1835, pp. 9-12.

Moreover, the development of the Liberal Public Space is measured, from the outset, by the extent of the debate between the press and the State, which took place throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The critical function in regard to the secret practices of the State is, at the same time, one of erecting for discussion a will capable of putting an end to domination, and the social forces that wish to influence the decisions of power, which make an appeal to an audience that makes public use of its reason, in order to legitimise their demands before this new forum. *O Movimento* should above all be seen as a periodical with a doctrinal character, which in fact made it inaccessible to many readers, because of its systematic recourse, through analogy with its modernity, to the wealth of classical antiquity, and its memory and gallery of figures from a universe loaded with symbolism and mythology.

However, influenced by the symbolic characters of the classical world, Barreto Feio uses imagination to express them and make them accessible to his public through allegorical characters created by him. This is the case of the “wild boar”, when referring to Michael I, and the “monster”, aimed at the government, whose head is embodied by Saldanha, who takes the four powers, while at the same time making a deep spiteful critique of the governance of the *Devoristas*, at the exact moment that the government is dismissed and then resuscitated by Saldanha, president of the council:

“We have taken alive and brought out of our territory this fierce boar, which had wrought more damage than that other from Erymanthus [...], divine providence, from the mistake we made [...], sent us in his anger, to govern us, an even more extravagant monster, than that which Horace paints in his poetic art, since [...] ours, where its head should have been, has an indefinable group, and there are those who have been able to make this out and have had the patience to count fifty-one faces [...]. Insatiable [...], devouring all in front of them with metals being no exception [...], *especially* if precious. More changeable than Proteus, taking on a thousand forms in a single day [...]. It celebrates ruinous treaties [...], ruins agriculture and domestic industry and sends the troops marching [...], only to deprive its military citizens of the right to vote [...]. It fills the House with peers that are automata, beggars, like Verres, crooks, with the liberal persecuting police [...], holding citizens without charge and exiling them [...], making, and interpreting and undoing laws as is its wont [...]. Could a nation be treated in a more insolently contemptuous manner? Where is the division of political powers?”<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> *O Movimento...*, 3, 1835, pp. 17-18.

The complaint concerning the “monster” is accentuated by the disclosure of various documents which confirm the accusations, making clear the squandering of public funds, the favours, the commendations, the titles and the Tower and the Sword, placed on their chest “by those who do not deserve it, except the tower and the gallows”<sup>20</sup>. Amongst the galaxy of critical allusions, he denounces the appropriation of a part of the literary subsidy, the removal of all primary schools (replaced by mutual education in villages with more than 400 dwellings), and raises the question of the dissolution of Parliament and the future election of ministers as deputies<sup>21</sup> a matter which, after the September Revolution, placed him alongside Rocha Loureiro<sup>22</sup> and which caused him to leave Parliament as well.

A refined defender of serious and meaningful politics, he abhorred the rough political spectacle provided by the *Devoristas*, based on their abuse of power, on cloaked repression and the abusive traitors of the most cherished principles of *Vintista* imagery.

Cruel and witty, as is the essence of satire, Barreto Feio also used fantasy as an ingredient strongly critical of the exercise of power in Portugal. In the unlimited greatness of his recollections, in the section entitled “Miscellaneous”, irony was one of the aspects of the creative imagination of the editor used as a recurrent device in his writings. Indeed, the “Miscellaneous” section was the playful aspect dealing with the situation in the country, and humour the other side of his discourse, which momentarily dissolved the drama of the situation: “The first Carvalho put Portugal on its feet, the second Carvalho turned it upside down”<sup>23</sup>. An exemplary, but paradoxically exemplary, story, because it shows a counter example. A sort of modern morality tale, in the Voltairean sense, i.e. amoral, which recalls an amoral situation to enable the moral to more easily resurge in ourselves.

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<sup>20</sup> *O Movimento...*, 4, 1835, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *O Movimento...*, 6, 1835, pp. 41 e 44-45.

<sup>22</sup> This was João Bernardo Rocha Loureiro, editor of *O Portuguez* - London, 1814-1826 – who considered Passos Manuel’s decree of 10 November 1836 to be illegal (cf. *Diário do Governo*, Nº 269, de 12 de November de 1836), Article 1 of which stated that “while the Assemblies do not enact the contrary, the Secretaries of State may be elected Deputies” (cf. Alves, 2005a, nrp # 43, pp. 216-218; Alves, 1992 and Alves, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> *O Movimento...* 9, 1835, p. 72.

The arc of memory places the two “Carvalhos”<sup>24</sup> face to face in its the galaxy of references. In essence, with these allusions, he is trying, through sincere embraces of friendship, to connect the hearts of those who still are bitter about mutual betrayals. At the same time, he gives all his efforts to the memory and reasonableness of the people of a nation, to cleanse their souls in a moment of old and motivated hatreds, which is an operation that exceeds the efforts of all human powers. However, in a deeply compartmentalised society, where communication and, *a fortiori*, subversive communication is not easily established from one sector to the other, the pleasure which sometimes arises from the simple abolition of social boundaries, and which the periodical welcomes and nurtures, is displayed, albeit in an ephemeral manner. Despite this, he shows an astonishing virtuosity and a breathless pace, in the annotations, such as the “Miscellaneous”, which are rapid, precise and sensitive to a society as a whole that vacillates, a little drunk, under the trappings of modernity, which was inaugurated at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, within the framework of satirical metaphor, criticising politics, the author develops a remarkable prose that seeks to publicly and ethically discredit the politicians that represent *Devorismo*.

In terms of the history of political criticism this is, in my view, one of the most brilliant texts of the period, from the point of view of its satirical catharsis, which demolishes all before it through its cross-cutting nature. In other words, this involves a high level of expression of the art of irony in politics.

It is worth quoting at length, and noting the timeliness of this admirable satire, when looking at many of the so-called politicians who are plentiful in areas involving circulation, but not those involving reflection, in the exercise of power, a situation which is even more serious because they have decision-making power, as understood in the political public sphere, as regards the welfare of society as a whole.

Barreto Feio drew, from Hobbes and Rousseau, the conceptualization of human nature as good or bad, in essence, therefore irreconcilable opinions, which may, in the opinion of the editor, be clarified through a zoological metaphor involving transition (a proto-homunculus hominid species), which he called “*Paunches*” (due to its extended stomach), as a means of clarifying what the *Devoristas* were:

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<sup>24</sup> Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, Marquis of Pombal, José da Silva Carvalho, Minister of Finance.

“Hobbes’s error was born out of his observations, in which he established his judgement, involving a distinct species of *bipedal* and *talking* animals, called *Paunches*, who intermingled with mankind, [...] and seem to form the transition between orangutan and man. This animal *Paunch*, due to its natural malignancy, its paucity of mental faculties, perfectly fits the definition [...] that the English philosopher gives to the bad man, *homo malus puer robustus*. Using carefully administered autopsies [...], it appears and has been confirmed that its internal structure differs from ours in the following ways: the size of the brain in its normal state is slightly larger than an acorn, with a tougher consistency than a man’s brain, which somehow endows it with the appearance of a sponge soaked in olive oil. It has no heart [...]. But what is most remarkable is its stomach, both due to its enormous size, from which derives its name *Paunches*, which is how these individuals are described, and which contains such a corrosive acid that it dissolves all substances, even iron and bronze, within a few minutes. It has also been observed that the teeth of this animal are sharper and cut better than those of human beings and that its voice, in its state of tranquillity, reminds us of a barking dog and, when enraged, sounds like the braying of a donkey. It is because of all this evidence that the *Paunch*, despite its outward resemblance to man, and because of the smallness and hardness of its brain, is unable to conceive any large, fully-embodied idea [...]. And as such the *Paunch* does not have no country, no friends, nor can it be moved except by its instinct of greed [...]. A *Paunch* will be conspicuous due to its avid hunger: hunger for money, hunger for property, hunger for gifts, hunger for jobs, hunger for distinctions and honours [...].

A *Paunch*, when faced with misery, instead of seeking a livelihood from the sweat of its brow, finds it more convenient to do so as a highwayman. If it was put on the weighing scales, the weights and measures due to its tricks would be a third less than the Municipal standard [...]. If it were an innkeeper, it would be an enthusiastic proponent of faith and would not sell one pint without being baptized [...]. A *Paunch* dressed in a toga is a greater scourge to a land than *cholera-morbus* [...]. A *Paunch* [...], if it were a journalist [...], would give emphasis to popular interests, but would at the same time not be ashamed of asking this government for a job [...], if a deputy, he would support and defend all the ministry’s actions, yet conspire to ruin [...] his *patria*, once it had freed up a title for it [...], or it had accumulated a number of profitable jobs [...]. However, it is when the disgrace of a kingdom reaches its peak that a group of *Paunches* excitedly enters and takes over the ministry.

And as such [...], the money disappears because the *Paunches* put it all in their *Paunch*. God forbid that our Portugal were to fall into the hands of such *Paunches*<sup>25</sup>.

In this light<sup>26</sup>, laughter, irony and humour have a function that cannot be ignored. Humour and irony can resolve, at least momentarily and in a provisional and aggressive manner, social and political tension. This humour and irony does not stem from nothing; when hatched, it comes from a multifarious situation which is both tragic and experienced - politically, economically, socially, religiously and culturally. In the final instance, it is a way of avoiding not only the "castration" of the individual/society, but also the very materiality of the act of criticising, of being a public figure and writing<sup>27</sup>.

Satire, as a means of provoking the desired contrast, makes use of metaphor to uncover the possible "truth", i.e. a new way of looking at the world that requires awakening, to feel what is going on around one, because satire is not resigned, but challenges, provokes laughter, almost instantly, and reflection. Language and aesthetics, emblem and humour, discursiveness and provocation, in a solicitous game which seeks to reform through critical-deformation, judging, at the same time, an ethic that no longer serves the ruling society, as satire captures a habit, a deformation, a world of life. The satirist captures activity, and expands it so that it becomes visible. However, in order for that exaggeration to be humorous, it is necessary that this does not appear as an end, but rather as a simple means used by its producer to express the changes seen, which are prepared<sup>28</sup> which may be political, social or economic.

A work of inter-discursiveness, between written culture and oral culture, settled on the border between ethics and aesthetics, exploring political, economic and social daily life. The understanding and reflection that are proposed are aimed at a new practice of communication that induces critical thinking.

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<sup>25</sup> *O Movimento...*, 20, 1836, pp. 165-167.

<sup>26</sup> *O Movimento...*, 40, 1836, p. 333.

<sup>27</sup> ALVES, 2005b, pp. 123-128.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. BERGSON, 1990, pp. 36 e ss..

It is possible to discern that this communicational activity is the means towards an aestheticisation of politics, which is also an aesthetic of life<sup>29</sup> a kind of frontier between the society of the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries, in which communicative advertising was founded and featured “stolen trinkets” and the halo of the “courtiers” of communication, and the future society, founded on communicative assumptions based on the most reliable criteria of the theoretical/practical complex of this new communication strategy.

Many other examples of political struggle could be highlighted, creators of empathy with their public, *e.g.* the Quartermaster General of Police, conservative conspiracies, corruption, medicine, theatre, educational deficiencies and lack of cultural formation in the kingdom, which it is impossible to realise within the limits of this paper. What can however be seen, in the aforementioned models, is the critical, dialogical and communicative competence of the editor of *O Movimento*.

In his critical act, where from first to last it is politics guiding the make-up of the periodical, the editor neglects nothing, so as not to end up empty-handed. At this critical moment, the body of the journal becomes a significant constellation, and the editor, preparing the long period of judgement, writes beautiful texts devoted to the gnosiological fundamentals of the exercise of power, to the theory of liberalism, to the search for the “Holy Grail” of general happiness. At the “heart of the impossible”, the author, placed at the crossroads of the political indifference of many, subject to all criticism, organises joint resistance on all fronts, summoning history and the liberal idea to serve the needs of the liberal cause. Foreshadowing what could have been a lost cause in 1823, betting on the future, but penetrating the future.

## Conclusion

Paraphrasing W. Benjamin, the editor of *O Movimento*, in traversing every path of political criticism<sup>30</sup>, is always at the crossroads. The severity, joy and humour, both moderate and imperceptible, at other times violent, the result of an intolerant drive, reaches its various publics, as if the “reading circle”, in addition to reading, hearing and witnessing, was forced to awaken its reason and intelligence.

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. BENJAMIN, 1992.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. HABERMAS, 1990, p. 126.

Given the revenge of the feelings and the economy of the passions, fear and hope rely on their witnesses, the emotions utilised by those who experience the situation addressed here, when opposition movements are “forbidden”, and the differences have deepened and individuals kept in a state of frustration and anxiety. In this context, fury and disorder are the manifestation of the desire for another possible world, but also of hope, a new cycle of Enlightenment, which fertilizes the modernity which started in Portugal with *Vintismo*, a mixture of transactions, oppositions and unions.

In fact, we can understand the instinctive adherence to revolt and indignant refusal of everything that does not nurture hope that puts an end to hatreds, humiliations and fears, taking into account the impending barbarism, which denies the Law. It is therefore not surprising to face the opponent, appealing to the fear of suffering and hope for prosperity. Indeed, it seems *Devorismo* is based solely on a utilitarian or calculating, Pavlovian or behavioural psychology, thus risking the possibility of dissipating into a mechanical and impersonal barbarism. To better understand the psychosocial state of the Portuguese character during this period, as people went from poverty to anger, it is necessary to look at the humiliation and other forms of suffering and exclusion and the economic links to that anger and wretchedness.

Although having passed the time of ghosts and utopias, and also the presence of the mystics from that situation and the portentous birds, this is a period that showed itself to be exciting because it opened new avenues to questioning the development of politics and politicians, through the “network of networks”, which was the periodical journalism of that period, and that we may address to politics in the present day. Just as in all battles there are betrayals and commitments, although, given the choice between the bright future-to-be and the Orwellian hell, the proposals of the heirs of this *Vintista* constitutionalism may seem practicable. Nevertheless, given the deficiencies in the Portuguese social character after the civil war, worsened by *Devorismo* and *Cabralismo*, the fact is that there was a deep crisis, which prevented things working as desired.

Indeed the systemic crisis across Portuguese society from the mid-nineteenth century was a morbid condition when taking into consideration, firstly, the two levels of socialisation and production (an identity crisis and a systemic crisis) and, secondly, the fact that social development was taking place in three dimensions: involving the economic aspect, the political aspect, the crisis of the rationality of the system and the crisis of legitimisation, and the socio-cultural aspect, with a crisis in motivation, as an influencing factor in the crisis of identity<sup>31</sup>

Finally, one could witness a former version of the second modernity in this exegesis, a version, where some of the journalists, as examined by *O Movimento*, were courtiers of absolutism and then courtiers of liberalism. Today, with another technological sophistication, this attitude remains. The inter-communicability between paradigms, which, with great acuity, makes the current media crisis both visible and irrefutable, and shows a process which is more acute and which is, except for some honourable exceptions, the fruit of an explosive mixture of totalitarian information, banal journalism, commonplaces, family businesses, “cleaners”, and the “praetorian guard” of media, economic, financial and political conglomerates. In other words, the written and audio-visual press is dominated by journalism with a vested interest, by complicitous plots, by industrial and financial entities, by the idea of market. A small group of ubiquitous hacks imposes its definition of information/goods on an activity increasingly fragilised through fear of unemployment<sup>32</sup>. Obscenity abounds, charlatanism, forgery, indifference, self-centeredness.

One can also note the continuity of a tradition of Portuguese political culture. In the twenty first century as in the nineteenth century, the space to create policies with an instrumental vision has for centuries marked and masked the exercise of power in Portugal. Which raises the question: where are the significant politicians, with a strategic vision, creators of major policy to give life to institutions, given that insignificance is part and parcel of the daily activity of the petty politicians who for centuries in this country have swarmed around?

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. HABERMAS, 1978b, pp. 14 e ss..

<sup>32</sup> Cf. ALVES, 2005b, pp. 15-20.

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