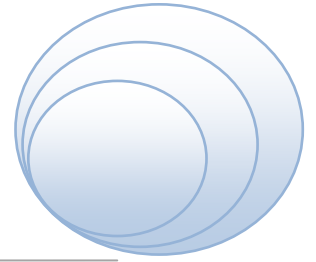


Byron Nosso Contemporâneo: Uma Fantasia Ludita



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As perguntas de Byron, a que muitos ainda hoje chamariam retóricas,
ecoam infelizmente pelos nossos tempos dentro.

(Alves, *As Carroças da Subversão* 85)

Centenárias ou não, evocações como esta conduzem não raro ao “eterno retorno” de temas, factos e personagens que o tempo, esse heraclitiano escultor, tornou literalmente “históricos”. No caso de Byron (1788-1824), 2009 assinala os duzentos anos da sua fixação em Newstead Abbey,¹ no perímetro medievo da antiga floresta real de Sherwood, do ingresso na Câmara dos Lordes e da sua peregrinação lusitana, da “via sacra” lisboeta ao “glorioso Éden” sintrense. Porém, a par da historicidade do que – e de quem – se evoca, destes encontros podem também emergir actualidades e relevâncias, mais ou menos inesperadas, do evocado. Procuraremos testar esta ideia a partir dos depoimentos do bardo inglês sobre a questão ludita, que os saudosos Professores Fernando de Mello Moser (1927-1984)² e sobretudo Hélio Osvaldo Alves (1938-2003)³ ajudariam a resgatar, em

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distintos momentos, da “enorme condescendência da posteridade”, na celeberrima expressão de E. P. Thompson.

O espaço disponível apenas permite uma caracterização genérica dos luditas, se tivermos em conta os mais de 720.000 *websites* e páginas existentes em meados de Junho de 2009. Assim, o termo engloba grupos activos entre, sobretudo, 1811 e 1813 (com um ou outro afloramento até 1816), período que inclui a fase final dos conflitos napoleónicos e pontuais recessões decorrentes de uma economia de guerra. O turbulento palco de uma Grã-Bretanha a braços com os efeitos e as consequências de um cruzamento de diferentes “revoluções” (agrícola, demográfica, tecnológica, industrial e romântica, com a francesa em tricolor pano de fundo) e onde o aumento de preço dos bens alimentares não achava correspondência no pagamento de jornas e salários, ajuda a enquadrar as motivações, as reivindicações e os anseios laborais dos luditas, bem como comportamentos e (re)acções defensivamente ancorados nas areias movediças de um mundo pré-industrial e pré-capitalista em vias de extinção.

Segundo P. W. J. Riley, “These machine wreckers were known as LUDDITES because they said their leader was Ned Ludd who lived in Sherwood Forest, but who Ned Ludd was, or whether there even was one, nobody knows” (182). Independentemente da existência e identidade, real ou pseudonímica, de Ned, também conhecido como *General*, *Captain* ou “*King*” Ludd, o facto de os luditas terem Sherwood como ponto de encontro convida ao estabelecimento de conexões e paralelismos com Robin Hood (Alarcão 326-331 *passim*), se bem que, e apesar de uma hipotética intencionalidade simbólica na escolha de Sherwood, não podemos acusar os luditas da caça furtiva de veados reais⁴ nem tão pouco envolvê-los nas alegadas políticas e práticas robinianas de redistribuição da riqueza, características de alguns “rebeldes primitivos” e “ladrões sociais” estudados por E. J. Hobsbawm. Isto não significa (nem impede) que o desejo de reposição de um *status quo* concebido como de maior equidade e justiça e manifestado em formas



directas e retaliatórias de contestação (não) possa aproximar Robin, Ned e os seus respectivos bandos.⁵

Como se sabe, a revolta dos artesãos do sector têxtil de Nottingham(shire),⁶ de base predominantemente oficinal, familiar e doméstica, contra uma mecanização nascente que permitia produzir e colocar no mercado, a mais baixo custo, maiores quantidades de produtos de qualidade inferior, traduzir-se-ia em ataques a fábricas ou fiações (*mills*) e na destruição de teares (*frames, looms*),⁷ de certo modo análoga à da maquinaria agrícola por Jack (ou “*Captain*”) Swing (1831).⁸ Este cenário de liberdade concorrencial (senão mesmo de liberalização económica, segundo Thompson) repercutir-se-ia nos volumes de vendas, receitas, lucros, perdas e danos, colocando constrangimentos e pressões sobre a mão-de-obra tradicional, alegadamente mais qualificada, e induzindo problemas reconhecíveis nos actuais quotidianos de globalização industrial, comercial e laboral: desemprego ou precariedade, congelamentos e contracções salariais, perda de poder de compra e qualidade de vida, falências, encerramentos, deslocalizações, etc. E se é certo que, no início do século XIX, a mecanização das sociedades não seria tão visível quanto hoje, as tensões entre o Homem e a Máquina, denunciadas, nas décadas seguintes, por Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), John Ruskin (1819-1900) e William Morris (1834-1896), começavam já a fazer-se sentir; daí que, sem pretendermos resvalar para xenofobias, chauvinismos ou racismos preconceituosos, perigosos e primários, possa ser sugestivo imaginar como reagiriam os luditas perante o expansionismo “imperialista” da indústria e do comércio asiáticos, têxteis e não só, à escala global. Do mesmo modo, *mutatis mutandis*, poder-se-ia talvez equiparar a contestação de há dois séculos, numa Grã-Bretanha onde as *Combination Laws*, em vigor entre 1799 e 1824-25, cerceavam as liberdades de associação e expressão, ao duelo desigual e profundo que opõe o comércio tradicional aos hipermercados ou as pequenas e médias empresas às grandes cadeias multinacionais. De que lado estaria um “Byron nosso contemporâneo”? Nunca o saberemos... mas alguns dos seus escritos, pela consciência e



sensibilidade sociais e humanas de que dão mostras, convidam a uma reflexão, ainda e sempre actual, sobre as complexas (cor)relações entre liberalização(ões), liberalismo(s), liberdades... e Liberdade. “Ouçamos, pois, a voz do bardo” que, afinada pelo passado recente anglo-americano,⁹ assim via o presente e o futuro:

As the Liberty lads o'er the sea
Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with blood,
So we, boys, we
Will *die* fighting, or *live* free,
And down with all kings but King Ludd!

When the web that we weave is complete,
And the shuttle exchanged for the sword,
We will fling the winding sheet
O'er the despot at our feet,
And dye it deep in the gore he has pour'd.

Though black as his heart its hue,
Since his veins are corrupted to mud,
Yet this is the dew
Which the tree shall renew
Of Liberty, planted by Ludd! (Byron 101)

Deste texto de Dezembro de 1816,¹⁰ intitulado *Song for the Luddites*, transparecem, sem ambiguidade nem rebuço, as simpatias e empatias da (po)ética romântica para com figuras, tipos, causas e movimentos populares, marginais, perseguidos ou oprimidos, bem como os impulsos libertários, radicais e patrióticos que levariam até à Grécia o amigo de Shelley (1792-1822)¹¹ e Leigh Hunt (1784-1859). Porém, o compromisso de Byron com a causa ludita manifestar-se-ia logo em 1812 através de três documentos: a carta enviada a Lord Holland em 25 de Fevereiro (cf. Anexo I); *An Ode to the Framers of the Frame Bill*, publicada em 2 de Março no periódico *Morning Chronicle* (cf. Anexo II); e sobretudo o seu longo discurso de estreia na Câmara



dos Lordes, proferido aos 24 anos, em 27 de Fevereiro. É dessa intervenção, apaixonada e militante, que recordamos agora os seguintes excertos:

My Lords, – The subject now submitted to your Lordships ..., though new to the House, is by no means new to the country As a person in some degree connected with the suffering county, ... I must claim some portion of your ... indulgence, whilst I offer a few observations on a question in which I confess myself deeply interested.

To enter into any detail of the riots would be superfluous[;] the House is already aware that every outrage short of actual bloodshed has been perpetrated, and that the proprietors of the frames ... and all persons supposed to be connected with them, have been liable to insult and violence. During the short time I recently passed in Nottinghamshire, not twelve hours elapsed without some fresh act of violence; and on the day I left the county I was informed that forty frames had been broken the preceding evening, as usual, without resistance and without detection.

Such was then the state of that county, and such I have reason to believe it to be at this moment. But whilst these outrages must be admitted to exist to an alarming extent, it cannot be denied that they have arisen from circumstances of the most unparalleled distress: the perseverance of these miserable men ... tends to prove that nothing but absolute want could have driven a large, and once honest and industrious, body of the people, into the commission of excesses so hazardous to themselves, their families, and the community. At the time to which I allude, the town and county were burdened with large detachments of the military; the police was in motion, the magistrates assembled; yet all the movements, civil and military, led to – nothing. Not a single instance had occurred of the apprehension of any real delinquent ... against whom there existed legal evidence sufficient for conviction. But the police, however useless, were by no means idle: several notorious delinquents had been detected, – men, liable to conviction, on the clearest evidence, of the capital crime of poverty; men, who had been nefariously guilty of lawfully begetting ... children, whom, thanks to the times ... they were unable to maintain. Considerable injury has been done to the proprietors of the ... frames. These machines were to them an advantage, ... as they superseded the necessity of employing a number of workmen, who were left in consequence to starve. By the adoption of one ... frame in particular, one man performed the work of many, and the



superfluous labourers were thrown out of employment. Yet it is to be observed, that the work thus executed was inferior in quality; not marketable at home, and merely hurried over with a view to exportation. ... The rejected workmen ... conceived themselves to be sacrificed to improvements in mechanism. In the foolishness of their hearts they imagined that the maintenance and well-doing of the industrious poor were objects of greater consequence than the enrichment of a few individuals by any improvement ... which threw the workmen out of employment, and rendered the labourer unworthy of his hire. And ... although the adoption of ... machinery in that state of our commerce which the country once boasted might have been beneficial to the master without being detrimental to the servant; yet, in the present situation of our manufactures, rotting in warehouses, without a prospect of exportation, with the demand for work and workmen equally diminished, frames ... tend materially to aggravate the distress and discontent of the disappointed sufferers. But the real cause of these ... disturbances lies deeper. When we are told that these men are leagued together not only for the destruction of their own comfort, but of their very means of subsistence, can we forget that it is the bitter policy, the destructive warfare of the last eighteen years, which has destroyed their comfort, your comfort, all men's comfort? ... These men never destroyed their looms till they were become useless, worse than useless; ... actual impediments to their exertions in obtaining their daily bread. Can you, then, wonder that in times like these when bankruptcy, convicted fraud, and imputed felony are found in a station not far beneath that of your Lordships, the lowest, though once most useful portion of the people, should forget their duty ...? But while the exalted offender can find means to baffle the law, new capital punishments must be devised, new snares of death must be spread for the wretched mechanic, who is famished into guilt. These men were willing to dig, but the spade was in other hands: they were not ashamed to beg, but there was none to relieve them: their own means of subsistence were cut off, all other employments pre-occupied; and their excesses, however to be deplored and condemned, can hardly be subject of surprise.

... I did hope, that any measure proposed by his Majesty's government ... would have had [*sic*; had] conciliation for its basis; or, if that were hopeless, that some previous inquiry, some deliberation, would have been deemed requisite; not that we should have been called at once, without examination and without cause, to pass sentences by wholesale, and sign death-warrant, blindfold. But,



admitting that these men had no cause of complaint; that the grievances ... were ... groundless; that they deserved the worst; – what inefficiency, what imbecility has been evinced in the method chosen ...! ... Such marchings and countermarchings! – from Nottingham to Bullwell, from Bullwell to Banford, from Banford to Mansfield! And when at length the detachment, arrived at their destination, ... they came just in time to witness the mischief which had been done, and ascertain the escape of the perpetrators, to collect the ... fragments of broken frames, and return to their quarters amidst the derision of old women, and the hootings of children. Now, ... As the sword is the worst argument that can be used, so should it be the last. In this instance it has been the first; but ... as yet only in the scabbard. The present measure will ... pluck it from the sheath; yet bad [*sic*; had] proper meetings been held in the earlier stages ..., had the grievances of these men ... been fairly weighed and justly examined, I do think that means might have been devised to restore these workmen to their avocations, and tranquillity to the county. At present the county suffers from the double infliction of an idle military and a starving population. In what state of apathy have we been plunged so long, that now for the first time the House has been officially apprised of these disturbances? All this has been transacting within 130 miles of London; and yet we ... have sat down to enjoy our foreign triumphs in the midst of domestic calamity. But all the cities you have taken, all the armies which have retreated before your leaders, are but paltry subjects of self-congratulation, if your land divides against itself, and your dragoons and ... executioners must be let loose against your fellow-citizens. – You call these men a mob, desperate, dangerous, and ignorant; and seem to think that the only way ... is to lop off a few of its superfluous heads. But ... Are we aware of our obligations to a mob? It is the mob that labour in your fields and serve in your houses, – that man your navy, and recruit your army, – that have enabled you to defy all the world, and can also defy you when neglect and calamity have driven them to despair! You may call the people a mob; but do not forget that a mob too often speaks the sentiments of the people. And here I must remark, with what alacrity you are accustomed to fly to the succour of your distressed allies, leaving the distressed of your own country to the care of Providence or – the parish. When the Portuguese suffered under the retreat of the French, every arm was stretched out, every hand was opened, ... to enable them to rebuild ... their villages and replenish their granaries. And at this moment, when thousands of misguided but most unfortunate fellow-countrymen are struggling with the extremes of hardships and hunger, as your charity began abroad it should end at home. A much less sum, a tithe of the bounty bestowed on Portugal, ... would have rendered unnecessary the tender mercies of the bayonet and the



gibbet. But doubtless our friends have too many foreign claims to admit a prospect of domestic relief; ... I have traversed the seat of war in the Peninsula, I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey; but never under the most despotic of infidel governments did I behold such squalid wretchedness as I have seen since my return in the very heart of a Christian country. And what are your remedies? After months of inaction, and months of action worse than inactivity, at length comes forth the ... never-failing nostrum of all state physicians After feeling the pulse and shaking the head over the patient, prescribing the usual course of warm water and bleeding, – the warm water of your mawkish police, and the lancers of your military, – these convulsions must terminate in death, the sure consummation of the prescriptions Setting aside the palpable injustice and the certain inefficiency of the Bill, are there not capital punishments sufficient in your statutes? Is there not blood enough upon your penal code, that more must be poured forth...? How will you carry the Bill into effect? Can you commit a whole county to their own prisons? Will you erect a gibbet in every field, and hang up men like scarecrows? or will you proceed ... by decimation? place the county under martial law? depopulate and lay waste all around you? ... restore Sherwood Forest as an acceptable gift to the crown, in its former condition of a royal chase and an asylum for outlaws? Are these the remedies for a starving and desperate populace? Will the famished wretch who has braved your bayonets be appalled by your gibbets? ... Will that which could not be effected by your grenadiers be accomplished by your executioners? If you proceed by the forms of law, where is your evidence? Those who have refused to impeach their accomplices when transportation ... was the punishment, will hardly be tempted to witness against them when death is the penalty. With all due deference to the noble lords opposite, I think a little investigation, some previous inquiry, would induce ... them to change their purpose. That most favourite state measure, ... temporising, would not be without its advantages in this. When a proposal is made to emancipate or relieve, you hesitate, you deliberate for years, you temporise and tamper with the minds of men; but a death-bill must be passed off-hand, without a thought of the consequences. Sure I am, from what I have heard, and ... seen, that to pass the Bill under all the existing circumstances, without inquiry, without deliberation, would only be to add injustice to irritation, and barbarity to neglect. The framers of such a bill must be content to inherit the honours of that ... law-giver whose edicts were said to be written not in ink but in blood. But suppose it passed; suppose one of these men, as I have seen them, – meagre with famine, sullen with despair, careless of a life which your Lordships are ... about to value at something less than the price of a stocking-frame; – suppose this man surrounded by the children for whom be



[sic; he] is unable to procure bread at the hazard of his existence, about to be torn for ever from a family which he lately supported in peaceful industry, and which it is not his fault that he can no longer so support; – suppose this man – and there are ten thousand such ... – dragged into court, to be tried for this new offence, by this new law; still, there are two things wanting to convict and condemn him and these are, in my opinion, – twelve butchers for a jury, and a Jeffreys for a judge! (Web. 31 Maio 2009 <<http://www.orion.it.luc.edu/~sjones1/byspeech.htm>>)

Não obstante esta ardorosa defesa de uma causa que Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) ficcionalizaria em *Shirley* (1849), a proposta seria aprovada, dando origem à lei de destruição dos teares (*Frame Breaking Act*), promulgada em 5 de Março de 1812, e objecto de um estudo específico de Karly Walters (2004). No rescaldo dessa aprovação, bem como da instituição, pelo futuro George IV (1820-1830), de uma recompensa de 50 guinéus para quem fornecesse informações conducentes à captura dos prevaricadores (cf. Anexo III), “April was [is] the cruellest month (...) mixing memory and desire (...)”.¹² Com efeito, os ataques lançados nesse mês às fábricas de Rawfolds, em Brighouse, Yorkshire; Burton, em Middleton, próximo de Manchester; e Wray e Duncroff, em Westhoughton, Lancashire, bem como a subsequente repressão policial, judicial e penal,¹³ marcada por uma violência das forças da lei e da ordem que anuncia (e prenuncia) Peterloo (1819), sugerem que a Primavera do descontentamento ludita, na transição dos governos de Spenser Perceval (Outubro de 1809-Junho de 1812) para o de Robert Banks, *Lord Liverpool* (Junho de 1812-Abril de 1827), terá sido particularmente agitada. Urge, pois, reexaminar as razões da invisibilidade das campanhas e da filosofia luditas entre 1816 e o início da década de trinta, no sentido de apurar até que ponto ela poderá dever-se a uma dissolução, mais ou menos “natural” e “espontânea”, do movimento e das motivações originais; a um princípio de (re)solução dos problemas internos após a neutralização definitiva de Bonaparte (1815); a uma repressão tradicionalmente emblematizada em Peterloo; a uma maior abertura do governo de *Lord Liverpool* após a substituição, em 1822, de Robert Stewart, *Lord Castlereagh* (1769-1822) por



George Canning (1770-1827); à revogação das *Combination Laws* (1824-5), etc.

Como é óbvio, abraçar aqui tal projecto excederia todos os limites, pelo que concluiremos com Emrys Bryson:

When the ... poet died in 1824, ... his body was brought back to England immersed in 180 gallons of spirits. Denied burial by the Dean of Westminster, this 'notorious libertine' set off on the long, last ride to Nottinghamshire. For the first mile or two, the cortège ... was escorted out of London by a procession of fifty carriages. Most of them were empty. The 'best people', who years before had lionised him, stayed away. But Nottingham remembered. As the body lay ... in 'The Blackamoor's Head', the parish church bells tolled, masses of stockingers filed through the room in ... groups of twenty to pay their last respects to the aristocrat who had fought for them, and next day the mourners stretched for a quarter of a mile. (Bryson 139-140)

Como por vezes se diz, "A história repete-se" ...; ainda e sempre a mesma, mas também (e já) outra. No que toca aos "luditas portuguesas", resta-lhes aguardar ou descobrir o seu próprio "Lord Byron" – um rebelde com causa(s) –, seja ou não ele outro parlamentar poeta que de Alegre se fez triste.

ANEXO I: Carta a *Lord Holland* (25 Fev. 1812)

MY LORD, – With my best thanks, I have the honour to return the Notts. letter to your Lordship. I have read it with attention, but do not think I shall venture to avail myself of its contents, as my view of the question differs in some measure from Mr. Coldham's. I hope I do not wrong him, but his objections to the bill appear to me to be founded on certain apprehensions that he and his coadjutors might be mistaken for the "original advisers" (to quote him) of the measure. For my own part, I consider the manufacturers as a much injured body of men, sacrificed to the views of certain individuals who have enriched themselves by those practices which have deprived the frame-



workers of employment. For instance; – by the adoption of a certain kind of frame, one man performs the work of seven – six are thus thrown out of business. But it is to be observed that that work thus done is far inferior in quality, hardly marketable at home, and hurried over with a view to exportation. Surely, my Lord, however we may rejoice in any improvement in the arts which may be beneficial to mankind, we must not allow mankind to be sacrificed to improvements in mechanism. The maintenance and well-doing of the industrious poor is an object of greater consequence to the community than the enrichment of a few monopolists by any improvement in the implements of trade, which deprives the workman of his bread, and renders the labourer “unworthy of his hire.”

My own motive for opposing the bill is founded on its palpable injustice, and its certain inefficacy. I have seen the state of these miserable men, and it is a disgrace to a civilized country. Their excesses may be condemned, but cannot be the subject of wonder. The effect of the present bill would be to drive them into actual rebellion. The few words I shall venture to offer on Thursday will be founded upon these opinions formed from my own observations on the spot. By previous inquiry, I am convinced these men would have been restored to employment, and the country to tranquillity. It is, perhaps, not yet too late, and is surely worth the trial. It can never be too late to employ force in such circumstances. I believe your Lordship does not coincide with me entirely on this subject, and most cheerfully and sincerely shall I submit to your superior judgment and experience, and take some other line of argument against the bill, or be silent altogether, should you deem it more advisable. Condemning, as every one must condemn, the conduct of these wretches, I believe in the existence of grievances which call rather for pity than punishment. I have the honour to be, with great respect, my Lord, your Lordship’s

Most obedient and obliged servant,

BYRON.



P.S. – I am a little apprehensive that your Lordship will think me too lenient towards these men, and half a frame-breaker myself.

Fonte: <<http://www.orion.it.luc.edu/~sjones1/byrlett.htm>>

ANEXO II: “An Ode to the Framers of the Frame Bill” (*Morning Chronicle*, 2 Mar. 1812)

Oh well done Lord E---n! and better Lord R---r!
 Britannia must prosper with councils like yours;
 HAWKESBURY, HARROWBY, help you to guide her,
 Whose remedy only must *kill* ere it cures:
 Those villains, the Weavers, are all grown refractory,
 Asking some succour for Charity’s sake –
 So hang them in clusters round each Manufactory,
 That will at once put an end to *mistake*.

The rascals, perhaps, may betake them to robbing,
 The dogs to be sure have got nothing to eat –
 So if we can hang them for breaking a bobbin,
 ’Twill save all the Government’s money and meat:
 Men are more easily made than machinery –
 Stockings fetch better prices than lives –
 Gibbets on Sherwood will *heighten* the scenery,
 Showing how Commerce, *how* Liberty thrives!

Justice is now in pursuit of the wretches,
 Grenadiers, Volunteers, Bow-street Police,
 Twenty-two Regiments, a score of Jack Ketches,
 Three of the Quorum and two of the Peace;
 Some Lords, to be sure, would have summoned the Judges,
 To take their opinion, but that they ne’er shall,
 For LIVERPOOL such a concession begrudges,
 So now they’re condemned by *no Judges* at all.

Some folks for certain have thought it was shocking,
 When Famine appeals, and when Poverty groans,
 That life should be valued at less than a stocking,



And breaking of frames lead to breaking of bones.
 If it should prove so, I trust, by this token,
 (And who will refuse to partake in the hope?)
 That the frames of the fools may be first to be *broken*,
 Who, when asked for a *remedy*, sent down a *rope*.

Fonte: <<http://www.orion.it.luc.edu/~siones1/byr2.htm>>

ANEXO III: Recompensa oferecida pelo Príncipe Regente, futuro George IV (1820-1830)



Fonte: “The Luddites”, in
 <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/PRLuddites.htm>>



ANEXO IV: “Song for the Luddites” (carta a Thomas Moore, 24 Dec. 1816)

. . . Are you not near the Luddites? By the Lord! If there’s a row, but I’ll be among ye! How go on the weavers – the breakers of frames – the Lutherans of politics – the reformers?

As the Liberty lads o’er the sea
Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with blood,
So we, boys, we
Will *die* fighting, or *live* free,
And down with all kings but King Ludd!

When the web that we weave is complete,
And the shuttle exchanged for the sword,
We will fling the winding-sheet
O’er the despot at our feet,
And dye it deep in the gore he has pour’d.

Though black as his heart its hue,
Since his veins are corrupted to mud,
Yet this is the dew
Which the tree shall renew
Of Liberty, planted by Ludd!

There’s an amiable *chanson* for you – all impromptu. I have written it principally to shock your neighbour * *, who is all clergy and loyalty – mirth and innocence – milk and water. . . .

Fonte: <<http://www.orion.it.luc.edu/~sjones1/byr1.htm>>

¹ Nome da mansão senhorial propriedade da família desde o século XVI, após a dissolução henriquina das ordens religiosas, a “nacionalização” dos respectivos patrimónios imobiliários e a compra, por *Sir* John Byron, da antiga casa agostiniana.

² Em Junho de 2009, quando da apresentação original deste texto, ficámos, uma vez mais, devedores da gentileza do Professor Doutor João Flor, ao chamar-nos prévia e particularmente a atenção para a existência de um estudo do Professor Moser (403-416). Na verdade, desconhecíamos tal ensaio (mesmo possuindo a obra na qual ele



seria republicado), pelo que aqui deixamos publicamente lavrado o nosso agradecimento ao Professor João Flor.

³ Cf. *Razão e Direitos*, e sobretudo *As Carroças da Subversão* 77-96.

⁴ Apenas (o que já não é pouco...) de ameaças e ataques a pessoas e bens, com pelo menos um homicídio de permeio, o de William Horsfall (1812).

⁵ “A antiga tradição mágica de Nottingham . . . e . . . da sua floresta de Sherwood . . . recriara por breves e fulgurantes momentos os valores ancestrais do mítico Robin Hood e dos seus alegres companheiros, . . . para, passado . . . esse fugaz fulgor, levar os pobres, de novo e sempre, aos caminhos da desilusão, da negação da auto-estima, do abandono, do sofrimento, da revolta, da subversão.” (Alves, *Carroças* 96)

⁶ A partir de Nottinghamshire, bem como dos condados vizinhos de Derbyshire e Leicestershire, o movimento estender-se-ia rapidamente a outras zonas de Inglaterra, envolvendo matérias-primas como o algodão (Cheshire e Lancashire) e a lã (*West Riding* de Yorkshire).

⁷ Delito inicialmente punível com catorze anos de deportação, sendo esta sentença agravada para a pena de morte após a aprovação, em 1812, da lei de destruição dos teares (*Frame-Breaking Act*).

⁸ Em sentido cronologicamente retrógrado, teria interesse confrontar qualquer um destes movimentos (ou ambos) com os levantamentos populares da Baixa Idade Média inglesa, como a Revolta dos Camponeses (1381) e de Jack Cade (1450), e/ou europeia, da *Jacquerie* (1358) aos *Maillotins* (1382), passando pelos *Ciampi* (1378), etc.

⁹ “Even though an effigy of Thomas Paine, who had worked as a corset maker in Nottingham, was hanged and burned in 1793 ... Nottingham persisted in its right of free expression. At the height of frame-smashing, the *Nottingham Review* was remarkably outspoken in its defence of the Luddites. Its editor, Charles Sutton, was gaoled for a year in 1816 for publishing a letter ‘signed’ by General Ludd which reported that his son Ned was now whirling his hammer smashing presses, and pillaging in America with Government licence.” (Bryson 131)

¹⁰ Segundo se lê em <<http://www.orion.it.luc.edu/~sjones1/byr1.htm>>, este poema integrava uma carta a Thomas Moore (1779-1852), datada de 24.12.1816 (cf. Anexo IV).

¹¹ Ao integrar as tomadas de posição sobre os luditas no segundo (o político, mais precisamente) dos seus “Três Modos de Abordar Byron”, recorda-nos Fernando de Mello Moser: “... já foi defendido ... que foi Byron, e não Shelley, o verdadeiro revolucionário político entre os poetas românticos, tendo em vista os seus pontos de vista pragmáticos, demonstrados em Itália e na Grécia, assim como o testemunho dos seus Discursos Parlamentares ...” (Moser 408).

¹² T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), *The Waste Land*, 1922, I, vv. 1-3.

¹³ Embora os números variem por vezes, cf. as 8 sentenças de morte proferidas em Lancashire, as 15 execuções após um julgamento em série, realizado em York, e as 13 deportações para a Austrália.



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