HOMENAGEM A
IRENE RAMALHO SANTOS

THE EDGE OF
ONE OF MANY
CIRCLES

ISABEL CALDEIRA
GRAÇA CAPINHA
JACINTA MATOS

ORGANIZAÇÃO
MATERIAL CULTURE, NEW CORPOGRAPHIES OF THE FEMININE AND NARRATIVES OF DISSENT.

MYRA, BY MARIA VELHO DA COSTA AND PAULA REGO – AN INTERSEMIOTIC DIALOGUE

Ana Gabriela Macedo

Resumo: Neste ensaio pretende-se fazer uma reflexão sobre o mais recente romance de Maria Velho da Costa, *Myra* (2008). Será confrontado, em diálogo intersemiótico com este romance, a poética visual da pintora Paula Rego e a sua representação de uma violência ideológica e assente em estereótipos de gênero. Argumentarei que existe uma profunda tensão entre o sublime e o abjeto que é partilhada por ambas as artistas e comum à obra de ambas.

Palavras-chave: Maria Velho da Costa; Paula Rego; Intersemiótico; violência de gênero; sublime.

Abstract: In this paper I will reflect on the latest novel published by the Portuguese writer Maria Velho da Costa, entitled *Myra* (2008). I will also approach, in this context, and in an intersemiotic dialogue with this work, the visual poetics of the artist Paula Rego and her representation of an

DOI: https://doi.org/10.14195/978-989-26-11308-6_37
ideological and gender-based violence. I will argue that the paradoxical tension between the sublime and the abject that lies at the core of the work of both artists is disturbingly similar.

**Keywords:** Maria Velho da Costa; Paula Rego; Intersemiotic; gender violence; sublime.

I – *Myra*

“Ekatarina, Catarina, Kate. The name you give me is who I am”

Costa 2008: 177

The latest novel by Maria Velho da Costa, one of the celebrated “Three Marias”, co-author of *The New Portuguese Letters* (1972), which vehemently exposed before a country still suffering Salazar’s legacy of a social, political and patriarchal reality kept cautiously muted, is a narrative in many ways unsettling, representing a stern denunciation of a post-industrial world where the paradigms of identity, culture, gender and race intersect and pose questions to each other, and to us as readers, in an urgent and unequivocal way.

This is a novel that escapes genre categories or univocal epithets such as postmodern, postcolonial or postfeminist, since it does not fall easily into any of them, yet ambivalently embraces them all in a symbiotic way. Postindustrial would probably be the fittest description. We could say that the novel takes on the dimension of a powerful narrative allegory that deconstructs, in a dizzying sequence of visual and dramatic scenes, an aberrant everyday life of beings on the verge of identity, cultural and emotional collapse. It is a liminal narrative between the poetic, the visual and the filmic,