

Photobook of the City: Eduardo Gageiro's *Lisboa no cais da memória*

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Abstract. In this article I examine the representation that Eduardo Gageiro's *Lisboa no cais da memória* makes of Salazarist Lisbon in the post-war period up until the Carnation Revolution. I look at how the work's *anchorage* and its obvious generic affiliation as humanistic street photography set up a particular reading of the work for the reader. I then consider how the text's photobook format works to convey the sorts of meanings associated with this type of photography and creates a city-like space in which the reader can follow the footsteps of the flâneur/street photographer into the historical space and time in question.

Published in 2003, Eduardo Gageiro's *Lisboa no cais da memória* re-groups photographs of the Portuguese capital taken by the Portuguese photographer between 1957 and 1974, dating in the main from the first half of this period. Perhaps Portugal's foremost photojournalist, Gageiro has produced many photobooks, often in collaboration with important Portuguese writers. He worked on *Gente* with José Cardoso Pires (whose introduction to this work provides a perceptive albeit short analysis of Gageiro's style), *Lisboa operária* with David Mourão-Ferreira, and *Olhares* with António Lobo Antunes, just to name those texts whose thematics dovetail with the work under analysis here. Indeed, *Lisboa no cais da memória* contains images extracted from all of

these previous works, and performs an anthological function in relation to Gageiro's work concerning Lisbon.

The images in *Lisboa no cais da memória* show the enmeshment of ordinary people in the environment of history. Synthesised into a sequence of photographs, the photobook tells the story of the city in the post-war period; there is, however, no unbroken linear chronology or topology. Instead, the images are organised into thematic strands, though there are short sequences dealing with discreet events. The book starts with two prefatory texts, one by a former president of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio, and one by journalist António Valdemar (a democratically elected head of state and an independent journalist both being eloquent symbols of the changes in the country since the period *Lisboa no cais da memória* represents). In the first Sampaio declares that the work "é um depoimento, um testemunho, um documento e uma memória. Por ele passam o tempo individual e o tempo colectivo, o tempo da alegria e o tempo da tisteza, o tempo da opressão e o tempo da liberdade" (n. pag.). In the second Valdemar states "a figura humana voltou a ser o elemento nuclear da objectiva areta de Eduardo Gageiro" and that the book "representa uma interpelação e denúncia do quotidiano" (n. pag.).

For the ensuing photographs these texts serve as what Roland Barthes termed *anchorage* (39). This term refers to textual material that acts as a signpost for the reading of images. Sampaio's text, with its conflation of individual experience and collective history, of happiness and sorrow, indicating a conflicting historiography of the period, is one such signpost. Valdemar's noting of the human and everyday as foci is another. Together these two pieces point us towards a reading of the photobook as representing a city where human life, though fettered, flourished nonetheless in a period of political inertia and great social and environmental change.

For this meaning to be enabled, however, these signposts must be followed by a corresponding interpretation on the reader's part. I want to look at how the photographs—considered in the light of genre affiliation and expectations and the way the images are concatenated into a photobook—enable the interpretation ordained in their anchorage. The images in *Lisboa no cais da memória* fit the genre of street photography, the vast majority of the pictures having been taken in the public space of the city. Westerbeck and Meyero-witz characterise street photography as centring around "candid pictures of everyday life" based on "errant details, chance juxtapositions, odd non sequiturs, peculiarities of scale and the quirkiness of life in the street" (34). It is

photography at street level, on the part of a pedestrian, attentive to the life and emotions of the people encountered whilst crossing the city. This being so, we can construe Gageiro's photobook as the record of an individual trajectory through the collective time and space of the Salazar-era city. Gageiro's photographs are identified and identifiable as taken in particular places and in particular years, ranging in space from the traditional dockside neighbourhoods to the incipient urban sprawl to the north and west of the city and in time from the impoverished city in the 1960s pulled apart by emigration and the colonial wars to the human landslide of liberation in 1974.

Westerbeck and Meyerowitz go on to characterise street photographers as *bystanders* who, in their understanding, are "people who come to bear witness. They are those who are there expressly for the purposes of making observations, which in this context is almost the same thing as making observances, as if taking the photograph were a ritual fulfilment of a moral obligation" (34). If we accept this engagement as an implication of the genre, the fact that the images contained in *Lisboa no cais da memória* are evidently street photography implies a certain humanistic attitude to what is represented, one similar to the position described in Sampaio's prefatory statement.

As well as having an affiliation with a certain genre of photograph-taking, *Lisboa no cais da memória* can also be classified according to the format in which its photographs are presented, a factor that is just as important as genre in analysing how Gageiro's work represents the city. Rather than being displayed in a studio exhibition or catalogue, Gageiro's photos are arranged in a photobook, which can be defined simply as a work in which the primary message is created by a *sequence* of photographs. In their history of the photobook, Parr and Badger quote Prinz as stating that therein "the photographs lose their own photographic character as things in themselves and become parts, translated in ink, of a dramatic event called a "book" (7). It is in this respect that the photobook becomes a historiographical approach, by articulating historical material to create a dramatic event, a sort of narrative discourse.

It is a commonplace that the act of photography severs image from space and time. Eduardo Cadava sees the image thus sundered as a *citation of history* (xvii). The organisation of photographs into a photobook has the effect of artificially re-introducing a potential time and a definite space, creating a loose narrative. John Berger claims that "an instant photographed can only acquire meaning insofar as the viewer can read into it a duration extending beyond itself" (89). Here this duration is created by the concatenation of

images, using the images to signify the wider reality from which they were captured: the everyday life of a particular city during a certain period. Parr and Badger argue that “in the true photobook each picture may be considered a sentence, or a paragraph, the whole sequence the complete text” (7). I would say that, just as the photobook occupies a grey area between the film and the novel, it would perhaps be more accurate to see the composing images of the photobook as hovering somewhere in between the literary word and sentence and the cinematic shot and sequence.

Whilst events, people, and places are depicted, and a narrative created through *mise-en-séquence*, there is, however, no clear plot. How then does *Lisboa no cais da memória*'s historiography work? For Berger, “if photography does narrate, it narrates through montage,” going on to suggest that the photobook employs an Eisensteinian *montage of attraction*. This I argue is what we can see at work within this photobook, the emotivity of the Eisensteinian attractions sitting well with street photography as I have described it. In a montage of attraction, each image should attract that which follows and vice-versa. Berger goes on to say that “the energy of this attraction could take the form of a contrast, an equivalence, a conflict or a recurrence. In each case, the cut becomes eloquent and functions like the hinge of a metaphor” (287). Thus, discrete elements are stitched together to form a whole and construct a narration.

Here it is useful to look at an instance of montage in order to see how this process functions in practice. The sequence in question shows the 5 October 1960 protests by the M.U.D. (Movement for Democratic Unity) against the Salazar government. The first image (280) shows a group of protesters amassed before a public building. The building flies a Portuguese flag, shrouded in shade. Directly below it a member of the crowd holds aloft another national flag, highlighted in brilliant sunshine. Two versions of Portugal are about to confront one another. The next image (281) “cuts” in closer (though, from the background it would appear that we have moved to another location), picking out several members of the throng who are identified as key protagonists in the accompanying caption. They are Arlindo Vicente, a member of the *Seara Nova* group and democratic presidential candidate in 1958, Adão e Silva, a lawyer from Lisbon and one of the dictatorship's staunchest opponents, and Azevedo Gomes, chair of the M.U.D. Behind them an illuminated Portuguese flag is again brandished by an anonymous protester.

The way the next images are linked is interesting. The following photograph (282) doesn't date from 1960 but rather from 1966. It depicts what

appears to be a police parade through one of Lisbon's main squares. In a strong diagonal stretching from the bottom left upwards, a row of uniformed policemen march imposingly, each being led by a police dog. The effect is intimidating, not least because, in the strong sunlight, each policeman's eyes are in shadow below the brim of his helmet. At the far end of their rank, peering from the pavement, hemmed in between a police vehicle and a prohibitive street sign, stand the public, constrained and cowed. The next image (283) shows the protest march under way. In contrast to the policemen in the previous picture, the protestors, many of whom are looking around them in trepidation, are assembled into a loose cluster. Despite their evident nervousness, the illuminated flag again makes its appearance in the centre of the image, embodying the hope for positive change perhaps. The two sides literally meet in the following image (284), which shows a protester and a policeman. The protester rolls back, one arm raised as a shield whilst the officer's truncheon swoops down. The contrast between the clenched posture of the policeman and the supine position of the protester, as well as the obvious inequality between the officer's official weapon and the prone man's woeful shield tell us all we need to know about the relationships enacted in this incident, as do the dismayed, impotent attitudes evinced by two onlookers. The prepotency of the state at this juncture couldn't be clearer.

Here, in the depiction of protest, power, and repression, there is something approaching a plot. Not all the images in the photobook entertain this type of flowing relation between one another, however. *Lisboa no cais da memória* is divided up into seven sections, each of which deals loosely with a theme. Each of these sections is prefaced by an extract from a poem and a picture of a jobbing photographer taking portraits in the streets, symbolising the immersion of the reporter-photographer-*flâneur* into the everyday lives of the people he depicts. The first section deals with a cross-section of the city, both topological and social. It introduces the reader to the traditional infrastructure of the Lisbon around the Castelo de São Jorge and the Alfama, as well as the new *Avenidas Novas* areas into which the city expanded after the Second World War. The image on page 24 shows a shepherd and his flock walking from left to right over rough ground, whilst the new urbanisations of Areeiro stretch out in the distance. The divergence and co-existence of old and new is made patent.

The second strand concentrates on children and activities of the street. Whilst the focus is on the simple joys of childhood and their picturesque aspect, there is a more sombre undercurrent in these images. For Cardoso

Pires, all Gageiro's shots of children represent "a imagem da infância traída" (*Gente* n. pag.) by the political and social situation in Lisbon. One image (*Lisboa* 67) shows a young, brooding man cradling an infant whilst a group of children and women congregate by a doorway. Whilst we cannot read the exact events surrounding the situation, consternation and what we might imagine as a fear for the baby's future are clear on the man's face. Another image (70) shows a group of children careening down a hill through a bank of smoke. The setting is Casal Ventoso, traditionally one of the city's most impoverished neighbourhoods. Whilst the children charge along with a care-free air, the smoke could be said to represent the uncertainties of their future.

The third theme deals with the everyday life of the city, the traditional working life of people that "mouream por férias e por cidades, ocupando o breve espaço da pátria que lhes cabe" (*Gente* n. pag.) and the changes this existence is undergoing. Many depict the traditional portside activities of the city, to which images of the construction of the Ponte Salazar are contrasted. Another image shows a small fishing boat against the backdrop of the newly built bridge (*Lisboa* 107), contrasting the modern and the traditional, but also highlighting, via their position mid-river, the time the fishermen shown still had to wait before the bridge received its current name, Ponte 25 de Abril. The fourth concentrates more closely on traditional life in the streets "inland." Images proliferate of people in the midst of their routines. The fifth strand continues the theme of the third and fourth, but in a more quirky vein, depicting, amongst other things, a great many shots of people waiting, especially old people, conveying a feeling of historical inertia. For Cardoso Pires, Gageiro "registra, sim, o velho que está dentro de cada adulto" (*Gente* n. pag.), waiting and old age being an indirect way to represent the unfortunate longevity of Salazar's premiership. The sixth shows the activities and pastimes of the city, music and bars, bullfighting and football, religious events and processions and provides a re-working of the way in which these were portrayed at the time by the regime. Football, for example, is shown as both a tool used by the regime (255), with Salazar shaking Eusébio's hand after the country's relative success in the World Cup of 1966, and as a potential locale for political mobilisation in an image of protest banners held aloft by students during the Académica-Benfica cup final of 69. The seventh, coming after the years of inertia and protests, shows the revolution and its immediate aftermath.

These more loosely connected thematic strands are constructed and must be approached in a different way than the smaller narrative sections that exist

within them. Their relative disconnection means that the photobook does not work in the same way as film and has two effects on the way in which the montage of attraction functions. The first is that instead of causing the narrative to flow, in Berger's words, "such an energy [the energy of the attraction between images] then closely resembles the stimulus by which one memory triggers another, irrespective of any hierarchy, chronology or duration." The second effect is that this subverts the linear notion of sequence, creating a situation in which "the sequence has become a field of co-existence like the field of memory" (*Another Way* 288). As well as particular narratives about certain events then, the loose groupings cause the book to act as a sequence of memories of certain aspects of the city.

For Cadava, photographs transform time into space (59). If we accept the preceding premises, we can argue that the sequential thematic arrangement of images makes possible a spatial representation of the city, a space of co-existence and commemoration, which can be moved through by a reader/viewer. Bearing in mind the street photography in *Lisboa no cais da memória*, we can even say that this journey takes place on foot and can follow different trajectories. There is a linear organisation of the work into themes, which are traversed horizontally so to speak. However, there are other routes and shortcuts possible, which take a more associative direction. Unlike a film, in which the spectator is borne along by the flow of time, in the photobook time is under control. At any moment, by flicking forward or backwards (an activity that the loose narrativity of the photobook encourages) the reader can bring two different images into contact. This could take the form of comparing the same place at different times, similar figures in different situations, or even just the serendipitous juxtaposition of disparate images: a sort of vertical traversal.

One way of conceptualising this process would be to compare the construction of sentences in language to this manner of traversal. The horizontal traversal can be said to work in the same way as a paradigmatic chain, insofar as each image gains significance through its divergence from a similarly themed "vocabulary" of photographs. The vertical traversal can be compared to the syntagmatic chain, in that the meaning of an image is enacted by its selection to follow a particular image and the tenor of the ensuing photograph. An example: At random I can open the book and see a dishevelled and impoverished man cooking his dinner over a small fire on the street (178). If I turn back a page I can see Cardinal Cerejeira, the bishop of Lisbon and a supporter of the regime, inspecting a kitchen before a presumably lavish official dinner

(176). This would outline the iniquity of the times. If I look at the photograph on the opposite page, on the other hand, I can see a group of seemingly content women eating their meagre meal together on the street and perhaps think that despite the deplorable poverty there did exist companionship and solidarity (179). While I am constructing this sequence, I might bear in mind the young soldiers embarking for the colonial wars (272, 273, 274, 275) or the crowd of chimney sweeps as an explanation for the absence of men at the street meal (exigencies of war or traditional divisions of labour) or instead the image on page 248 of a procession of Santo António, 1966 (the importance of Catholicism in the life of the city). With around 300 photographs in the photobook, the number of such trajectories is manifold.

The arrangement of motionless photographs into sequences and the movement needed to traverse these introduce an unresolved tension between stillness and motion in Gageiro's work. It is through this relation that the city of *Lisboa no cais da memória* is constructed. While the flow of a film may introduce an element of a "here and now" into the narrative and hurry the spectator along, *Lisboa no cais da memória* remains resolutely in the static "there and then," as it is the reader/viewer who strolls through it. A telling translation for the Portuguese title would be "Lisbon in the Dock of Memory." In this way, as well as being the portrait of a port city, by taking the other meaning of the word dock the work can also be seen as a place of extended judgement from a humanist point of view where various aspects of the city's history are tried, then acquitted, such as the simple communality of the people, a disappearing way of living, or condemned, like the repression of the regime, eventually swept peacefully away in 1974.

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