

## Resumo

A definição de um estilo Estado Novo constitui um problema intensamente discutido por historiadores da arte portuguesa. A praça *Alameda Dom Afonso Henriques* em Lisboa pode ser considerada emblemática pela arquitetura de poder no Estado Novo. A *Alameda* forma um vale jardimado entre duas colinas. Nos dois extremos deste vale encontram-se dois edifícios significativamente famosos: O Instituto Superior Técnico e a Fonte Luminosa, dedicados, respectivamente, às ciências modernas e à contribuição harmónica da natureza pela cidade de Lisboa. A iconografia da *Alameda*, tanto como a sua integração nas campanhas propagandistas de planeamento urbano nas décadas 1930 e 1940, exemplificam as políticas de representação durante o Salazarismo. Projetos urbanistas da época visavam criar cidades que preservassem o carácter de uma sociedade tradicional e católica e, ao mesmo tempo, respondessem à necessidade de modernizar o país, portanto, cidades que evocassem a imagem de um estado progressista. Desta maneira, as obras públicas e praças urbanas, tais como a *Alameda*, contribuíram à ‘imagem corporativa’ e ao ‘espírito’ do regime. ●

## Abstract

The stylistic categorization of the *Estado Novo* has been intensely discussed by Portuguese art historians. The square *Alameda Dom Afonso Henriques* in Lisbon (*Alameda*) can be seen as paradigmatic for the architecture of power of the *Estado Novo*. The *Alameda* forms a gardenized valley between two hills. There you find two prominent and highly propagandist buildings: The Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) and the Fonte Luminosa are dedicated to modern sciences and respectively to the harmonious contribution of nature to the city. The iconography of the *Alameda* as well as its incorporation into the propagandist use of urban planning in the 1930s and 1940s exemplify the visual politics during Salazarism. Urban planning programs intended to create cities that would preserve the character of a traditional catholic society and at the same time answer to the need to modernize the country and evoke the image of a progressive state. Thus, public buildings and urban squares such as the *Alameda* contributed to design a corporate image and to the ‘spirit’ of the regime. ●

## Arbitragem Científica Peer Review

**Helena Barranha**

Instituto Superior Técnico – Universidade de Lisboa

**Sandra Vaz Costa**

Direcção Geral do Património Cultural

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# VISUAL POLITICS OF THE *ESTADO NOVO* REALIZED ON THE *ALAMEDA DOM AFONSO* *HENRIQUES* IN LISBON THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDEAL CITIZENSHIP?

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JAKOB HARTMANN  
Universidade de Bremen  
Translation INKA MÜLLER

<sup>1</sup> Of the few individual analyses of the *Alameda* or the *Fonte Luminosa*, Acciaiuoli 2005, Santana/Sucena 1994 and Guarda 2008 are to be pointed out primarily.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. e.g. Kemp 1992, Hall 1997.

This essay references the preliminary findings of a PhD thesis (at the Sciences of Art institute at the University of Bremen) on historic transformations of significance on the urban square *Alameda Dom Afonso Henriques (Alameda)* in Lisbon between the state's visual politics and everyday reception by the users of the city. The focus is on ascription and production of meaning in interplay with changing discourses and ways of reception. As Roland Barthes notes, referring to painting: „Le tableau, quiconque l'écrit, il n'existe que dans le *récit* que j'en donne; ou encore: dans la somme et l'organisation des lectures que l'on peut en faire: un tableau n'est jamais que sa propre description plurielle.“ (Barthes 1969, 16, emphasis in the original) Transferred to our context, we are interested in the 'production' of the square and its implicit observers. Also, I will introduce the *Alameda* in respect to stylistic and iconographic aspects.<sup>1</sup> In accordance with an approach of reader-response criticism and the critique of representation,<sup>2</sup> the main focus, however, will be on the interrelations of gaze, processes of perception and the interactions which the square potentially enables and privileges in its (landscape) architectural staging. It is about the implicit observer figures it addresses and about the forms of subject

constitution its aesthetics may thus promote. In other words, it's about a „historically dimensioned and hegemonic 'given-to-be-seen'“, not as „any clear, large-scale plan“, but as a „situational accumulation of ascriptions“. (Nierhaus 2011, 35) From art historical classifications to actual ways of utilization in everyday life to the stipulation of iconographic programs and interpretations, e. g. by explanatory plaques or newspaper reports: discursive inscriptions of meaning mould our view of the square in many different fields. This essay follows the premise that aesthetic works such as the *Alameda* and its landscape architectural design can also, by its interactions with and orientation towards the intended subjects of reception and by privileging certain views, contribute to the promotion of an ideal of citizenship. W.J.T. Mitchell argues in a similar vein in his introduction to a collection of essays about „landscape and power“, demanding „[...] to change landscape from a noun to a verb.“ Landscape should be seen „not as an object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a process by which social and subjective identities are formed.“ (Mitchell 2002, 1) The *Alameda* with its wide and open lawn, which used to be loosely populated with trees, suggests a transfer of this approach to the evocation of landscape in the city. From this perspective, urban spaces appear as scenography of an exhibition that is supposed to steer the gazes and attention of the people moving in it. The square and the layout of the city can therefore be understood as a display, which positions the subjects in the field of visibility and discourse and hence forms identities.

The question of how the evocation of landscape in the city contributes to the constitution of the subject is also profitable for the analysis of Salazarist cultural politics and propaganda. Margarida Acciaiuoli points in a comparable direction on the topic of the connection between the 'Política do Espírito', proclaimed by minister of propaganda António Ferro,<sup>3</sup> and the aesthetic expression of the regime. She states that Ferro's massive promotion of an internationally accepted, idyllic image of Portugal, in the end let the country's orientation towards aesthetics appear as the only image of the propagated progress. Having realized already in the 1920s that reality can be produced aesthetically, Ferro – according to Acciaiuoli – created the „país de Bilhete Postal de que o poder tinha necessidade“. (Acciaiuoli 2008, 17) The *Alameda* with its mythifying idealization of the voyages of discovery and the taming of nature may seem like urban planning's anticipation of the aims of the 1940s 'Campanha do Bom Gosto': „elevar o nível do nosso gosto, para embelezar o país, [...] para tentar [...] passá-lo a limpo.“ (Ferro 1949, quoted in Acciaiuoli 2008, 19) The question of the aesthetic expression of Salazarist politics is linked to the debate about the definition of the architecture *of* or *in* the 'Estado Novo'. This text will leave the often discussed distinction of a modernist phase of the architecture in the 'Estado Novo' from more revivalist, regionalist, neo-baroque or neo-classicist tendencies of the late 1930s and 1940s without comment. Supplementary to stylistic discussions and classifications,<sup>4</sup> I will suggest an additional possible perspective on the architectural expression of Salazarism, from which to take into view the visual and spatial policies of the 'Estado Novo' and their possible implications – using the

<sup>3</sup> From 1933 until 1949, Ferro, being Salazar's minister of propaganda, was head of the *Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional* (since 1944 known as *Secretariado Nacional de Informação Cultural Popular e Turismo/SNI*).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. e.g. the differentiated contributions of Pedro Vieira de Almeida (Almeida 2002) and Paulo Varela Gomes, who discusses the notion of Rationalism within the modernist as well as within traditionalist discourse and states their respective intersection and vagueness. (Gomes 1989) Joana Brites gathers valuable analyses and considerations in her essay on the architectonic programs of the *Caixa Geral de Depósitos* (Brites 2007), that offered an appreciated stimulus for the present work, too.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. e.g. Lôbo 1995, França 1989 or the already mentioned essay by Israel Guarda.

<sup>6</sup> Faria da Costa was also responsible for the final draft of the *Alameda* from 1939, which already included the monumental *Fonte Luminosa* as climax.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Acciaiuoli 2005.

example of the *Alameda*. Given the multitude of individual projects and their respective regional characteristics and blends, one cannot speak of a uniform development of urban planning in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>5</sup> In general, two tendencies can be found: on the one hand, an orientation towards a strict axial order and towards a general monumentalism, similar to the *City Beautiful* movement, represented, among others, by Cottinelli Telmo or Cristino da Silva. On the other hand is a group that rather follows the ideas of the *Gartenstadt*-movement or the concepts of Camillo Sitte, represented for example by urbanists Etienne de Gröer or Faria da Costa. Both directions aim at hierarchizing urban space by a pattern of streets, squares and housing blocks, at establishing dominant sightlines or at staging complex paths of reception (e. g. by points and routes of attention, such as squares, avenues and monuments which induce impulses) in which citizens can wander and contemplatively or actively experience and constitute themselves as subjects as well as a collective.

Urban planning campaigns by the still young dictatorship in the 1930s and 1940s aimed at achieving order of and control over space by the state in the face of a rapidly growing population. Furthermore, the image of a nation and of a metropolis that appear representative, rich in tradition, yet at the same time modern was to be evoked. To this end, cell-like, 'organically' linked and loosened-up city structures were designed in some places in which prominent public buildings were to demonstrate the unity and order of the nation. One of these designs was done, for example, by Faria da Costa in the second half of the 1940s for the areas north of the *Alameda*.<sup>6</sup> Israel Guarda considers the urbanisation north of the *Alameda* to be the best example of urban planning policies of the 'Estado Novo'. (Guarda 2008, 181) Additionally, Guarda identifies the aim as „definir unidades de vizinhança, como unidade mínima reconhecida no espaço urbano que garantisse homogeneidade morfológica e social“. (Guarda 2008, 185) This way, a synthesis was to be reached between the needs of an industrially developing society and economy and a catholic-nationalist, authoritarian ideology of state.

## The square's aesthetic

The *Alameda*, including its two architectural poles, was built mostly between 1927 and 1948. Its size and central location alone make it a significant example of the urbanist policies in the first decades of Salazar's dictatorship. By being named after the first Portuguese king, it refers back directly to Portuguese history and its mythical idealization in national historiography. The *Alameda* gains additional symbolic and practical significance in the city's fabric by its location at roughly the middle of the central street connecting the historic city centre and the airport (opened in 1943).<sup>7</sup> It is also a traffic hub and is used as an inner-city venue. Spatially, it is characterised by its bipolar layout. Between two hills marking its boundaries, an open lawn area crossing the main road and a side street stretches over the valley

and axially links the respective architectural poles. The building of the *Instituto Superior Técnico (IST)* sits 'enthroned' above the steeper and higher part of the *Alameda*. It was built between 1927 and 1935<sup>8</sup> by one of the most active architects of the 'Estado Novo', Pardal Monteiro, in strictly axial-symmetric, monumental Art Déco-style with traces of both neo-classicism and rationalism.<sup>9</sup> (Fig.1)

This ensemble, important for the new dictatorship in terms of urban development as much as political symbolism, was called a 'new Acropolis', the first time in a eulogy written by the architect himself and published in the internationally renowned journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*.<sup>10</sup> A term like that – apart from the inherent idealization of Portugal's first modern campus as the new chapel of an industrializing nation – may seem comprehensible, as the *IST* would have a strong dominating effect in the space of the city by its distinct orientation towards the *Alameda* (which, though envisaged in the urban development plan, was not yet finished).<sup>11</sup> Due to the slightly recessed position behind another crossing street, this effect only unfolds completely to viewers standing on the hill lying opposite. At this end of the *Alameda*, the monumental building of the *Fonte Luminosa* rises – named after its original illumination. (Fig.2) Being less steep and connecting the neighbouring residential areas (including a central market hall from 1940), this area is, where the social life at the *Alameda* concentrates. Along the street circling the *Alameda*, there are the *Império*, by Cassiano Branco, one of the big cinemas of the 1950s,<sup>12</sup> a couple of cafés with outside tables and a recently opened retro-style café-kiosk close to the metro station. I would now like to discuss the fountain and its iconology in more detail, due to the significance this part of the *Alameda* carries in everyday life and in respect to the visual and spatial political development and ordering of the area as a whole. The fountain's orientation towards the *IST* and its

<sup>8</sup> According to the information provided by *Instituto da Habitação e da Reabilitação Urbana (IHRU)* at [http://www.monumentos.pt/Site/APP\\_PagesUser/SIPA.aspx?id=3162](http://www.monumentos.pt/Site/APP_PagesUser/SIPA.aspx?id=3162).

<sup>9</sup> For the *IST*'s building history and aesthetic see Tostões 2009.

<sup>10</sup> *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 4, May 1934, cf. Tostões 2009, 53.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Tostões 2009, 55f.

<sup>12</sup> The architectural as well as social importance the cinema held for the *Alameda* at the time can only be indicated. However, the *Diário de Lisboa* (25.05.1952, p. 4) puts the cinema in an interesting context: „[...] foi ontem inaugurado o cinema Império, moderno e luxuoso, como o bairro em que está situado, luminoso como a vizinha Fonte Luminosa. Com a assistência [...] dum público elegante e numeroso, daquele bairro [...]” Cf. <http://www.fmsoares.pt>.



Fig. 1 – *Instituto Superior Técnico*, Pardal Monteiro, 1935, copyright Jakob Hartmann (2010).

Fig. 2 – *Fonte Luminosa*, ferroconcrete, limestone, glazed ceramics, Carlos and Guilherme Rebelo de Andrade/Diogo de Macedo/Maximiano Alves/Jorge Barradas, 1948, copyright Jakob Hartmann (2010).



<sup>13</sup> With regard to the juxtaposition of technology and «nature» being thus made and the aesthetic and propagandistic call to the *IST*'s prospective engineers, it is not surprising that a revealing interpretation of the *Fonte Luminosa* as „dam” can be found at [http://www.monumentos.pt/Site/APP\\_PagesUser/SIPA.aspx?id=4806](http://www.monumentos.pt/Site/APP_PagesUser/SIPA.aspx?id=4806).

<sup>14</sup> On its website, the IHRU states 1943 as the time of the monument's opening and presentation to the city. The inscription on the fountain itself suggests the opening and presentation of the „fonte monumental” as late as 1948: „No dia vinte e oito de maio de mil novecentos e quarenta e oito vigésimo segundo aniversário da revolução nacional aberta a primeira exposição de obras públicas foi inaugurado esta fonte monumental e entregue à câmara de Lisboa”. Cf. [www.monumentos.pt](http://www.monumentos.pt) (see Footnote 13) The *Anais do Município de Lisboa* state May 30, 1948 as the day of both the opening and presentation to the city. Cf. <http://hemerotecadigital.cm-lisboa.pt>. Indeed, the monument was inaugurated and illuminated publicly at May 28, 1948 in the context of the propagandist exhibition *15 anos de Obras Públicas* which had been opened during that weekend at *IST*. Interestingly, journals reported the event with particular focus on the connection to the exhibition rather than underlining the fountain's architectural originality. Cf. e.g. *Diário de Notícias*, 29.05.48, p. 5 and Folgado 2012.

direct addressing of the engineering students are to be understood as fundamental. The *Alameda* is staged as a place of mythical idealization of Portuguese history and the forces of nature and at the same time as a place of order. Yet the overall effect only unfolds in the interplay with the *IST*.<sup>13</sup>

## The *Fonte Luminosa*

The *Fonte Luminosa* was planned and built between 1939/40 and 1948 by the brothers Carlos and Guilherme Rebelo de Andrade (1887-1971/1891-1969).<sup>14</sup> The figural furnishings were made by the sculptors Diogo de Macedo (1889-1959) and Maximiano Alves (1888-1954), the ceramics by Jorge Barradas (1894-1971). The *Fonte Luminosa*, one of the biggest fountains of Europe, also serves as an impressive viewing platform that grants a wide view over the *Alameda* onto the *IST* lying opposite. Climbing one of the flights of stairs at the sides, you reach a platform spanning the complete building. At the back of it, an open colonnade invites you to sit on benches with a view over the whole platform with its central, rectangular shallow pool and over the *Alameda*. Above the viewing platform rises the hill, on which grass and a few trees grow, and on top of which are more benches with tables and a freestanding central palm tree in a paved and walled-in round. Several paths lead from the viewing platform, the street and the pavement in a nearly concentric, bowed or secant-like form to this highest place of the hill.

The symmetrical corpus of the fountain consists of a wide block of reinforced concrete covered with smooth white-grey limestone bands, the deep joints and sharp edges of which give the fountain a rustic and fortified impression. The building is



flanked by two avants-corps which each make for about one fifth of the fountains total width. With a ratio of approximately three to one (width to height), the fountain is harmonically balanced.

At the lateral avants-corps two bas-reliefs, one over each of the two massive portals with inscribed plaques, take up almost the complete height of the building. The whole building is encompassed by a plinth of smooth limestone and crowned with a likewise light-coloured balustrade atop a distinctly overhanging ledge.

The middle part of the *Fonte Luminosa* is dominated by one semi-oval and two smaller semi-round basket-shaped basins. These serve as pools for the water streaming out of the openings situated above, which again repeat the order and ratio of the whole ensemble as well as of the middle part. Just as the avant-corps are arranged with a single vertical step, the water basins are tiered horizontally so that the water gushes down in a cascade. All three basins are eventually encompassed by two additional pools. The form of these pools is remarkable as well, as they add a distinct dynamic to the otherwise strictly axial-symmetric building and constitute a subtle transition or expansion into urban space.

Taking a frontal look at the fountain, the main impression is one of plunging masses of water softly burbling and finally subsiding – generated due to the astonishing discrepancy of height between the three high, narrow basins and the wide pools at ground level. The wave-like guiding of the fountain's architecture to the lawn area of the square is, however, best seen from the viewing platform: The seemingly massive architecture presents itself as a dynamic spatial relation in an alternation of different radiuses and heights. This spatial relation is ordered harmonically and at the same time seems to be organically interwoven with its environs. Looking from above, an expansion into the square is occurring via the various semi-circles of the pool, of the slightly raised ground and of a notching in the lawn area. This expansion (with its rhythmic arrangement and its opening towards the square) may evoke associations of a stage. (Fig.3) From our



Fig. 3 – *Alameda Dom Afonso Henriques*, airview, copyright Google GeoEye (2012).

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Fig. 4 – *Fonte Luminosa*, allegory of Abundantia/scenes from work (detail), glazed ceramics, Jorge Barradas, 1948, copyright Jakob Hartmann (2010).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. [www.monumentos.pt](http://www.monumentos.pt) (see note 13). The ceramics form an additional, complex visual program. It has to be emphasized that representations of women in nature and male craftsmen and farmers at work are tellingly juxtaposed. Technology/industrialization and ›nature‹ – as the two poles on the *Alameda: IST* and *Fonte Luminosa* – are interrelated and a feminized nature almost seems to be the reward for the work of the male craftsmen. In a landscape that is probably to be read as ideal-typical of Portugal's regions, we find, among others, ploughing and sowing farmers, farm-women harvesting hay and grapes, women picking oranges or feeding a child in a garden, laundry women, fishermen, smiths, potters and glass-blowers and also hints to a factory and a few port sheds. Also, the figuration of the city of Lisbon is grouped with the rural scenery on the right, while Abundantia is on the left side, together with the representations of the city with crafts and industry.



raised position on the viewing platform – only here both the square and the fountain basin offer themselves completely to the sublime perspective – we can comprehend the subsiding of the waters, their plunging, expanding, swelling, ebbing and ‘seeping away’ in a wave-like motion. The relations between the elements water, stone and earth are being translated into the sensuality of an interplay of shapes.

## The iconographic program – corporality in the service of corporatism?

This sort of interpretation is also supported by the iconography of the figural furnishings and the dedication of the fountain, which – according to the plaques – is rendering homage to the waters of the Tejo entering the city. The vertical glazed ceramic friezes above the plaques are to be understood in this way as well: A bas-relief features working figures, engaged in typical activities of the countryside and of the city. They are connected by a meandering river and thus introduced as the unity of city and countryside, the cohesion of society through nature and technology. Two other central figurations are presented larger-than-life: Abundantia with a cornucopia and the city of Lisbon, which are, however, partly damaged.<sup>15</sup> (Fig.4) In the curvature of the three big basket-shaped pools – here, too, associations of agriculture, harvest or even femininity may come to mind – are 13 life-sized sculptures of naked women who seem to pour more water from shells and jugs shouldered or carried on their heads. The position of the arms above their heads is offering their bodies completely to the eyes of the observer, and when the fountain is running, they seem veiled and unveiled at the same time behind the curtains of the cascades. Thus, they are left to our imagination and visual appropriation as projection surfaces and objects of desire.<sup>16</sup>

This is even more evident with respect to the four kneeling nymphs in the flat basin at the front. The figures portray Tágides, water goddesses of the Tejo, from whom Luís de Camões expected poetic inspiration in the first canto of *Os Lusíadas* (1572), his national epic about the Portuguese voyages of discovery. In the Tágides' midst rises the statue of a rider, a young, muscular hero in the pose of the taming conqueror, the personification of the Tejo who keeps the rearing horse (or is it dashing out of the water?) under control with his right hand while guiding a Portuguese caravel over the water with his left. (Fig. 5) The pose and the caravel as a traditional symbol of Portuguese naval and colonial dominion directly address the glorious past and – within the overall framework – are used as aesthetical actualisation, an idealization and mythical confirmation of the (then still existing) colonial empire.<sup>17</sup> A link between the architectural site and Camões' *Os Lusíadas* as the quintessential national epic is conceivable. In this essay, it can merely be pointed out that



the landscaped layout of the *Alameda*, especially the monumental fountain with the half-naked figures of the Tágides, can well be interpreted as an architectural update of the epic that is so important to Portugal's imperial identity and of the myth of the *Ilha dos Amores* that is described in it. In Camões' epical narration, the Portuguese seamen under Vasco da Gama are being received by beautiful nymphs on a fabled island as a reward for their heroic courage in discovering India. The ninth canto of the *Lusíadas* describes the landscape where the sexual union with the nymphs awaits the seamen and the future of the Portuguese voyages of discovery is prophesied to Vasco da Gama. Verse 54 and 55 say of the island: „Três fermosos outeiros se mostravam, / [...] Que de gramíneo esmalte se adornavam, / Na fermosa Ilha, alegre e deleitosa. / Claras fontes e límpidas manavam / Do cume, que a verdura tem viçosa; [...] // Num vale ameno, que os outeiros fende, / Vinham as claras águas ajuntar-se, / Onde ãa mesa fazem, que se estende / [...] Arvoredo gentil sobre ela pende [...]” (Camões 1972, 236) The enticing prospect of similar paradises and amorous adventures is meant as encouragement to follow the glorious example of Vasco da Gama. In the end, Camões urges the king to new heroism: „E fareis claro o Rei, que tanto amais, / [...] Vos farão, como os vossos já passados: [...] Que quem quis sempre pôde; e numerados / Sereis entre os Heróis esclarecidos / E nesta 'ilha de Vênus' recebidos.” (Camões 1972, 246)

The architectural ensemble of the *Alameda* could thus serve as a direct request to imitate and internalise Portugal's imperial past – also in relation with the many other monuments for the voyages of discovery in the Portuguese capital (for example the Fernão de Magalhães memorial close by). At the same time, the myth of the conquests appears to be transferred to the current needs of modernization and corporative unification of the country, for example by representing the intended harmony of rural and urban workers, of technology and 'nature' on the fountain's ceramics. The fountain praises the technological harnessing of water as a new colonization, as renewal of the nation.<sup>18</sup>

Hence, the prospective engineers of the *IST* are every day confronted with the image of a nation that is (forcibly) unified in a corporative order, a nation in which, apparently, technological progress and popular patriotism work together productively. Against the backdrop of the *Alameda* as architectural illustration of the „ilha de Vênus”, the expectation of the students' own rationalistic contribution to the country's modernization seems to be a promise of quasi-orgiastic union with the forces of nature and myth.

The Tágides' secondary sexual characteristics are orientated towards the observer. The Tágides offer their bodies to the observer sitting or standing at the fountain's edge and are separated from him (or her) only by the shallow waters or the barely one meter high enclosing wall. Only from the thighs down are the nymphs covered by scales, thus clearly showing their hairless pubic area. They sit on square pedestals let into hollows with round-edged encompassing walls which again serve as a sort of pedestal and emphasis, but also as additional boundary and disconnection. (Fig. 6) A complex visual play of presentation and withdrawal, of promise and dis-



Fig. 5 – *Fonte Luminosa*, equestrian statue/ allegory of Tejo, limestone, Diogo de Macedo, 1948, copyright Jakob Hartmann (2010).

<sup>16</sup> In such ways, the paradigm of gaze is exemplified. It is affected by patriarchy and driven by desire – a premise constitutive also for the present interpretation. Cf. e.g. Silverman 1996 and Bryson 1983.

<sup>17</sup> For interpretation of the sculptures cf., among others, Acciaiuoli 2005, 35. Yet, the concrete allegoric function of the sculptures is not registered at the fountain itself. Especially the equestrian – with its attribute of the caravel – may just be read as a reference to Portuguese history of discoveries and conquests in general.

<sup>18</sup> The *Fonte Luminosa* can also be understood as the inner city equivalent of the syphon at the Tejo canal, which was rebuilt at the same time. This was used for the city's fresh water supply and furnished with two monumental statues, as well by Maximiano Alves. Cf. Acciaiuoli 2005, 36 and [www.monumentos.pt](http://www.monumentos.pt) (see Footnote 13).



Fig. 6 – *Fonte Luminosa*, equestrian statue and allegories of Tágides, Diogo de Macedo, 1948, copyright Jakob Hartmann (2010).

appointment sets in: The naked nymphs seem – depending on the observer's focus – to be rising out of the water as temptation to lose oneself in the foaming water or as confirmation of the regulative, aesthetic gaze and architectural frame of the engineer-crafted building. Nature in the service of corporatist society is alluring with its sculpted forms and controlled elements and is thus offering itself to risk-free contemplation. The 'solemn' architecture of the fountain, its skilful, wildly gushing water art: confirmation of the technological-rationalist power interplaying with the mythically idealized powers of nature.

The sweeping view over the whole square and the view onto the fountain from afar allow for the visual penetration of the space without relevant obstacles; and the view from above shows the tiered embedding of the arrangement. The fountain is set in front of the hill and towered over by the trees on it, so that the water can be imagined as streaming directly out of a mountain. (Fig. 7) However, the fountain's architecture has a clear frame and consequently offers the possibility of visually captivating the 'forces of nature'. The wide flights of stairs leading to the viewing platform additionally open the apparently wild 'spring' up spatially. In one continuous motion, the citizen ascends the stairs along the square and, below the crowning idyllic grove, meets a rectangular, flat basin of water let into the platform. Water softly bubbles from fish heads fixed to the sides into the basin. The rambler is separated by open colonnades with stone benches and a wall from the hilltop behind the viewing platform. Above this, again a sort of 'throne' rises in the middle with a parapet at its front. (Fig. 8) This raised bench, accessible by two curved flights of stairs, is separated from the hill (and from the soil at its back) by a high stone backrest decorated with painted tiles and volutedly curved. This particularly prominent seat thus appears to be let into the 'natural space' while at the same time being disconnected from it.



Fig. 7 – *Fonte Luminosa*, view from the *Instituto Superior Técnico*, copyright Jakob Hartmann (2011).



Fig. 8 – *Fonte Luminosa*, Miradouro, copyright Jakob Hartmann (2010).

The place therefore derives its effect and status from the topography, from ‘nature’ or the earth behind and beneath it; but by the rationality and harmony of its architectural order it also literally makes them its ‘subjects’. At this point already, the question arises if and to what extent not only the figural allegorical furnishings of the fountain and the bas-reliefs, but also the architectural and landscape composition in general serve the staging and conveyance of a national ideal of order and work. If the mythical figures of the Tágides and the hero in the fountain’s basin are to transfer the glorious past into the present, is the activation of the square’s users as moving, interacting subjects in the architectural order perhaps meant to suggest to them an elitist view?<sup>19</sup>

Viewing platform, colonnades and central bench, however, allow for a distanced view over the whole *Alameda* and simultaneously offer personal, almost intimate seclusion, shielded from the gazes of passers-by on the square below. Those who have climbed the wide flights of stairs to the platform and further up belong to a special, elevated and detached class.

In absorbing and walking the site, the city residents fulfill the active role Michel de Certeau ascribes to them concerning the way meaning is determined in urban space: „First, if it is true that a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities [...] and interdictions [...], then the walker actualises some of these possibilities. In that way, he makes them exist as well as emerge.” (De Certeau 2011, 98)

Consequently, the prospective engineers of the *IST*, strolling about the *Alameda* and admiring the female allegories of nature, the city and abundance of the fountain, can see their stroll as a confirmation of their masculine drive in the service of the industrialisation and modernisation of the country. The male ideal of the efficient engineer, believing in progress as the architect of the nation is being advertised and strengthened by the tempting prospect of the Tejo nymphs and the nurturing women on the

<sup>19</sup> The social structure of the surrounding residential areas should briefly be pointed out in this context. They were also only urbanised during the 1930s and 40s and were generally reserved for a bourgeois or middle-class population. See also França 1989, Lôbo 1995.

<sup>20</sup> In this sense, the Alameda would give us a propagandistic image of the healthy and agile *Volkskörper* (racial corpus) in the form of the fountain's allegorical figures.

ceramics. At the same time, the idealizing representations of work along the Tejo remind the *New Man* of the 'Estado Novo' of the values of patriotism and tradition.

## (Landscape) Architecture between biopolitics and disciplinary regime

After having seen which directions of gaze and motion the *Alameda* might privilege and which levels of meaning it may thus open, the question is to ask to what extent the layout of the square can be interpreted as implementation of a certain form of government. The works of Michel Foucault offer some suggestions.

In his lecture on biopolitics, Foucault points out the mutual permeation of different power techniques in modern societies. He describes the disciplinary techniques aiming at the individual body that enable the orientation and surveillance of bodies and thus define the field of visibility. (Foucault 1997, 215) On the other hand, the image of the city's 'green lung', referring to parks and green areas, or 'veins and arteries', referring to streets and avenues, can hence be recognised as an expression of the regulatory techniques of biopolitics. In Foucault's terms, the *Alameda Dom Afonso Henriques* could be described as a built interconnection of two techniques of power permeating one another – the element of urbanistic campaigns by the Salazarist regime and the architectural expression of an ideology of societal control. In its function as architectural-spatial structuring and hierarchization of urban space, the square directly affects individual bodies, arranges the „distribution spatiale des corps individuels [...] et l'organisation, autour de ces corps individuels, de tout un champ de visibilité.“ (Foucault 1997, 215) Against the backdrop of a policy of 'modernisation', of public hygiene and of urban beautification, the square can be interpreted as an element of biopolitical power techniques of controlling and regulating life in itself.<sup>20</sup> Irene Nierhaus uses the term „landscapeness“ and argues along similar lines, describing „landscapeness“ as giving the impression, through motivic quotations and evocations, of a landscape „that ultimately appear[s] unplanned or 'naturally' developing.“ (Nierhaus 2011, 30) „Greenery [...] was now envisioned as spreading and merging to become a shared ground within a society coordinated in terms of social 'naturalness'.“ (Nierhaus 2011, 32)

These reflections on the naturalisation of urban space can be transferred onto the *Alameda* as a designed site. What is particular about landscape is that it usually appears to us as a supposedly *pre*-social, 'natural' entity. It does not seem to represent anything in itself – which is exactly why, according to Irene Nierhaus, it is especially suited to represent the pre-social. (Nierhaus 2010, 34) Thus, social order is being naturalised and, as such, made legitimate.

At this point, Acciaiuoli's thoughts on Salazarist propaganda may again prove useful. She sketches the regime's cultural politics as a suggestion of modernity and

progress through aestheticisation of the country. Like the *Alameda*, this campaign can in some ways also be read as biopolitics in the sense of Foucault. Acciaiuoli's description of the essence of the 'Campanha do Bom Gosto' as imposing outward harmony on the country and its people may remind us of the *Alameda* (designed before the campaign!) with its staging of the unity of science and technology, work, heroism and nature. To Margarida Acciaiuoli, campaigns like that lead to the creation of a space where art and power become indistinguishable and, consequently, any direct insight is blocked. (Acciaiuoli 2008, 22)

The consequences are far reaching: The author notes that during the 'Campanha do Bom Gosto' an amalgamation of the discourse of modernisation and aestheticisation took place. Not least because of that, according to Acciaiuoli, the latter would often seem to us as the core of a renewal movement which again is supposedly outside of the actual ideological and political determinants. The author of this essay unconditionally agrees with Acciaiuoli's subsequent admonition to critically reflect current visual politics of a similar kind.<sup>21</sup> ●

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. In regard to present urbanistic programs in Lisbon one might think e.g. of the establishing of a „Percurso Turístico-Cultural“ and the transformation of great parts of the Mouraria to an ›open air museum‹ including a „Sítio do Fado“. Cf. [www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt](http://www.aimouraria.cm-lisboa.pt).

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