

Crop



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Crop

Apresentação

*But a crop is a crop,
and who is to say where
The harvest shall stop?*

ROBERT FROST

Crop é um primeiro passo para, de forma mais sistemática, tornar conhecidos da comunidade intelectual aspectos da produção docente e principalmente discente do programa de Língua Inglesa e Literaturas Inglesa e Norte-Americana — LILINA — do Depto. de Letras Modernas da FFLCH-USP.

Fundada em 1971, a área de LILINA tem como propostas centrais a pesquisa e a formação de mestres e doutores em suas três subáreas de atuação: literaturas de língua inglesa, lingüística e, mais recentemente, tradução. Pioneiro, no Brasil, em estudos da linguagem e das literaturas dos países de língua inglesa, o programa tem ex-alunos atuando em várias partes do país. Nesse aspecto, **Crop** vem retomar um diálogo acadêmico que esperamos ter continuidade através de colaborações de todos os que participaram e participam do programa.

A área de LILINA agrupa hoje suas pesquisas individuais em um projeto comum: o estudo da teoria e das expressões da cultura de países de língua inglesa. De acordo com as especialidades dos docentes envolvidos, esse campo se subdivide em:

I. Literaturas nacionais

1. *Britânica*
 - a) Ficção e história da narrativa (séculos XVIII a XX)
 - b) Teatro contemporâneo
2. *Norte-Americana*
 - a) Narrativa americana (séculos XIX e XX)
 - b) Poesia americana contemporânea
3. *Anglo-Irlandesa*
 - a) Ficção contemporânea
 - b) Teatro do século XX
4. *Canadense*
 - a) Poesia contemporânea
5. *Pós-colonial*
 - a) Ficção

II. Teorias críticas

1. *Viagens teóricas*
2. *Shakespeare — tendências críticas*
3. *Teorias da tradução*
4. *Teorias da poesia*
5. *Discurso pós-colonial*
6. *A mulher na literatura*

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III. Contatos literários

1. *Percursos literários Inglaterra-Brasil*
2. *A tradução de ficção e poesia em inglês no Brasil*

IV. Comunicação transcultural

1. *Atos da fala em contraste*
2. *Bilingüismo*
3. *A tradução de elementos culturais*
4. *Idiomaticidade e convencionalidade*
5. *Etnografia da sala de aula*
6. *Leitura*

Para esta primeira "colheita" selecionamos trabalhos, inéditos no Brasil, de docentes e alguns exemplos da produção discente que pudessem ilustrar os projetos em andamento. A leitura dos artigos acaba por explicitar uma linha que percorre as diferentes produções. Esta é expressão concreta de uma maneira de trabalhar as questões da cultura em língua inglesa e traça a medida da unidade na diversidade. Nesse aspecto, **Crop** pretende configurar uma contribuição do programa de LILINA da Universidade de São Paulo para o debate das questões da cultura de expressão inglesa.

O projeto editorial aspira à continuidade da publicação e está aberto a contribuições e comentários, que devem ser dirigidos à Coordenação da Pós-Graduação em Língua e Literaturas Inglesa e Norte-Americana, Departamento de Letras Modernas, Av. Luciano Gualberto, 403, São Paulo, SP, CEP 05508-900.

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*MARIA ELISA CEVASCO
pela Comissão Editorial*

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Literatures in English
Literaturas em Inglês

Drama
Drama

*The distorting mirror and
the concealing mirror
in Brian Friel's
The Mundy Scheme
and
Dancing at Lughnasa*

MUNIRA HAMUD MUTRAN

There are many ways of looking at reality and transforming it into art. One of them is to depict reality as if through a distorting mirror — as in satire. *The Mundy Scheme* (1969), by Brian Friel, has in its title a clue to its pedigree: the word “scheme” is replaced many times in the play by “proposal”, certainly a reference to a more famous, although modest, proposal. Another clue to the play’s satirical purpose is its ironic subtitle, “Or may we write your epitaph now, Mr. Emmet?”, an allusion to Robert Emmet’s serious “When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then, let my epitaph be written.”¹

The Mundy Scheme has been called “a rather crude political satire”² or “cynical satire.”³ The Voice we hear in the Prelude to Act I ironically summarizes seven hundred years of Irish History and echoes the subtitle’s question; in this way the mood for a satire is set. What happened to Ireland, the Voice asks, after the Irish “realized that they had better put their green isle in order if they hoped to create the nation that the idealists of 1916 would be proud of?”⁴

The key-word in Act I is “mess:” an ironic answer to this “in order.” The Prime Minister’s desk is a mess; his drawing-room has been converted into his office because of his bouts of labyrinthitis, an obvious reference to a confusing state. The country is a mess: its economy, its justice, its commerce, its foreign policy and its culture. As complaints come from all corners, Ryan, the Prime Minister, tries to find the Minister of Justice, “who has gone into hiding,” or the Minister of External Affairs, who “is in some squalid native ale house.” In the meantime, Ryan’s mother keeps coming and going, and she insists on evicting the receptionist and the secretary, calling them “tinkers.” Ryan has a seizure but his drops cannot be found in the mess on the desk. Meanwhile, the secretary speaks without stopping, uttering insignificant and extremely important statements in

The feelings of disgust for the politicians are the main object of attack of Friel’s satire

the same breath. Everybody, when they do manage to meet, shouts at once. In this chaotic farcical scene, typical of satire, characters are depicted as unbalanced, vulgar, cynical and corrupt. Disorder is most apparent in Irish Economy. Boyle, the Minister for Finance, “would like to be Minister of Culture if such a post existed.” His “Fourth Economic Programme” has ruined Irish economy beyond repair. It depends on the English, the Americans, the Japanese and the Swiss, who own everything in the country. The disorder in economy generates all kinds of troubles leading the country to “spiritual and

economic depression.” The solution? “The Mundy Scheme,” which, in short, will turn the lovely west of Ireland into an international cemetery.

The key-word for Act II is “sell.” The proposal has to be sold to the Ministers, who will in their turn sell it to the Cabinet, to the Church, to the Gaelic League, and to all the Irish people. Selling is linked with Ryan’s former profession of auctioneer; he now proposes to auction the country — “to the highest bidder.” Act II describes these politicians at their dirty work. Moloney, Minister of External Affairs, sells the proposal by using usual methods of flattery, threats and bribery. His long speech is an example of how words can distort meaning.

What would my good father have said if someone had come to him with a simple proposal like this? (...) I will fence these worthless fields and drain them. I will construct broad, sweeping roads alongside those worthless fields. I will bring visitors, tourists by the hundred, along those broad, sweeping roads, and your little remote holding will no longer be isolated, alone, lonely on the rim of Western Europe but will be right in the mainstream of world commerce, world thought, world Action. Mr. Moloney, is that what you want? A place in the open society, dignity and prosperity for yourself, your neighbors, your country?⁵

The advantages these politicians will have with the Scheme are obvious, and excitement follows doubt or hesitation. Practical questions spring up: “How do — these — remains come?”, “When do they want to start?”, “Payments in dollar or sterling?”, “Why didn’t you get England roped, too?” In Act II, the irony or farce of Act I give way to the grotesque, and most of all, the absurd. With half the Cabinet missing, these “boys”, who cheerfully discuss the destiny of the country during the whole night, look like rats, or foxes, or chameleons; their only concern is the profit they may receive from the proposal. At four-thirty, just before ending the meeting, they are interrupted by an old lady in her dressing-gown and slippers, who asks her son, the Prime Minister, to taste the marmalade she has made for him.

Act II is important because it intensifies the feelings of disgust for the politicians, the main object of attack of Friel's satire. It is significant to notice that their caricatures are mainly achieved through their use of language almost devoid of meaning, but a powerful weapon for their purposes. Ryan's way of speaking is the best example. He can pretend to be charming, simple, honest, surprised, furious, innocent. To justify the proposal, he uses words associated with the spiritual such as "sanctuary," "big church," or "holy ground."

***Verbal language can be replaced
by a blush, a stare, a wink, a
grimace, a kiss, a shout,
a laughing, a whisper***

What kind of story have we had so far? As we know, neither plot nor character is emphasized in satire. Nothing much happens in Act III: Ryan rids himself of his "boys" in order to gain all the profit and powers; and the Mundy Scheme is inaugurated. The reader or audience is left with unforgettable images: planers arriving from New York and Paris, "the freight unloaded into a fleet of waiting funeral cars which were decked with flowers and flags of the participant nations;"⁶ the procession driving slowly through the streets of Dublin, going to the international cemetery in the west of Ireland; the burials being conducted in batches and "those fine young Mayo lads standing to attention with their shovels, waiting to fill in the graves."⁷

As Ronald Paulson writes, "at the centre of almost every satire there is an image which, if effective, the reader cannot easily forget."⁸ *The Mundy Scheme* has certainly this central image, maybe a metaphor for a "national death:" the west of Ireland, where the roots of language and Celtic civilization have persisted longer than in other parts of the country, and which has been the inspiration for great Irish writers, is to become a cemetery.

In Friel's attack on politics, the grotesque and absurd predominate over humour or wit, thus placing his satire more in the Juvenalian rather than the Ho-

ratian tradition. His disgust and pessimism do not suggest changing or mending, and, least of all, rebuilding. His caricatures are wicked and they will always be like that.

If in *The Mundy Scheme* reality is seen as through a distorting mirror, in *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) our first impression is that it is a play in the realistic tradition with emphasis on the "lifelikeness" of situations as reflected in a normal mirror.

Five sisters, in a small village in Donegal, try to survive in very lean circumstances, and to relate to each other and to the outside world; the arrival of their brother, a priest from Africa, after having worked twenty-five years in a leper colony, complicates the picture. Their story is introduced by a young man, son of one of the women, who stands back and remembers one summer in early August in 1936, when he was seven. The narrator's main role is to make the scenes he describes more poignant by letting us know in advance what happened to those people in the end.

The lifelike impression is not all. The mirror's surface shows an imitation of everyday life, but at the same time it conceals other meanings. On one hand, these women perform all their daily tasks: bake soda bread, make tea, wash, iron, sweep, make a mash for hens, knitt gloves, cut grass, bring a basket of turf into the kitchen. There is no end to their domestic chores. Gradually one is aware that the central concern of the play is language and its devaluation, a concern which has been detected in Friel's previous work as in *Philadelphia or Translations*, and in much contemporary literature and criticism. Language, in the words of Susan Sontag, "is the most impure, the most contaminated, the most exhausted of all the materials out of which art is made."⁹ For her, "silence remains, inescapably, a form of speech (in many instances of complaint or indictment) and an element in a dialogue." For Sontag "as the prestige of language falls, that of silence rises."¹⁰

In the sister's dialogues, language — instead of conveying truth, feelings, and ideas — distorts, lies, builds illusions, hurts. Silence becomes a very important element in their conversation. As a matter of

fact, innumerable stage directions fill the text with "Silence," "Pause."

This produced a very impressive effect in the performance. Pauses in this play show a desire to contradict or to convey that there is more, much more to say. After them, there is usually a change of subject, or a refusal to answer questions, or a plain "shut up" or "shhh," or a relapse into dance or song, generally in a parodic way. At the same time that Friel insists on the devaluation of language, he points to many other means of expression. Verbal language can be replaced by a blush, a stare, a wink, a grimace, a kiss, a shout, a laughing, a whisper. Although Kate hurts her sisters with hard words, and criticizes Chris for having a son "out of wedlock," whenever she sees the boy "her face lights up with pleasure," and she kisses the crown of his head.

***Adam spoke a language different
from all known languages. It
was a "sensual speak"***

Discrepancy between what they say and do is quite obvious. By showing different means of expression other than verbal language, Friel touches upon another interesting idea: that primitive man, perhaps not contaminated by civilization, is more capable of expressing fear, pleasure, and other emotions through gestual language. The priest brother who lived in Africa provides the necessary parallelism. Ballybeg, Donegal, Ireland, has much in common with Ryanga, Uganda, Africa. In 1936, Ballybeg still shows traces of primitive festivities, rituals, and superstitions. Rose, one of the sisters, wears a charm and a miraculous medal pinned side by side on her jumper; Gerry, the boy's father, believes that a cow with only one horn, and a single magpie, are good and bad omens; and references to the Festival of Lughnasa, which has many resemblances to the harvest festivities in Uganda, show that, although layers of civilization and religion have dulled the primitive characteristics in Ballybeg, they are all there. Friel's view is that these apparently dif-

ferent communities are much more similar than Kate, the pious schoolteacher, would like to allow. Their brother is, nevertheless, a personification of the process of relapsing into the primitive. Strangely enough, whenever he talks about Africa, he uses the present tense as if he were still living there:

Kate: All gathered together for Mass?

Jack: Maybe. Or maybe to offer sacrifice for Obi, our Great Goddess of the Earth, so that the crops will flourish. Or maybe to get in touch with our departed fathers for their advice and wisdom (...) I complain to Okawa that our calendar of ceremonies gets fuller every year.¹¹

Parallel to Jack's forgetting his Christian faith, is a process of forgetting his English language; when he arrives, he has no trace of Irish accent and keeps asking questions about the vocabulary which has been lost. It is significant, though, that he slowly recovers his English words but never says Mass again.

Dancing at Lughnasa shows that silence, gesture, music, and dance can communicate more effectively than words. I suppose that this has much to do with the idea of "sensual speech" mentioned in Susan Sontag's "Aesthetics of Silence," from which I have already quoted. The idea is so interesting, and also so beautiful, that it is worth mentioning:

According to Boehme, Adam spoke a language different from all known languages. It was "sensual speech," the unmediated expressive instrument of the senses, proper to beings integrally part of sensuous nature — that is still employed by all animals except that sick animal, man. This, which Boehme calls the only "natural language," the sole language free from distortion and illusion, is what man will speak again when he recovers paradise.¹²

In the play of the five sisters, their dance is something very close to this "sensual speech." It includes gestures, shouting, pounding, wheeling round, holding hands, and embracing. For Gerry and Chris dance means more than a thousand words:

Chris — Gerry —
Gerry — Don't talk
Chris — What are you at?
Gerry — Not a word.
Chris — Oh, God, Gerry —
Gerry — shhh

.....
Chris — Don't talk any more; no more words. Just dance
me down the lane and then you'll leave.¹³

What we have been able to say about *Dancing at Lughnasa* so far (it offers various possibilities of interpretation and an anthropological approach would be very interesting), it shows that for Friel, among other contemporary writers,

art itself becomes a kind of counterviolence, seeking to loosen the grip upon consciousness of the habits of lifeless, static verbalization, presenting models of "sensual speech" in which order is subverted.¹⁴

Richard Pine termed *Dancing at Lughnasa* a "memory play" which is "both itself and its own echo."¹⁵ Yes, the play deals with the past in a very complex way: the young man remembers the scenes as if in a mirror in which the incidents are blurred by the passing of time; we see the scenes through memories; the people

Two different ways of representing life in literature

remembered also have memories of their youth and childhood, and also keep memories of the "immemorial past" lying in the unconscious. Michael himself perceives that there is "a widening breach between what seemed to be and what was."¹⁶

While Pine calls *Dancing at Lughnasa* "a memory play," he also notes that Friel "questions that element which precedes and occupies the space beyond language: silence. In this dance play dance is wedded to nostalgia."¹⁷

The two plays I have discussed are illustrations of two different methods of representing life in literature.

The aim in *The Mundy Scheme* is to attack wicked politicians; by showing them completely evil and corrupt, truth is evaded and distorted. As Alvin P. Kernan points out:

The satirist sees the world as a battlefield between a definite, clearly understood good, which he represents, and an equally clear-cut evil. No ambiguities, no doubts about himself, no sense of mystery trouble him, and he retains always his monolithic certainty (...) But in no art form is the complexity of human experience so obviously *scanted* as in satire. The satirist is out to persuade us that vice is both ugly and rampant, and in order to do so he deliberately distorts, excludes and slants.¹⁸

From the 1969 play to the 1990 play Friel moved towards universality and contemporary appeal. From the artistic point of view, the distorting mirror is not as complete a means of portraying life as the hazy surface of a mirror behind which much more can be found. What Friel is showing in *Dancing at Lughnasa* is that human beings, unable to use verbal language, which has become a source of misunderstanding, will be happy when gestural or other forms of communication such as "sensual speech" take place. The priest was very happy in Africa among the lepers, and the young man's mother, after dancing silently with his father, changed. When he left, "there was no sobbing, no lamenting, no collapse into a depression:"

And this time it was a dance without music; just there, in ritual circles round and round that square and then down the lane and back up again, slowly, formally, with easy deliberation. My mother with her head thrown back, her eyes closed, her mouth slightly open (...) no singing, no melody, no words. Only the swish and whisper of their feet across the grass.¹⁹

Michael, again, voices Friel's view at the end. The memories of the music of the thirties "that seems to be both itself and its echo" bring back the scene just described. He tries to understand it:

Dancing as if language had surrendered to movement — as if ritual, this wordless ceremony, was now the way to speak, to whisper private and sacred things, to be in touch with some otherness. Dancing as if the very heart of life and all its hopes might be found in those assuaging notes and those hushed rhythms and in those silent and

hypnotic movements. Dancing as if language no longer existed because words were no longer necessary...²⁰

Dancing at Lughnasa is, then, more than anything else, about finding a way to be in touch with some otherness.

NOTES

¹DANTANUS, Ulf. *Brian Friel. The Growth of an Irish Dramatist*. Göteborg, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1985, p. 221.

²Id., *ibid.*, p. 221.

³DEANE, Seamus. Introduction. *Brian Friel's Selected Plays*. London, Faber and Faber, 1984, p. 15.

⁴FRIEL, Brian. *Crystal and Fox and The Mundy Scheme*. New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1970, p. 158.

⁵Id., *ibid.*, p. 224-5.

⁶Id., *ibid.*, p. 303.

⁷Id., *ibid.*, p. 296.

⁸PAULSON, Ronald. The Fiction of Satire. In: — (ed.). *Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1971, p. 340.

⁹SONTAG, Susan. The Aesthetics of Silence. *Styles of Radical Will*. New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1966, p. 1.

¹⁰Id., *ibid.*, p. 14.

¹¹FRIEL, Brian. *Dancing at Lughnasa*. London, Faber and Faber, 1990, p. 47.

¹²SONTAG, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹³FRIEL, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁴SONTAG, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹⁵PINE, Richard. *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Brian Friel's New Play. Theatre Ireland, Spring, 1990, p. 7.

¹⁶FRIEL, K. *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁷PINE, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁸KERNAN, Alvin P. Theory of Satire. In: PAULSON, Ronald (ed.). *Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1971, p. 263 and 265.

¹⁹FRIEL, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *cit.*, p. 42.

²⁰Id., *ibid.*, p. 71.

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Drama
Drama

King Lear and materialist feminist criticism

MARLUCE OLIVEIRA RAPOSO DANTAS

Valerie Wayne in the introduction to *The Matter of Difference* asserts that the word difference, “an abstraction used to denote women’s marginality, our marked space apart from the (male) generic and universal, is worthy of being made by historians and literary critics into matter in several senses: as a subject with importance, as a textual presence and as a reading practice.”¹

Wayne is concerned with the production of history as an activity that is not apolitical; for her, it is impossible to deny the relevance of “our gender, race or class in the histories that we construct.” She complains that “many earlier versions of history, literature and myth have obscured women from active or positive roles in shaping the past.”

Wayne’s views seem to be an echo of Kate Millet’s ideas on images of women in male literature:

Many scholars attribute the beginning of this type of textual discovery to Millet’s influential book *Sexual Politics* (1970), which illustrated a way to recognize and interpret the images of women in male literature as misogynistic. *Sexual Politics* offered a way to read against texts by becoming aware of their gendered bias and to foreground the notion that art is not distinct from politics.²

In analysing the traditional historical tales of mankind, such as those of the mythic life of Arthur and romances associated with the knights of the Round Table, the historical Charlemagne as defender and leader of the Christian world and legends about Alexander the Great, Wayne asserts that “versions of history such as these make certain kinds of persons and events matter.”

I believe Wayne’s position has some correspondence with Walter Benjamin’s method of criticism. Benjamin³ reminds us of the necessity of telling the untold history of the defeated. Therefore, the winner’s history ignores as immaterial, or demonises as alien other persons, places, occurrences, women included.

Walter Benjamin links Marx’ economic-political criticism and Freud’s criticism of civilization to the influence of Jewish culture. For him *origin* and not *future* should be the aim.

History angel’s task (the historian’s task) should be to turn his/her back on the future, to contemplate ruins⁴ painfully and try to stop historical time in order to gather those ruins — that would redeem humankind.

Benjamin proposes a shock against empathy; historians generally maintain empathy with winners, for those who win always write history according to their own view and personal angle. The version with which historians empathize is usually expressed through epics. For feminist criticism this concept is extremely helpful, as Benjamin believes empathy brings intimacy between the observer’s view (the historian) and the legacy of domination (the conquered).

In order to point out the relevance of materialist feminist criticism, Wayne states:

difference, offered as an alternative to those other histories, should matter, because events associated with women and otherwise oppressed persons, also deserve to be realized as textual social practices.⁵

By searching for ways of relating to material conditions of life in the past, materialist feminists see those conditions as configured by gender as well as race, class, erotic practice to literary and critical texts. Aspects such as historical moments, geographical locations, erotic reactions we recognize or repress have implications for the ways we reproduce the past in the present, Wayne says.

Concerning Shakespeare's play *King Lear* and feminist criticism, critics have asked different questions. Ann Thompson raises three points, which make us aware of the importance of issues of gender and power in the analysis of the play: (1) Are there any women in *King Lear*? (2) Have women been erased? (3) Can women be restored?⁶

Earlier authors have always focused on male power relationship, class and property. Issues of gender are omitted

In asking whether women have been erased in *King Lear*, Thompson provokes an interesting debate on the role of feminist criticism and Shakespeare's works. She reinforces the idea that the debate has done much to stimulate interest in the play's representation of sexuality, courtship and marriage, leading to stimulating rereadings and revaluations of the comedies and romances.

No doubt criticism of Shakespeare is essentially concerned with his representation of economic, social and erotic elements in Renaissance society; issues such as women's condition, legal rights, motherhood, marriage and patriarchy are closely intertwined in the feminist discourse.

Cultural historicism as suggested by Thompson is not concerned with issues of gender, but focuses on politics and male-power relationship, tending to reinforce the traditional preeminence of the tragedies and to offer rereading of the histories.

Cohen states that plays like *Othello* and *Anthony and Cleopatra* are the privileged tragedies for American feminist critics, while *King Lear* occupies a similar position for traditional Marxist critics. Thompson however strongly disagrees with that idea, in a sense that it seems impossible for gender-conscious critics to neglect issues of class and economics and vice-versa.

In the history of criticism on *King Lear*, earlier authors have always focused on male power relationship, class and property. According to Thompson, writers are more interested in the role of Edmund and class tensions, though they also represent generational conflict in the father-daughter relationship.⁷ It is quite clear, however, that in the traditional criticism of the play there has been more emphasis on divine providence than on issues related to gender and the presence, absence, symbolism or the role of women's images in the play. On the other hand, Dollimore analyses the humanist view in opposition to the Christian alternative.⁸

Thompson observes a tendency in new historicist and in cultural materialist criticism in the 1980's to play down gender issues and denounces not only the absence of women in the play but also the way in which they were marginalized or displaced in criticism.

As to women being erased in literature and criticism I agree with Sue-Ellen Case's view in *Feminism in Theatre*, where she analyses women's presence in the theatre from ancient Greece to modern times. Her discussion of feminist analysis of history and theatre begins with a deconstruction of the classics of the canon; she is concerned with the prejudices and omissions of the traditional theatre.

Case emphasizes that, from a feminist perspective, initial observations about the history of theatre noted the absence of women within the tradition. They are absent not only as authors, but when they are portrayed, they are seen through male eyes and they are not always

given their true dimension. Case discusses women's omission, displacement and marginalization in theatrical tradition. In her deconstruction of the classics of the canon, revision of the masters, analysis of roles, images and participation of women in the history of theatre, as well as the male creation of female parts, she draws a clear image of women in Greek and Elizabethan drama.

Thompson's complaint about women being erased in *King Lear* echoes Case's long discussion of the problem, concerning women in theatrical tradition.

Judith Fetterley in *The Resisting Reader* also showed how to resist reading texts by men as they have been conventionally read. Likewise Case⁹ emphasizes that numerous revisions of Aeschylus and Shakespeare are being published, including two basic types of images: (1) *positive roles*, which depict women as independent, intelligent and even heroic; (2) *misogynistic roles*, commonly identified as the *bitch*, the *witch*, the *vamp* and the *virgin* (the unsexed woman).

Case asserts that in the 1970's, through important studies on women in history, socio-historical evidence afforded by theatrical texts was identified. Documents on laws, social practices and economic restrictions on women in history were published. All that cultural material collated by feminist critics and historians enabled them to produce a new kind of cultural analysis, "based on the interplay of cultural and socio-economic evidence, to discover the nature of women's lives in the classical periods."

*"To excavate the material subtext,
to uncover the hidden mother
in the hero's inner world"*

Following her accusations of displacement and marginalization of the feminine in *King Lear*, Thompson criticizes Tennenhouse and Turner for omitting issues of gender and giving privileges only to questions of power and class. In Thompson's opinion, while Turner's marginalization of Edmund makes him appear potent

and glamorous, his similar treatment of women in the play makes them appear either impotent or evil.¹⁰

Thompson adds that Neely complains that Cordelia virtually disappears from discussion in *King Lear*; here Neely criticizes Greenblat and Dollimore. Though Dollimore generalizes the father-daughter relationship into a master-slave relationship, in his criticism Goneril and Regan are mentioned only once by name. In her listing of accusations on cult-historicists and cultural materialist critics who neglect women's discussion in the play, Thompson also refers to Terence Hawkes, who "similarly focuses on male-centred political issues and has almost nothing to say about Cordelia."

According to her, critics have given more attention to the question of the crime against the aristocratic body, against patriarchy. They seem to forget Cordelia's homage to Lear, when she acknowledges him as father (IV, VII).

Coppélia Kahn, in her essay "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," adopts a psychoanalytical approach, along the line of French feminist critics, such as H. Cixous, and tries "to excavate the maternal subtext, to uncover the hidden mother in the hero's inner world." Thompson asserts that where "cult-historicists erase the women who are present in the text, Kahn seeks out and reinstates the woman who is absent."¹¹

In his despair, after suffering humiliation at Goneril's house, Lear gets to Regan's and after talking to Kent, and telling him about the terrible insults he has undergone, Lear feels a great difficulty to rationalize. As Lear calls "his sorrow hysterical, he decisively characterizes it as feminine."

O! how this mother swells upward toward my heart!
Hysterica passio! Down, thou climbing sorrow!

Kahn explains that by going back to 1900 B.C., when an Egyptian papyrus first described the malady. Fifteen hundred years later Hippocrates named it as the disease of the Hyster, the womb.

Kahn points out the development of the disease and states that, from ancient times through the 19th

century, women suffering from choking, feelings of suffocation, partial paralysis, convulsions similar to those of epilepsy, aphasia, and lethargy were said to be ill of hysteria, caused by a wandering womb. What sent the womb on its errant path, people thought, was either lack of sexual intercourse or retention of menstrual blood.

That critic asserts that in Shakespeare's time, hysteria was also called the *mother...* and like anyone in his culture he would have understood the *mother* in the context of notions about women, hysteria seen as a metaphor of woman in general.

In her discussion of Kahn's article, Thompson states that Lear tries to manipulate his ritual division of the kingdom in such a way that he can hold on to his favorite daughter's love even as he gives her to a husband. Kahn adds that "the renunciation of her as incestuous object awakens a deeper emotional need in Lear: the need for Cordelia as daughter-mother."

Kahn's very incisive article analyses different issues in the long list of restrictions on women: hysteria as a vivid metaphor of woman in general, the Eve figure (temperamentally and morally infirm — skittish, prone to err in all senses); the womb, a metaphor for feelings and needs associated with women, her justification and her glory (the sign and source of the weakness as a creature of the flesh rather than the mind or the spirit for whom the remedy should be a husband and regular sexual intercourse).

In the same article, Kahn and Dianne Hunter return to the Anna O. case to reinforce their thinking. Kahn reminds us that in relocating the cause of hysteria to the head instead of in the womb, Breuer and Freud were able to make sense of it, treat and to an extent cure it. Hunter emphasizes that what Anna O. talked out was her specifically female subjectivity. She expressed through the body language of her paralyzed arm, her squint, and her speech disorders the effects on her as woman of life in a father dominated family and a male-dominated world that suppressed the female voice.

Kahn adds that beneath patriarchal structures (control, force, logic, authority, linearity, misogyny, male

superiority), as in a palimpsest, one can find the maternal subtext. In her reading of *King Lear* she tries to uncover the hidden mother in the hero's inner world. Her interpretation of the play comes out of the feminist re-examination of the mothering role and it is particularly indebted to Nancy Chodorow's analysis, and breaks with Freud's ideas on sexual differentiation.

The symbolism of the *cave* might thus be depicted in Lear's scheme by parceling out his kingdom where a child's image of being mothered can be discerned; his wish to be loved by his daughter as a baby by his mother symbolically goes back to the "cave", *regressus ad uterum*.

Kahn's psychoanalytical study of Lear is very detailed as she also analyses historical Puritan attitudes toward authority and feeling, lordliness, male anxiety, the Elizabethan patriarchal family, the father's power over his wife and children. In her words the 16th century aristocratic family was patrilinear, primogenitural and patriarchal.

*Women are not allowed to speak
their own truth, their own
subjectivity. They are silenced,
they are punished*

Another very interesting point in Kahn's article is the correspondence she establishes between the *king* and *father* figure, as kings are compared to fathers in families, for a king is *parens patriae*, the politic father of his people (Stone). She emphasizes the idea that the state thus had a direct interest in reinforcing patriarchy in the home; heaven and home were both patriarchal. In order to prove her point, Kahn evokes the Pauline admonition:

Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord; for the husband is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the church.

I agree with Thompson in that women seem to have been erased from the text. There is no literal mother in *King Lear*, no Gaia echo, no nurturing mother (instead, in Kahn's thought, Lear in a very childish attitude looks for his daughters' love like a baby for his mother's); the queen is mentioned in the play, only once.

In mythological terms, one might associate Cordelia with the goddess figure of Metis: prudence, wisdom, exact knowledge. Like Metis, first of Zeus' wives, she is also metaphorically swallowed by the male patriarchal figure, Lear. In revealing the cultural renaissance tradition of Elizabethan society, Shakespeare goes back to the Greek (and later Western) custom of giving women in marriage: like Calcioppe who is given to Frixo, Cordelia is (dowerlessly) given to the King of France. Her behavior reminds us of the speaking voice in Emily Dickinson's poem "I died for beauty,"¹² Cordelia dies for truth. As she expresses sincerity of duty and affection, little by little she is erased in the play by the king's repressive authority. Women are not allowed to speak their own truth, their own subjectivity; their discourse is supposed to answer men's wishes, and women's voice will be silenced if it expresses their own true thoughts. Punishment is their reward.

Like Medea's husband Jason, Lear seems to be a fallen hero. The presence and comprehension of the hero's dynamism is utterly relevant for the evolution

Shakespeare uncovers the hidden layers where women had been buried since ancient times

and structuring of humankind. Whenever something new and transforming happens in the personal and collective conscience of human kind, some heroic dynamism has to be activated. Lear fails as a hero in trying to create something new. His method is childish, selfish and weak.

In discussing women in Shakespeare, one can not

forget Euripides' tragedies in his deep focus on women. Like Shakespeare, Euripides is also a revolutionary; he is profoundly interested in the roots of human behavior and in such characters as Medea and Phaedra he provided psychological studies of considerable power. Following Euripidean tradition, Shakespeare realistically dresses his kings in rags (e.g. Lear).

Euripides is a sophist: he is an unbeliever who workshops Ather; rationalism and realism were the strong interest of his generation. He is a child of that intellectual renaissance which made 5th-century Athens a new epoch in the history of humankind, when there was a widespread comprehension of the importance of wisdom and knowledge. That *sophoi* intellectual awakening startled the old-fashioned perspective of Athenian thought. Those thinkers' ideas, their *sophia* affected the whole structure of Greek society and its values were called into question.

Euripides is a pessimist like Sophocles; he discusses everything: myths, customs, love, family... In Greek tragedy, the most powerful images of women are in his texts.

Some feminist authors criticize Euripides by complaining that he often reveals women characters as crazy and angry (e.g. Medea, Phaedra, Clitemnestra). However, one should remember that his depiction of the feminine soul settles women as oppressed by patriarchal ideology and practice.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, can not be judged as a misogynist. His work also reveals a long list of strong women, so he is thus considered a proto-feminist. If he depicts negative feminine characters in *Lear*, we have to remember that he also presents Lear as childish, a selfish dictator who begs for his daughters' love to fulfill his insecurity and, in Kahn's views, wishes for a *regressus ad uterum*; if Shakespeare depicts Gertrude as a frail woman he also reveals Claudius as a villain. Shakespeare is above all concerned with the roots of human nature and, by means of going deep into the Elizabethan cultural scene, he was also able to uncover the hidden layers where women had been buried since ancient times.

NOTES

¹WAYNE, Valerie. *The Matter of Difference. Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. Introduction. New York, Harvest, 1991, p. 1-26.

²CASE, Sue-Ellen. *Feminism and Theatre*. London, Macmillan, 1988. Chapter 1, p. 5

³ROUANET, Sérgio Paulo. *Walter Benjamin*. São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1984, p. 57.

⁴GAGNEBIN, Jeanne Marie. *Os cacos da História*. São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1982, p. 68.

⁵WAYNE, op. cit., p. 9.

⁶THOMPSON, Ann. Are There Any Women in *King Lear*? In: WAYNE, Valerie (ed.). *The Matter of Difference. Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. New York, Harvest, 1991, p. 117-26.

⁷Id., *ibid.*, p. 122.

⁸DOLLIMORE, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy. King Lear, 1605-6 and Essentialist Humanism*. Brighton, Harvest, 1984. Chapter 12.

⁹CASE, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰THOMPSON, op. cit., p. 122.

¹¹KAHN, Coppélia. The Absent Mother in *King Lear*. In: VICKERS, Nancy (ed.). *Rewriting the Renaissance*. London, Harvest, 1992. Chapter 2.

¹²DICKINSON, Emily. In: MATTHIESSEN, F.O. *The Oxford Book of American Verse*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 442.

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Drama
Drama

The function of the playwright

ROSALIE RAHAL HADDAD

In an article called "The Play of Ideas" published in *The New Statesman and Nation* XXXIX, May 6, 1950, Bernard Shaw answers to Terence Rattigan's article of the same title written in 1949. Shaw points out that the difference between Rattigan's work and his own is that Shaw reasons out every sentence he writes to the utmost of his capacity before he prints it whereas Rattigan "slams down" everything that comes into his head without reasoning about it at all. In Shaw's opinion this leads him into all sorts of contradictions, deadends, and even delusions. Therefore, Shaw refers to Rattigan as a poor reasoner and strongly states that Rattigan does not like Shaw's plays because they are not exactly like his own, and no doubt bore him. Rattigan's article declares that Shaw's plays do not have any action or plot in them and indeed are not plays at all but platform, speeches, pamphlets, and leading articles.

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He further on states that though plays must be all talk, the talk should have no ideas behind it. Shaw contests Rattigan and asks him to think for a moment that, without a stock of ideas, the mind cannot operate and plays cannot exist. The quality of a play is the quality of its ideas.

This brings us to question the function of the playwright. According to Shaw, his aim throughout *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant* is "to force the spectator to face unpleasant facts; in the pleasant plays, to laugh his audience good-humouredly out of their romantic illusions."¹ In both cases, reality is where we are to come out.

With the publication of *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant* in 1898, Shaw begins to be viewed as a significant dramatist. He contrives to suggest in the prefaces to the two volumes that his career as a playwright was accidental, started out of a determination to manufacture the evidence in the case of the New Drama in England. He does not blame the theatre managers for refusing to perform his plays — by 1898 he had still not had a major professional production in England — but he blames contemporary theatre itself, the tastes of the theatre-going public, and the training of the actors for making his plays unplayable.

***Shaw's attacks are directed against
the readers themselves and not
against his stage figures***

The prefaces to *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant* significantly articulate Shaw's strategy as a dramatist, and the anti-thesis pleasant/unpleasant itself is of importance in defining their effect. Indirectly the title suggests a challenge for the traditional division tragedy/comedy. Although the subject matter of the unpleasant plays is the crimes of society and that of the pleasant plays is romantic "follies", both categories have a common purpose cutting across the generic division. In Shaw's words, "the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences of our persistent attempts

to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imagination instead of on scientific natural history."²

From a Victorian point of view, the subject matter of the unpleasant plays made them unpleasant. All three (*Widowers' Houses*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *The Philanderer*) are concerned with sex and social economics and with the relation between the two. In the case of *Widowers' Houses* its object is to take its audience with the innocent hero, Harry Trench, from ignorance and innocence through disillusionment and complicity with Sartorius, the slum-lord. As Shaw states at the end of the *Unpleasant* preface his attacks are directed against the readers themselves and not against his stage figures.

Widowers' Houses (1892) can be said to be one of Shaw's most powerful demonstrations of the capitalist system. He points out in the 1893 preface to *Widowers' Houses* that formerly a man was responsible only for his private conduct and for the maintenance of his own household. Now, as an inevitable consequence of Democracy, he is responsible for the state of the whole community which he helps to govern as a citizen and a voter. Sartorius is the ordinary man of business, voting for the candidate who promises to keep down the rates. And he does so in a hypocritical way only because that is the custom. Shaw has drawn him as a man of "strong and masterful character," unscrupulous but not a law-breaker. His villainy, Shaw strongly emphasizes, does not lie in his refusing to spend money on improving dwelling conditions for his tenants as, in his opinion, they would burn his improvements. It lies altogether in his indifference to defects in the British social system which at the time this play was written, produced a class of persons so poor that they were driven by constant physical privation to turn everything they could lay hands on into more fuel and more food. But Sartorius is not ashamed to explain the disappearance of his banisters and cistern lids on the absurd ground that "these people" do not know how to live in handsome houses. He has found out that there is no use in treating them nicely; and he has not enough social conscience to proceed to ask why there is no

use, and to find out how, as a citizen and an elector, to repair the abominable poverty which makes a woman willing, for the sake of having a good fire, to burn the handrail that is put up to save her and her neighbors from falling downstairs.

Furthermore, the love-plot between Trench and Blanche (the daughter of the slum-lord) apparently gave Shaw the conventional structure for comedy. Act I, exposition, Trench meets Blanche; Act II, complication, Trench loses Blanche; Act III *dénouement*, Trench gets Blanche after all. In the first edition of the play, published in 1893 as the initial volume in the Independent Theatre series, Blanche has been a fairly conventional woman, although she was already given the

The Victorian drama ordinarily took place in a fantastic make-believe land

Shavian “unwomanly woman” display of temper when she pulls the palourmaid’s hair which deeply shocked the Victorian playgoer. In the 1898 revision Blanche is made much more dominant in the relationship with Trench from the start in the sense that she is a direct and strong woman and not an enamored Victorian female indulging in lover’s talk. In its revised form, the scene ends with the final meeting and reconciliation with Trench which Shaw introduces in the 1898 text with very explicit stage directions in the sense that Trench triumphs finally in the battle of sexes by refusing to respond to Blanche’s humiliation of him. Shaw was trying to go beyond merely showing the interdependence of love and marriage within the socio-economic system around which the play turned. He was suggesting an aggressiveness and voracity in the sexual life of his middle-class characters which matched the reality of their money-making. Thus, in *Widowers’ Houses* Shaw presents sex itself as tainted as society is, and to stand in as much need of radical alteration. Failing the possibility of such alteration, Shaw’s implication seems to be that we should give it up altogether.

There is a case for calling *Widowers’ Houses*, possibly, the most unpleasant play Shaw ever wrote. “Nobody,” said Shaw in the preface to the first edition of the play written in 1893, “will find it a beautiful or lovable work.” The play is full with the atrocious reality of life it represents; most of its characters do not invite admiration or sympathy. For that matter the people do not engage in pleasant conversation, live gracefully or sincerely face their own position. Thus it is quite clear that the author is not trying to portray beauty and romance but, on the contrary, drags up to the surface of respectability the “slime and foulness” of the society he depicts.³

We can say, then, that Shaw’s intention in this play is clearly didactic. He cannot understand how any man in his senses can deliberately take as his model the empty style of Wilkie Collins or Scribe and the in-existent social message of the well-made play. Shaw rejected these plays on the ground that although they entertained audiences very agreeably by carefully constructing and revealing mysteries, they simply depicted puppets for furthering a shallow plot and contained no social message. According to Maurice Valency, the main object of these plays was to comply with the pre-established Victorian morality.⁴ In the period 1850-80 the English drama was controlled by a small group of unimaginative professionals — managers, actors and writers — whose principal aim was to please a sophisticated, but relatively uncultivated audience whose tastes were known but whose possibilities were not explored. This audience was strongly oriented along moral and patriotic lines. It cherished inviolable ideals, the truth of which no playwright would dare question. Since Victorian audience desired the stage to provide not an authentic representation of experience but a means of escape from the discomforts of life, the Victorian drama ordinarily took place in a fantastic make-believe land which only occasionally recalled the world outside the playhouse. The theater thus developed its own special reality, its own conventions, morality, logic, speech, and gesture, in short its own imaginary world. As a playwright Shaw refused to follow this example.

According to Shaw, the line between the authors who place their imagination at the service of their "ingenuity" and those who place their "ingenuity" at the service of their imagination may be hard to draw, but if we draw it as an equator, Scribe and the plot constructors will be at the South pole and authors like Shaw himself who told the story but disregarded the plot would be situated in the North. Therefore, to many

In Shaw's opinion, the ordinary dramatist only neglects social questions because he knows nothing about them

critics *Widowers' Houses* being didactic was not a work of art. Notwithstanding, Shaw offers it as a propagandist play — a didactic play — a play with a purpose which, if well acted, will entertain its proper audience to the last word. Shaw's concept of the theatre as he states in his essay "The Problem Play — A Symposium"⁵ gives strong emphasis to the play of ideas and, in his opinion, the ordinary dramatist only neglects social questions because he knows nothing about them. The idea of art for art's sake made no sense to one for whom art was essentially allegorical, and behavior a basis for moral judgment.

To illustrate, let us take Terence Rattigan's *Variation on a Theme* (1958). Rattigan states without modesty that "he can claim a sort of world's record for writing plays so blessed with longevity."⁶ This success he no doubt attributes to the fact that he is considered a popular playwright writing plays known to be empty of all intellectual content and oriented towards a majority audience for which true theatre exists, and has always existed; while highbrow theatre would exist only for a minority audience, which is a euphemism for a small audience, a half-empty house, in the sense that such a theatre produces unsuccessful plays that should have been read and not acted.

Laughter, tears, excitement, this is what the playgoer demands. Rattigan thinks that the audience is

bored by propaganda, hates a lot of philosophical talk on the stage with nothing happening at all. For that matter, he is not able, as his rival (Shaw) to attack the state of the modern theatre, to deplore the commercialism of Shaftesbury Avenue where all Rattigan's plays were performed, to condemn the short-sightedness of West End managers, to praise the courage and enterprise of small repertory theatres outside London, as in the case of Shaw, who could only have some of his plays produced because of the support of J. T. Grein's Independent Theatre based on the lines of Antoine's *Théâtre Libre*. In Rattigan's point of view the essential point about the West End audience, or for that matter about any audience anywhere in the world, is that they do not have to be educated but entertained. Thus, he is an admirer of stock comic situations and familiar comic characters, all aimed at making the audience laugh at almost anything provided they do not have to think.

It is possible to say that following his aesthetics on theatre, Rattigan avoids confrontation with the values of an average spectator as well as with those of the Establishment. This can be seen in his play *Variation on a Theme*, where he does not question social or political issues approached either by Shaw as in *Widowers' Houses* or by his contemporaries such as Osborne, Arnold Wesker, and Shellagh Delaney.

In Rattigan, social issues are translated into personal terms

Variation on a Theme is a light entertainment which echoes polite drawing-room drama. After 1956 there was a clearly discernable liberalization of public attitudes, yet we feel that Rattigan's play was designed principally to entertain and not to question social or political issues. Apparently what Rattigan had in mind was a revival of the complete well-made play, an updated, naturalistic drawing-room problem play. Bearing in mind Shaw's words that "every social question furnishes material for drama but every drama does not involve a social question"⁷ we perceive that Rattigan

does not develop his characters as to give them socio-economic significance. Rattigan deals with the theme of motherhood in a mild fashion as if his primary intention were not to shock the spectator but to compromise with him by offering what he accepts as "normal." The problematic relationship between mother and daughter is actually not discussed, only briefly referred to by the author, as there is no pretension to a psychological and social penetration. Again, it is fair to say that the male protagonist's (Ron) lower-class upbringing and lack of financial means, as well as his emotional involvement with the leading lady (Rose), are developed on the grounds of a personal conflict and not as a socio-economic criticism. We feel Ron resents his economic inferiority but does not contest it in a broader social scale.

Thus, social issues are translated into personal terms and it is mainly this aspect that links Rattigan to the traditional well-made play of Scribe and Sardou. There is seldom any feeling that the limitations of the genre are restricting Rattigan in anything he wants to do. The homosexual relationship in the play is disguisedly portrayed. Rattigan's concern with reflecting conventional behavioural norms can be perceived as he subtly formulates this theme in universal terms, where the emotional quality of a relationship is more significant than its specific sexual orientation. Shelagh Delaney in her play *A Taste of Honey*, written in the same year as a reaction to Rattigan's conventional way of dealing with homosexuality, presents her characters as people who elaborate their experiences not solely as something personal but expands them to universal consequences. Furthermore, the play is inspired on conventional, melodramatic nineteenth century plots. The heroine of *Variation on a Theme* is a modern equivalent of *La Dame Aux Camélias*, marrying her men instead of being kept by them, and a center of considerable destructive and self-destructive energy. Even the title can be linked to a nineteenth century, romantic *Leitmotiv*, in this case, a melodic one such as Franz Liszt's (1811-1886) *Variation on a Theme by Paganini*. As in its musical counterpart there is a main theme, i.e. Rose and

her various levels of relationship: abortive love (Ron), emotional dependence (Hettie), competition for Ron (Sam), financial dependence (Kurt), unsuccessful motherhood (Fiona), all evolving around her self-centered, possessive personality as Liszt's composition which centers around his personal interpretation of the *Capriccio number 24* by Paganini.

***Shaw's plays probably have done
less for the theatre managers
but more for the world***

It is easily discernable that Terence Rattigan's play, written in 1958, goes back to melodramatic themes of the nineteenth century, and that Bernard Shaw, although having written *Widowers' Houses* in 1892, condemned these same conventions thus contributing much further to the socio-political advancement of drama. For commercial purposes Shaw had better have written a more conventional or a grand play like the tragic masterpieces; but as he himself reports, he was not able to. Modern commercialism he considered a bad art school which in a futile way pretends to move us melodramatically to pity and tears.

Shaw's art then is the expression of his sense of moral and "intellectual perversity" rather than of his sense of beauty. His life has been passed mostly in big modern cities where his sense of beauty has been starved while his intellect has been filled with problems like those of the slums he presents in *Widowers' Houses*; he claims that its value is enhanced by the fact that it deals with a burning social question and is deliberately intended to induce people to vote on the Progressive side at the County Council election in London. Shaw is very aware as he himself comments that a drama with a social question motive cannot outlive the solution of that question and loses in popularity to the drama which deals with the natural factors in people's lives. Thus we see that this latter kind of drama though necessarily not better than the drama which deals with socio-political factors, is likely to last longer.

Keeping this in mind, it seems fair to say that Terence Rattigan's plays may lead the fashionable theatrical life as he himself has mentioned, but they dwell in the world of imagination instead of in the world of politics, business, law and the platform agitations by which social questions are made known. Therefore, it can be said that Rattigan becomes a minor playwright. He may be clever, imaginative, sympathetic, humorous

and observant of manners of the society he portrays but he demonstrates hardly any knowledge of the world. Shaw's *Widowers' Houses* may have contributed financially less to theatre managers and entertained less the conventional playgoer who expected amusement from a play, but it will probably have done more for the world. And as Shaw says, "that is enough for the genius, which is always intensely utilitarian."⁸

NOTES

¹*The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw: Collected Plays with their Prefaces.* London, 1970-1974. 7 v., v. I, p. 34.

²*Ibid.*, v. I, p. 385.

³*Ibid.*, v. I, p. 45.

⁴VALENCY, Maurice. *The Cart and the Trumpet.* New York, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 30.

⁵*Shaw on Theatre.* Ed. E.J. West. New York, Hill and Wang, 1958, p. 59.

⁶*The Collected Plays of Terence Rattigan.* London, Hamish Hamilton, 1964. V. III.

⁷*Shaw on Theatre*, cit., p. 59.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 63.

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WESKER

A cook preparing the meal of human despair

GERALDO FERREIRA DE LIMA

IN WESKER'S COSMOVISION MAN lives in an insane world and the representation of such an insanity is the apparent chaos of "the large kitchen of a restaurant called Tivoli." As a naturalist playwright forged in the New Wave's concept of drama as a medium to express man's sense of annihilation and destruction, Wesker's rejection of the Shakespearean concept of the stage as a representation of the world does not seem strange. The world Wesker sees in the kitchen, as an interface of the real one, is in pieces and in it all coherence seems to be gone. Like a Tower of Babel, the multiplicity of nationalities in *The Kitchen* helps to create an environment where men, in spite of being altogether, are separated by the barriers of language and individual prospects.

The Kitchen, inverting Shakespeare's statement, changes its frenetic types into *fantocini*. The young and old, the male and female, the cooks and waiters — all dichotomies are not worthwhile. In its frenzy people lose not only their own identity but also their capacity of expressing their ultimate necessities. Kevin shows his kitchenmates how difficult it is to be a human being in such an environment: "I don't dream of men... Most people sleep and dream; me — I dream of sleep."¹

Making use of the well-made play technique, without being Sardoodledomist, Scribean or even Shavian,

Wesker speaks of cruelty and rudeness of existence in a world which does not exist by itself. It exists because man is in it, and being in it means a process of constant fight against underlying powers. For human beings there is no solution, but fighting these powers. The cause for it is given by the consciousness of *being* which is an echo of Descartes's *ergo sunt*. Wesker is Cartesian. He believes in man as depositary of thought, but he goes further. In his concept of a world determined by consciousness thought has to be changed into pragmatic attitudes provided by a political view of existence. His characters in *The Kitchen*, *Chicken Soup with Barley*, and *Chips with Everything*, although separated by circumstances, are part of the society which brought them up.

Unlike Beckett's or Pinter's characters, who, isolated from society, express their tragic individuality with all traces of social contacts erased, Wesker's act in the group as if out of it no humanity or lack of humanity could be possible. Peter in *The Kitchen*, Ronnie in *Chicken Soup with Barley*, and Pip in *Chips with Everything*, in their attempts to express their own individuality do not go out of their respective groups. When they do, it is to assert the impossibility of living out of the social walls of their human conditions.

**"Most people sleep and dream;
me — I dream of sleep"**

The exploration of the theme of food associated with political attitudes shows analogies to Wesker's own life. Coming from a Jewish Hungarian working class family, with a militant background, Wesker worked at a variety of jobs for many years. In his "curriculum" are included activities like carpenter's mate, book-sellers's assistant, seed sorter, kitchen porter, pastrycook, chef and a course in film-making.

Although essentially a political dramatist whose plays are inserted in what is defined as "socialist theatre", Wesker's questioning does not restrain itself to political context only. As far as he is concerned, to him man is

not only in conflict with a reality which oppresses him. Wesker's characters in these plays, conscious of being part of a wide project by means of which society should be changed (as that one defended by Sarah in *Chicken Soup with Barley*), or unconscious of any project for their lives (as Peter's simple aspiration to dream in *The Kitchen* and Smiler's wish to have his smile accepted as a natural component of his physiognomy in *Chips with Everything*), all of them, in a way or another, tend to give priority to their own individuality. Such an attitude could be seen as a paradox whereas the main point implicit in Wesker's speech concerns to politics. In these plays two tendencies are clearly asserted by their characters' behaviour: one political towards society, another philosophical towards individuality. In his work as a chef, Wesker mixes political and philosophical raw materials according to laws of combination and prepares the meal with which he feeds his characters.

The interaction of contrasting substances produces the unveiling of a human being whose political beliefs are either choked by the strength of institutions or neutralized by an underlying pessimism. It is as if his characters were condemned by an inexorable *verdictum*: the establishment moulds man, not vice-versa. One is allowed to be against society because of the Cartesian capacity for thinking and being, but ultimately what he gets is a desperate scream as in Sarah's reiteration "you'll die", "you'll die" to her son, Ronnie, in the final scene of *Chicken Soup with Barley*.

Wesker is more than a dramatist making use of realism to express his "socialist theatre." His words are of a playwright but his eyes are of a sharp observer with the ability to show the sensations and the spiritual aspiration of his characters. When putting thirty people from both sexes, from different nationalities and different ages, with different cosmovisions in the quasi-Dantean inferno of a kitchen, throwing nine conscripts into a RAF hut under the orders of a sadist Corporal Hill who "never smiles, never jokes" and promises to send them "to hell, a scorching hell" or showing, step by step, the anguish of a woman trying to preserve

her political ideal before a reckless husband, a daughter looking for her own identity and a son instinctively closer to his father than his mother's idealism, Wesker is doing more than simply telling stories. His speech is political on the surface and openly against the establishment. His characters, either in *The Kitchen*, *Chicken Soup with Barley* or *Chips with Everything*, attempt to subvert the order of the *status quo*. They, like Cervantes

***Even not sure of heavenly
existence, man tries to build up
a sort of paradise***

hero, live in a world in which there is no place for day-dreamers, but, like Don Quixote, it is hard for them to get rid of a dream even if it is not in colour. Ronnie, knowing that his dream of being a kind of reborn Maikowski for a revolution he is sure will never come, simply says to his terrified mother:

I don't see things in black and white anymore. My thoughts keep going pop, like bubbles. That's my life now you know? — a lot of little bubbles going pop.²

Sarah, painfully, almost in soliloquy, although Ronnie close to her does not care about the meaning of her words, which sound him *nihil et rem*, asks a series of questions as if she were reciting a litany from the Book of the Common Prayer. Then, in short statements concludes:

But all my life I've fought. With your father and the rotten system that couldn't help him. All my life I worked with a party that meant glory and freedom and brotherhood. You want me to give it up now? You want me move to Hendon and forget who I am? If the electrician who comes to mend my fuse blows it instead, so I should stop having electricity? I should cut off my light? Socialism is my light, can you understand that? A way of life... I've got to have light.³

More than stories, Wesker tells us allegories. Like Chaucer's his allegories have double meanings. They place man in the center of human actions and show him that, above his individuality, is idealism. The difference between them is in the approach to their utopias. To Chaucer there is a paradise in heaven waiting for man, and man in him, as author and character, is sure of it. To Wesker, even not sure of heavenly existence, man tries to build up a sort of paradise, either consciously or unconsciously, either individually or socially. In *Chicken Soup with Barley*, Sarah is a Chaucerian character in pilgrimage to her socialist paradise. With no husband, children or friends to give her support, she makes up her mind to go on fighting even knowing how impossible to be successful she is. As though it were a corollary she says to her son:

All authorities, the shopkeepers, even today — those stinking assistance officers — I could buy them with my little finger — even now I'm fighting them, like your father I'll fight them.⁴

In exploring reality, Wesker oscillates between naturalism and a certain *Neue Sachlichkeit* expressionist. In doing so, he reveals himself as a dramatist not only worried to explore reality — as it is, but a deeper one. In this sense Peter's inadequacy to adapt himself to the reality of the chaotic world of *The Kitchen*, Smiler's silent pain after being caught and tortured, and Harry's apathy after the second stroke are samples of expressionist scenes which remind us of the absurd scream expressed by Munch's or of a solitary human figure before existence. To those who want to see Wesker as the representative of only a kind of theatre, he remarks:

It means nothing to think of my plays and stories as social realism — a term I've always resented because it blinded people to those other elements in my work I'd always hoped would be recognised! The paradoxical, the lyrical, the absurd, the ironic, musical, farcical and so on; all the elements united, as Ruskin says, "in due place and measure."⁵

In their attempt to present an axiological system flexible enough to allow man to ask for conditions to give origin to a new human being in a new society, Wesker's characters fail. They fail either because they, like Sarah, are overpoliticized or because they, like Peter and Pip, lack politicization. The first ones, absorbing the universal, deny the particular for the belief of an ideal human brotherhood as if there were no opposing forces moulding people's mind within the ideology of welfare implicit in the society that provides the basis for consumerism. The second ones go on opposite direction. They reject the universal in order to affirm the particular. Both their speeches are in a certain way fallacious: universality does not imply that particularity has to be negated, and the reverse is not true either.

In Wesker's cosmovision, any choice man makes implies despair

Not necessarily aware of it, Wesker's characters' speech expresses two political attitudes towards existence: social idealism and individual realism. By social idealism one must understand the sort of attitude based upon a well articulated political proposal that does not admit failure even in the face of it. Such an attitude is revealed by Sarah. After being shown how her world of "democracy and freedom and brotherhood" is falling into pieces, she simply tells her son: "Drink your tea, darling."⁶ Not even after showing to Sarah that the family she always wanted had desintegrated does Ronnie succeed in making his mother admit that she made a mistake.

The individual realism is double-natured: self-destructive and submissive. Peter, in his fury against Marango's world, expresses self-destruction. In his answer to Peter, instead of counterattacking, Marango rethorically just says: "I don't know what more to give a man. He works, he eats, I give him money. This is life, isn't it?" Pip's "rite of passage" when he changes

his uniform from an airman's to an officer's shows submission to the new status. In order to demonstrate it he speaks to the group of conscripts (to which he had belonged to until some minutes ago): "We are good, honest hard-working like yourselves and understanding; above all we are understanding.."⁸

Although his characters fail to build up a new man in a new social order, Wesker succeeds in discussing through them insanity in the world. His world is not the macro reality which we are used to. As a fine craftsman, he works with elements more humanly rooted like frustration, pride, pain, solitude, and those more socially based like subversion, rejection, recklessness

and prepotency in a "microcosmicized" world where more important than the place in which these people work or live are the dilemmas they express in their daily interactions or lack of them. In his discussion on politics, the essential to him, in human relationship, is that men, either as agents or not, are in conflict with their surrounding reality. In Wesker the capacity of man to make choices is not taken out. Free to choose, man in Wesker's cosmovosion is able to make decisions, either to confirm his submission to the geographical space or to destroy it. Any choice he makes implies despair — human despair. Out of which there is no choice.

NOTES

¹WESKER, Arnold. *The Kitchen*. In: —. *Three Plays*. London, Penguin, 1987, p. 53.

²Id., *ibid.*, p. 73.

³Id., *ibid.*, p. 74.

⁴Id., *ibid.*, p. 74.

⁵Apud LEEMING, Glenda. *Wesker — The Playwright*. London, Methuen, 1983, p. 29.

⁶WESKER, Arnold. *Chicken Soup with Barley*. In: —. *The Wesker Trilogy*. London, Penguin, 1985, p. 72.

⁷WESKER, *The Kitchen*, *cit.*, p. 70.

⁸WESKER, Arnold. *Chips with Everything*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1962, p. 73.

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THE ASSUREDNESS OF TOUCH AND THE POETICALLY IRONIC OVERTONES IN *WASTE*

GLORIA SYDENSTRICKER

When Harley Granville Barker wrote *Waste* in 1906-1907, the mood of Edwardian England was one of extravagance and display. But beneath the apparent surface of ostentation, parent surface of ostentation, the new century inherited a general conservatism mainly on the British stage, a somewhat stale inclination for radical change, for a drama that expressed ideas relevant to the vital issues of social and political life. Although the age began to gain more relaxed manners and morals, there remained visible vestiges of a "veiled moral code" that concealed human weaknesses that lay beneath the surface of order and degree.

Avant-garde artists and reformers had to struggle with an unquestioning moral code in common attitudes to religious, social and political problems. Theatrical artists started not only to question religious dogma, but also to investigate with greater depth themes that required serious psychological observation, and to criticize the errors of society. Harley Granville Barker belonged to the group of the "New Dramatists" that meant to treat these issues seriously.

Our purpose in writing this paper is to briefly discuss some aspects of the delicate fabric in Barker's play *Waste*, which treats with subtlety the complex themes of sex, guilt, and spiritual bareness.

Waste is a play rich in sentiment and assuredness of touch that echoes many of the moral concerns that are profoundly embodied in human nature. Barker's approach reaches poetical and ironical overtones, awakening in the reader (or playgoer) a deep sense of sheer aesthetic delight.

WASTE AND CENSORSHIP

Were the elements of sex, abortion and hints at incest the real reasons for the Lord Chamberlain's censure of *Waste* in 1907? Shaw said that the Examiner of Play's role was not to make the theatre moral, but to prevent its having any effect on public opinion.¹

A critic of *Times* (Nov. 27, 1907) admired the play but said it was "unfit for performance under ordinary conditions before a miscellaneous public of various ages, moods and standards of intelligence."² William Archer, one of the principal dramatic critics of his day, classified *Waste* as "our greatest modern tragedy."³

As a modern tragedy, *Waste* exhibited the hypocrisy that lay beneath the placid surface of social conventions and approached themes that caused a feeling of uneasiness and moral indisposition. The tragic hero is one who represents and symbolizes the flaws and shortcomings of his society.

TREBELL — A TRAGIC HERO

On a first reading, the impression that *Waste* conveys to us is that it depicts mainly social evils or that it functions as a play of social protest. Undoubtedly, it presents themes that were dear to Barker, such as: social hypocrisy (mainly of the higher classes), women's liberation and the emotional sterility of many social reformers. However, after another careful reading, we feel that the real issue which is at stake is a spiritual one. It is mainly concentrated in Trebell's tragic figure.

From the very start, Trebell has all the marks of a tragic hero. He stands apart from the other characters. Barker made him a "stiletto of ice" and confirmed this characterization in a letter to Nicholas Hannan: "Trebell has no sunshine in him. That is his tragedy; that is why he kills himself."⁴

Trebell is a brilliant politician, a man of extraordinary intellect who has a materialistic view of life; a man who doesn't believe in God but who surprisingly (or ironically) embraces the cause of Disestablishment out of sincere conviction, to regard teaching in a religious light. Trebell is an idealist and sincerely believed in taking away interests from the church and applying all the surplus money for the establishment of a new system of colleges and universities.

On the whole I'm a believer in Churches of all sorts and their usefulness to the State. (Act II, p. 196)

He is utterly devoted to a higher cause: that of promoting a true sense of education, a search for knowledge which is a sacred thing. He was really in love, but the irony of it was that he wasn't in love with a woman, but with a cause!

I found I've fallen in love. No, not with a woman, you old sentimentalist! With this job. I am in love with a Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church of England (...)

Trebell possesses the qualities of a tragic figure: excellence, nobleness of intention and passion (for a

cause). Above all, he has the unalienable trait of the tragic hero, courage and character which he displays on several occasions of the play. But his virtues are insufficient to save him from self-destruction; their remembrances will bring about a feeling of loss. After the catastrophe, Kent makes a last elegiac speech, which ends the play:

No, I don't know why he did it... and I don't care. And grief is no use. I'm angry... Just angry at the *Waste* of a good man. Look at the work undone... think of it! Who is to do it! (Act IV, p. 239)

Trebell shoots himself not because he was afraid of a scandal since O'Connell, the betrayed husband, is ironically the only one to understand and solidarize with him. He, like Trebell, is horrified of a society that values sterility more than life.

Is the curse of barrenness to be nothing to a man? And that's the death in life to which you gentlemen with your fine civilization are bringing us. I think we are brothers in misfortune, Mr. Trebell. (Act III, p. 210)

He wasn't afraid to have his career jeopardized after Amy's death. He was young, brilliant and would probably have plenty of opportunities to recover his prestige. The reasons for his suicide were primarily two: the destruction of a passionate cause and the destruction of his unborn child. Nothing more is left to him in life.

He and Francis, his devoted sister, have a dramatic dialogue in the last act when Trebell says:

I've stood for success, Fanny; I still stand for success. I could still do more outside the cabinet than the rest of them, inside, will do. But suddenly I've a feeling the work would be barren. (Act IV, p. 234)

The words "bare", "barren", "barrenness" are repeated insistently throughout the play conveying the idea of a spiritual, psychological sterility:

Oh, cheer up. You know we're an adulterous and sterile generation. (Act III; p. 211)

Trebell realizes as the play develops, that parentage would have been the only salvation for his spiritual sterility. The impact of fatherhood would have made him grow in human dimensions and become a more complete, a better man.

The man bears the child in his soul as the woman carries it in her body. (Act IV, p. 235)

His whole being became involved with the idea of fatherhood; it was significant that there was a child in the process of nature's continuity. This is a crucial point in the play.

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Waste is a challenging play in its richness of overtones and subtlety of method. Trebell, as a central character, is a fascinating figure because he is able to pass unto us a sense of the ambiguity and ambivalence of the human condition. As a modern tragedy, *Waste* draws us into the orbit of great realistic drama of an intense and moving spiritual pursuit.

NOTES

¹KENNEDY, D. *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 85.

²BANHAM, M. and THOMSON, P. (ed.). *British and American Playwrights 1750-1920. Plays by Harley Granville Barker*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 17.

³Id., *ibid.*

⁴SALMON, E. (ed. and annotated). *Granville Barker and his Correspondents*. Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1986, p. 472.

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La Dame aux Camélias: the myth in Verdi's *La Traviata* and in Pam Gems's *Camille*

VALTER LELLIS SIQUEIRA

Drama
Drama

When Alexandre Dumas *fils* had his play *La Dame aux Camélias* first produced on 2nd February 1852, he probably did not know he was creating one of the greatest female myths of all times: the *demi-mondaine* who regains dignity through love and death. Since then, the myth — a typically bourgeois one — has been interpreted in several ways. Here we intend to discuss two of its versions: *La Traviata* (1853), the opera by Giuseppe Verdi, and *Camille* (1984), the play by Pam Gems.

Dumas did not invent the figure of Marguerite Gautier — she actually existed (under the name of Marie Duplessis) and was his mistress for some time. Marie came from a very poor family and had spent her childhood in the French countryside. Thanks to her unusual beauty she became a *demi-mondaine* in Paris, with rich and important men supporting her. Towards the end

of 1845 she became the mistress of the composer Franz Liszt and probably, if she ever really loved anyone, it was Liszt. Nevertheless, in the midst of her affair with Liszt she travelled to London with the Vicomte Edouard de Perrégaux and married him at Kensington Register Office on 21st February 1846 but they never lived together. Back in Paris, her health deteriorated rapidly — she had tuberculosis — and she became seriously ill. One night early in December she paid a last visit to the Opéra, wearing white satin, lace and diamonds and carrying her favourite camellias. She died on February 3rd, 1847 but not before, according to Théophile Gautier, “by a last effort of youth, recoiling from destruction, she rose to her feet as though to escape; then she gave three loud cries and fell for ever...” She was only twenty-three. L.A. Yeats tells us how it all happened between Alexandre and Marie:

Alexandre Dumas first saw Marie Duplessis in the summer of 1842. It was in the Place de la Bourse and she was alighting from an elegant blue coupé. They were both eighteen and he loved her at first sight. He was, at this time, the very embodiment of Romantic youth: tall, slim but broad-shouldered with blue eyes and fair hair. In the fashion of the time he did not declare his love but nursed it for almost two years (while consoling himself with other women). Then, one evening at the Variety Theatre he arranged a meeting through a mutual friend; so began a love-story which has gone round the world. Invited to her house he admitted his love, swearing it was "profound and eternal." Marie was impressed by the young man's sincerity but warned him that she would only make him unhappy. But Alexandre persisted and Marie, already ill and hoping perhaps for happiness and security, yielded. The rest of the story is well known; Alexandre's jealousy of her other lovers (he was not rich enough to support her entirely), her first bout of illness and the idyllic summer at his father's villa at Saint Germain where Alexandre nursed her back to health. Then Paris again and Marie's gradual return to her old life. Alexandre put up with it for as long as he could but the break was bound to come and in August 1845 they quarrelled and finally parted."¹

After Marie's death, Alexandre wrote a novel telling what had happened between them. He later turned the novel into a play. Both works were called *La Dame*

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treated the
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ways**

aux Camélias, and Alexandre mixed reality and fiction in them. Lots of details such as his father's opposition to their affair and their reconciliation at the moment of her death were made up by him in order to give

Marguerite (Marie's name in the novel and in the play) a greater dignity. He also disguised himself under the name of Armand.

Alexandre Dumas's play — regardless of the initial troubles with French censorship — soon became a huge success. Great actresses such as Sarah Bernhardt and Eleonora Duse turned the role into their greatest hits. But it was with Verdi's opera *La Traviata* that the story reached the whole world. The opera is still a favourite with the public in every country and no season is considered totally satisfactory without it. Recently the English playwright Pam Gems made an adaptation of *La Dame aux Camélias* called *Camille*, a name she borrowed from the Greta Garbo film *Camille* (1937) on the same subject.

**Materialist
feminism
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Verdi and Gems treated the myth in two opposite ways. The libretto of Verdi's opera — written by Francesco Maria Piave — is very close to Dumas's play. It was considered *avant-garde* when it was written because of innovations such as a contemporary subject and dialogues which often reproduce ordinary daily conversation, and somehow it even anticipates the future *Verismo* in opera. But for modern audiences it is definitely Romantic. Piave kept the *male gaze* when treating Violetta (the heroine's name in the opera): she is a *demi-mondaine*, but full of dignity and a stoicism which rank her side by side with Norma, Desdemona, Aida, or any other traditional opera heroines. Prostitution for Violetta is seen as an option for an easy life since no reasons are given by Piave for her behaviour. In other words, prostitution is something concerning a personal attitude and not a social and economic prob-

lem. This is how the bourgeoisie regarded it in the 19th century and probably still regards it today.

Gems's play — as indicated by the author — is “based on *La Dame aux Camélias*, by Alexandre Dumas *fil.*” Gems changed the original quite a lot. Marguerite (regardless of the title, she kept the heroine's original name) became a *demi-mondaine* in order to survive and offer her son a decent life. By the way, the father of her son is the Marquis de Saint-Brieuc, Armand's father. Marguerite and her family used to work for the Marquis and he was the first man to rape her and lead her towards prostitution. In other words, Gems gives us a concrete reason for prostitution. And this reason is definitely social and economic, which we can perfectly understand if we keep in mind that Pam Gems is a materialist feminist.

Materialist feminism is a broad label and began to be employed in the early 1980s. Generally speaking, it refers to feminist positions derived from Marxism and socialism. Sue-Ellen Case gives a good definition of it:

Derived from Marxism, materialist feminism posits that class determines the situation of all people within capitalism. The dynamics of class consciousness are central in the formation of all economic, social and cultural institutions. Class biases determine the attitudes of individuals in the spheres of labour, interpersonal relationships and the production of cultural artefacts. This assumption implies that works of art reflect the class of the artist and that bonds between people are usually the bonds of a shared class. Class is a hierarchical structure in which the owners of the means of production garner their privileges through the oppression of the workers. The definitive role that class plays in social organisation means that there are crucial differences between upper-middle-class women and working-class women — not only are all women not sisters, but women in the privileged class actually oppress women in the working class.²

This definition helps us to understand Gems's Marguerite well. She is perfectly aware of being a victim

of her social class condition. And it was this that led her to prostitution. It is then interesting to compare how Piave's and Gems's heroines see their own lives:

Violetta

Povera donna, sola,
abandonata in questo
popoloso deserto
che appellano Parigi...
che spero or più?
Che far degg'io? Gioire
di voluttà ne' vortici,
di voluttà perir!
Gioir! gioir! Ah!
Sempre libera degg'io
folleggiare di gioia in gioia
vo' che scorra il viver mio
pei sentieri del piacer.
Nasca il giorno o il giorno
muoia
sempre lieta ne' ritrovi, ah!
e diletta sempre nuovi
dee volare il mio pensier.

*A poor lone woman,
abandoned in this
teeming desert
they call Paris,
what more now do I hope for?
What must I do? Plunge
into the vortex of pleasure,
engulfed in pleasure to die!
Revel in pleasure! Ah
Always free, I must flit
dizzily from pleasure to pleasure
I want my life to skim
along the purple path of pleasure.
Down the day, die the day
always merry in company, ah,
to pleasures ever new
my thoughts must fly.*

(*La Traviata*, Act 1)

MARGUERITE: (*Talking to Armand*) You want to know? You want to know? I know the way you live! Hot-house grapes, lofts full of apples, figs with the bloom on them... stables, libraries, a fire in your room. (*She lopes, fiery and restless.*) I used to clean the grates with my mother... five o'clock in the morning on tiptoe while you all snored. I saw them! The rugs, the pictures, the furniture... chandeliers... music rooms, ballrooms... all a hundred metres from where we lived on potatoes and turnips, and slept, the seven of us together, in a coach-house loft.

ARMAND (*slight pause*): Are you accusing me?

MARGUERITE: Yes.

(...)

And then, one morning.. my cousin came into my room. I was putting on my stockings — he started to shake. I

didn't have the strength to push him away. Afterwards, he puts his finger to his lips, and gave me a gold coin. And there it was. I knew. All of a sudden. How to do it. How to go through the magic door. How to be warm, how to be comfortable... eat fine food, wear fine clothes, read fine books, listen to fine music. I had the key. A golden key. *(She laughs.)* After all... what had I got to lose? Innocence? That had gone before I was five.

(Camille, Act 1)

As we can see, the contrast between the two heroines is a sharp one. Violetta complains about her life but she seems not to be totally aware of what her real condition is. She complains about her loneliness and her living permanently in pleasure. Marguerite, on the contrary, is totally aware of what led her to prostitution: her class condition. And she even accuses the rich — Armand — for that. Her awareness of the social gap between her and Armand is fully expressed when she says:

If everything were different — no! There is no world, no way that you and I can connect... except in the moment. Please — no, don't touch me. There's nothing for us. I could look over the wall at you all my life and never get to touch your coat-tails. Don't be a fool. Only a fool believes a lie.

(Camille, Act 1)

Marguerite knows that capitalist society is a thoroughly closed system. Class relationships are restricted to the essential ones. Whenever people try to make them more intense, disaster comes.

Some materialist feminists have been criticized because they established women as a class due to their specific economic conditions. This is not quite the case with Pam Gems. She knows perfectly well that the notion of women as a class belies the differences between upper-, middle- and working-class women. This is clearly seen in the play in the relationship between

Marguerite and her maid Janine. In Piave's libretto the relationship Violetta and her maid Anina is totally peaceful. Anina remains faithful to Violetta till her death, presumably as a way of thanking her for her kindness and friendship. In Gems's play, the general

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class relationships we find in capitalist society can be detected in the relationship between Marguerite and Janine, that is, the upper class oppressing lower classes. After all, Marguerite somehow belongs to the upper class now. Her past does not count for her and now she oppresses her own maid:

MARGUERITE: Robbing me from cellar to attic, you're going home to your pig-faced mother!

JANINE *(throwing stuff on the ground from her pockets)*: Go on, take it! I hope it sticks in your great mush and chokes you!

MARGUERITE: Hang on! Where do you think you're —

JANINE: I'm not staying here where I'm not appreciated! Who was it found Signor da Costa... me! *(She goes.)*

MARGUERITE: I'll bang her bloody head through that door.

PRUDENCE: They're all the same.

(...)

MARGUERITE: I hate her!

PRUDENCE: Well, that's because she's a little turd. But a good maid!

MARGUERITE: Biggest scroungers in the village. *(She grins.)* I only took her to show off.

PRUDENCE: Playing the lady? Well, why not? *(...)*

(Camille, Act 1)

But society cannot forget Marguerite's condition and social extraction. When discussing with Armand his relationship with Marguerite, his father says:

Respect? Respect?! For a whore?!! You dare to talk of love... you dare to talk of friendship — with a whore? You dare to come to me, talk of marriage? Introduce a harlot? Into my family? Are you seriously suggesting... that you want... as your life's companion... before God and the Church... as the mother of your children... as my heirs... a woman who has felt the private parts of every man in Paris? (ARMAND lunges at his FATHER, who stumbles and recovers.) You become as depraved as the company you keep. Good God, boy, what does it matter? One woman's slot or another?

(*Camille*, Act 2)

The Marquis de Saint-Brieuc talks about decency and morality but in fact it is Marguerite's origin that counts. Decency and morality as capitalist societies still understand them are totally false concepts. They do not count when members of the upper class are involved and are used for the keeping of bourgeois society's balance. And Pam Gems recalls that when she

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introduces Prince Bela Mirkassian, a character not found in Dumas's play. A homosexual affair between Bela and Armand is explicit in *Camille*. The Marquis knows about it but he is not the bit least scandalized. After all, Bela is a prince — and rich. Here we can also detect the *male gaze*, which has been condemned by all feminists.

Morality does not count at all when members of the upper class take advantage of people from the working

class. This is also present in *Camille* when we learn that the father of Marguerite's child is the Marquis himself. After all, for him "women's slots" are all the same!

And he blackmails Marguerite using the child. She is forced to resign Armand for her son's sake after the Marquis promises her the boy will be raised in a "civilized" way.

In Piave's libretto, morality is present in a different way: It is regarded as a value in itself. Giorgio Germont — the Marquis's counterpart in the opera — also asks Violetta to leave Alfredo (Armand's name in the opera) for morality's sake, but he is vividly impressed by the heroine's dignity — after he learns that it is Violetta who is supporting Alfredo and not the other way round:

Premiato il sacrificio
ch'io consumai d'amore
d'un opra così nobile
andrete fiera allor...

*The sacrifice of your love
will be rewarded,
then you will be proud
of such a noble act...*

(*La Traviata*, Act 2)

And he even scolds his son when, in Act 2, Alfredo despises Violetta:

Di sprezzo degno se
stesso rende
chi pur nell'ira la donna
offende.

*The man who insults a
woman, though in anger,
renders himself worthy of scorn.*

Dov'è mio figlio? Più
non lo vedo

*Where is my son? I no longer
recognize him.*

In te più Alfredo trovar,
no, no non so.

*I can no longer find Alfredo
in you.*

His approval of Violetta's sacrifice — here and elsewhere in the opera — is another expression of bourgeois mentality. If you know your place it is all right. Class consciousness here only means that. Violetta is redeemed because she knew her place and accepted her condition as a *demi-mondaine*. She is assisted by father and son in her death, but this only seems to be

a sort of confirmation that she can no longer be a nuisance for the Germont family.

In *Camille*, Marguerite dies all by herself. The confirmation that she is no longer a trouble for “decent” society is here even much more cruel and explicit. And the play ends with the total indifference of the upper

**Bourgeois dignity
still commands
the great public's
taste**

class. Bela, Prudence, Gaston, and Sophie tell Armand to travel to Italy in order to forget his pain. Armand's reaction to this piece of advice somehow redeems him, too. In the play he is presented as young bourgeois inflamed by passion and trying to fulfil another of his caprices. But now he seems to be at least partly aware of the real cause of Marguerite's death:

ARMAND: No. No. (*He rises.*) You killed her. Were we so threatening? One man? One woman? It was the wrong transaction. There was a chance. A chance for something real. Something mutual. There for the taking like an apple on a tree. Something ordinary. Unnoticeable.

PRUDENCE: A dream.

ARMAND: There was respect. Honour. Possibility. But you don't want that. What do you want?

(*Camille*, Act 2)

In the opera, Alfredo simply remains the Romantic young man in love, somehow vain and indifferent. In fact, he is much more worried about his own situation after Violetta's death:

No, non morrai, non
dirmelo,
dèi viver, amor mio;
a strazio sì terribil
qui non mi trasse Iddio

*No, you are not going to die; do
not tell me so;
you must live, my love.
God has not brought me here
for such dreadful torture.*

(*La Traviata*, Act 3)

La Traviata and *Camille* are two different readings of the same myth. The opera is still a favourite with audiences all around the world. *Camille* — as far as we know — was not a great success even in the author's country. It is a great feminist play, but perhaps its frankness and truth make audiences uneasy. Our society is still bourgeois, and we are shocked every time our values are questioned. We still prefer harmless love-stories that do not disturb us too much. Bourgeois dignity still commands the great public's tastes.

NOTES

¹YEATS, L.A. “Marie, Alexandre and after”, in the libretto for the London recording of Verdi's *La Traviata* DSA 1279, 1963, with Pilar Lorengar, Giacomo Aragall and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau in the main roles.

²CASE, Sue-Ellen. *Feminism and Theatre*. London, Macmillan, 1988, p. 82-3.

Valter Lellis Siqueira é mestrando na área de LILINA-USP

A ascensão do romance na Inglaterra do século XVIII marca também a inauguração de um longo e intenso processo de discussão sobre o novo gênero. Inicialmente restrita aos prefácios, onde escritores como Defoe, Richardson ou Fielding refletiam sobre seus objetivos e sobre os problemas técnicos que enfrentavam, a atividade reflexiva que acompanha o período de formação do romance se expande de modo surpreendente, invadindo periódicos e revistas literárias e ganhando espaço na correspondência de leitores.

A certeza de estarem trilhando novos caminhos faz com que durante todo um século não só escritores mas também dramaturgos, periodistas, resenhadores e jornalistas se ocupem em defender, explicar, atacar ou justificar o romance. Os periódicos, os romances, as cartas, os diários transformam-se em palco de um debate que colocou de um lado os defensores do novo gênero e, de outro, seus detratores. Trava-se um verdadeiro embate de idéias e concepções divergentes sobre o que é um romance ou a que propósitos deve servir. Acusado por seus inimigos de “perigoso”, “pernicioso”, “inútil”, “subversivo” ou “frívolo”, o romance se defende como pode, sem, no entanto, abandonar a arena. Estima-se que aproximadamente 2 mil romances foram publicados durante o século XVIII e, apesar de opiniões como a do personagem de Sheridan, na peça *The Rivals*, que condenava as bibliotecas circulantes como “an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge” (Ato I), houve um verdadeiro dilúvio de títulos que as alimentaram. Isto explica certamente a quantidade surpreendente de discussão sobre o gênero que tem lugar ao longo do século, mesmo depois de seu período de preparação e fermentação.

Sem dúvida, o novo gênero ganha força a partir de 1740, com a publicação de *Pamela*, de Samuel Richardson, e a fundação da primeira biblioteca circulante na cidade de Londres¹. Mas a história do

Notas Sobre o Romance

Inglês do Século

XVIII

SANDRA VASCONCELOS

Men must be taught as if you taught them not.
ALEXANDER POPE, *Essay on Criticism*

romance certamente não começa aí; foi, na verdade, fruto de um longo processo de gestação que se iniciou muito antes.

O “romance” medieval, a novela, os panfletos, a tradição dos “jest-books” — todas essas formas já apresentavam, em maior ou menor grau, algum traço realista, seja através de um diálogo vivo aqui, da atenção ao detalhe ali, ou de uma descrição de cenário num terceiro caso. Também ao tratar do homem comum, como fizeram Nashe e DeLoney, a ficção havia dado mais um passo em direção ao novo modo literário, que vai fazer da vida privada e doméstica seu grande tema.

Mas é particularmente desde o início do século XVIII que a ficção começa a dar mostras de estar se aproximando daquilo que reconhecemos como sendo o mundo do romance. Talvez prosa de ficção fosse uma expressão mais

Fiction
Ficção

adequada para denominar e englobar a variedade de publicações daqueles momentos iniciais que, intitulados “A história de...”, “As memórias de...”, “As aventuras de...”, “A vida de...”, pareciam pretender dar alguma verossimilhança aos relatos e torná-los mais aceitáveis pelo público leitor, que colocava sob suspeita tudo o que contivesse um conteúdo ficcional. Nesse sentido, não fica difícil entender por que tantos escritores se valeram do truque de se apresentarem como editores de um velho manuscrito, depositários de antigos papéis ou testemunhos, ou editores de cartas, prática que perdura ao longo de todo o século. A própria instabilidade do termo “novel”, que só vai se fixar na língua inglesa para denominar o romance já no final do século XVIII, pode ser mais um motivo para usarmos a expressão “prosa de ficção” ao nos referirmos a muitas das produções desses momentos iniciais.

É dessa época de formação que datam os primeiros prefácios, surgidos em obras que praticamente desapareceram da maioria dos manuais de história literária e que só encontram registro nos catálogos de levantamento da ficção publicada no período. Ao lado dos chamados “pais-fundadores” (Richardson, Fielding, Smollett e Sterne), há um sem-número de escritores marginalizados, ou simplesmente esquecidos, cujo esforço e contribuição foram fundamentais para consolidar e transmitir a tradição, seja pela renovação, seja pela repetição. Esses romancistas de “segundo time”, para usar a expressão de Marlyse Meyer, são importantes justamente porque nos permitem trazer à luz os elos esquecidos no processo de constituição do gênero. Desses, muitos são mulheres².

Num momento em que o gênero não está definido e suas fronteiras não estão demarcadas, e em que a régua usada pelos seus contemporâneos para medir o “bom” ou “mau” desempenho dos escritores é aquela da tradi-

ção clássica, a própria perplexidade reinante é um dado significativo: profusão de termos, de critérios, de exigências, de propósitos.

Recém-chegado à cena literária, ao romance faltam tradição e sangue nobre. Em que pesem as tentativas de dar-lhe uma ascendência, associando-o à épica, ele é, na verdade, um “parvenu de la République de lettres”³. Numa época em que se valoriza a “polite literature”, a arte e a cultura “altas” são restritas ao consumo de uma elite que as considera sinal de refinamento e distinção. O romance, de origem bastarda, é imediatamente associado ao popular e visto por muitos como uma leitura pouco recomendável, passatempo de ociosos, ou, mais grave ainda, corruptor de costumes. Daí ser ele frequentemente julgado mais a partir de critérios morais do que estéticos. Mas seu grande apelo popular acaba por fazer com que muitos passem a ver no romance um precioso instrumento pedagógico. Trata-se de uma estratégia consciente de utilizá-lo com fins educativos, na esteira daquilo que tinham realizado os periódicos *Tatler* e *Spectator*, instituições centrais da “esfera pública burguesa” na Inglaterra do começo do século XVIII, que, segundo Terry Eagleton, estavam engajadas num “empreendimento mais amplo que explora atitudes para com os servos e as regras do comportamento galante, o *status* das mulheres e afetos familiares, a pureza da língua inglesa, o caráter do amor conjugal, a psicologia dos sentimentos e as leis da toalete”⁴. Há uma preocupação generalizada com o decoro, com as regras de comportamento, com o modo de vestir e falar, com a adequação das leituras. No caso do romance, o que aparece com frequência na crítica é o raciocínio de que, se o romance tem um forte apelo popular e os jovens vão lê-lo de qualquer forma, é melhor que ele contenha uma boa dose de instrução, dentro do preceito horaciano do *dulce et utile*.

Em 1741, respondendo a seu médico e amigo Dr. Cheyne, que o tinha aconselhado a evitar expressões ternas e trocas de carinhos entre seus personagens Pamela e Mr. B, pois isso não ficava bem particularmente em relação às mulheres, Samuel Richardson escreve:

**O romance,
de origem
bastarda, é
visto por
muitos como
corruptor de
costumes**

I am endeavouring to write a story, which shall catch young and airy minds, and when passions run high in them, to show how they may be directed to laudable meanings and purposes, in order to decry such Novels and Romances, as have a tendency to inflame and corrupt.⁵

Para muitos, portanto, o novo gênero é aceitável desde que seu conteúdo possa ser controlado e mantido sob vigilância. Não se trata de censura, obviamente, mas de estabelecer regras, limites e freios ao caráter nocivo de uma forma literária que convida ao devaneio e que pode levar os jovens a condutas inadequadas por encher-lhes a cabeça de fantasias e irrealidades. Através dos prefácios, assistimos ao longo e difícil esforço do romance para livrar-se do princípio do “doce remédio”. Ainda quase no final do século, é possível encontrar aqueles que defendem sua finalidade moral, como Clara Reeve em seu prefácio a *The School for Widows*, de 1791. Há alguns, inclusive, que se referem ao romance por meio de metáforas mais pesadas, que se estendem um pouco além dos tradicionais “pernicioso”, “perigoso”, “subversivo”, “frívolo”... Fanny Burney, por exemplo, encara o romance como uma doença:

Para muitas mulheres, o romance era a única forma de acesso a qualquer tipo de informação ou “educação”

Perhaps were it possible to effect the total extirpation of novels, our young ladies in general, and boarding-school damsels in particular, might profit from their annihilation: but since the distemper they have spread seems incurable, since their contagion bids defiance to the medicine of advice and reprehension, and since they are found to baffle all the mental art of physic, save what is prescribed by the slow regimen of time, and bitter diet of experience, surely...⁶

Paradoxalmente, apesar de considerá-lo um mal que seria desejável extirpar, Burney escreve um romance! Seu propósito, porém, é contribuir com o número daqueles que podem ser lidos “if not with advantage, at least without injury”.

Esse é apenas um dos exemplos dos dilemas e das contradições que fazem a história do romance nesse período. O desejo de educar o leitor, de influir na sua formação, de oferecer-lhe instrução de maneira agradável e até mesmo imperceptível mostra claramente a construção de um elo de ligação entre o escritor e seu público. Para muitas mulheres, inclusive, o romance era a única forma de acesso a qualquer tipo de informação ou “educação”. E é exatamente isso que a maior parte dos romancistas deseja lhes oferecer. Eram elas basicamente o público-alvo, para quem os romances eram destinados. Seu novo papel dentro da família burguesa lhes atribuía uma nova importância na sociedade e, por isso mesmo, era preciso cuidar de suas leituras:

What improvements would a woman have made, who is so susceptible of impressions from what she reads, had she been guided to such books as have a tendency to enlighten the understanding and rectify the passions, as well as to those which are of little more use than to divert the imagination.

But the manner of a lady's employing herself usefully in reading shall be the subject of another paper, in which I design to recommend such particular books as may be proper for the improvement of the sex.⁷

A promessa é cumprida por Richard Steele em 1714, quando ele publica *The Ladies Library*, cujo objetivo declarado é “to fix in the mind general rules for conduct in all the circumstances of the life of women”.

Essas tentativas de se relacionar diretamente com o leitor, de falar-lhe e reformar seus modos e costumes faz da história do romance um processo de construção compartilhado igualmente pelos produtores e consumidores do gênero. O leitor cumpre um papel inédito

e é parte fundamental neste processo. Richard Cumberland, autor de *Henry* (1795), fala, em um dos seus capítulos introdutórios, de uma espécie de senso de responsabilidade do escritor para com o leitor:

It is a very sacred correspondence, that which takes place between the mind of the author and the mind of the reader; it is not like the slight and casual intercourse we hold with our familiars and acquaintances, where any practice serves to fill a few social minutes, and set the table in a roar; what we commit to our readers has no apology from hurry and inattention; it is the result of thought well digested, of sentiments by which we must stand or fall in reputation, of principles for which we must be responsible to our contemporaries and to posterity.⁸

Há, como já disse, o esforço em pôr fim às suspeitas do público em relação à ficção (daí o recurso ao truque do manuscrito, das cartas editadas, etc.). Por outro lado, é preciso criar um leitor que aceite as convenções do gênero, que vão sendo definidas passo a passo. Vê-se no diálogo que se estabelece entre o escritor e o público, através dos prefácios ou dos capítulos introdutórios, o desejo do escritor de dar um rosto a esse público, que já não é conhecido nem facilmente identificável. Ele já não mais escreve, como antes, para um pequeno círculo de pessoas que imaginava conhecer.

Na impossibilidade de identificar os leitores, alguns romancistas tentam recriar esse pequeno círculo em torno de si, com quem mantêm uma troca aparentemente infinita de comentários, explicações, etc. Há um intenso debate através de cartas, como bem o demonstra a volumosa correspondência de Richardson com seus leitores e admiradores (grande parte dos quais são mulheres), e também através das resenhas e cartas publicadas nas revistas literárias, que começam a se multiplicar por volta da metade do século. A prática da subscrição, que faz

O novo gênero provoca comoção em seu período de formação

deles “patrocinadores coletivos”, é outra forma de chamar os leitores a se transformarem em membros de uma “comunidade de participantes benevolentes de um projeto de escrita”⁹.

É surpreendente para o leitor dos dias de hoje, habituado ao mundo do romance, testemunhar a comoção que o novo gênero provoca nesse período de formação e consolidação. O romance torna-se um fenômeno. É popular, é sucesso, vende, é lido. E fala-se sobre ele, em todas as oportunidades e em todas as rodas. *Robinson Crusoe*, de Daniel Defoe, *Gulliver's Travels*, de Jonathan Swift e *Love in Excess*, da esquecida Eliza Haywood, são, de acordo com John Richetti¹⁰, os romances mais populares até a publicação de *Pamela*, que, assim como *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, *Clarissa* e *Roderick Random*, alcança várias reedições durante os anos 50 e 60.

Apesar dos fatores que trabalham contra o aumento do público leitor (quantidade insuficiente de escolas, acesso restrito à escolaridade, entrada precoce de crianças no mercado de trabalho, alto preço dos livros, a idéia de que a leitura deve permanecer um privilégio de classe, etc.), há uma expansão significativa do número de leitores, principalmente entre as mulheres de classe média, que se transformam em peça fundamental no processo de produção e consumo do romance. Os romancistas destinam suas obras para elas, que respondem acorrendo às livrarias ou bibliotecas circulantes para obter um exemplar. A sede insaciável por romances cria um mercado que exige permanente renovação e ao mesmo tempo faz surgir a figura do escritor profissional, que escreve por dinheiro e é contratado pelos livreiros para alimentar esse mercado. Algumas mulheres também se profissionalizam. Nem todas, no entanto, assinam suas produções, como Eliza Haywood, ou admitem que escrevem por dinheiro, como Charlotte Smith. Muitas, por causa das restrições a esse tipo de atividade para mulheres, se escondem sob pseudônimo ou publicam anonimamente. Este é o caso de Fanny Burney, que só se revelou autora de *Evelina* após certificar-se de que o romance tinha tido boa acolhida entre seus amigos e familiares.

A transformação do comércio de romances num rendoso negócio acabou por fazer dele uma mercadoria descartável, e portanto facilmente substituível, e por mediocrizá-lo.

Os anos 70 assistem, segundo Tompkins¹¹, a um período de estagnação do gênero. Com destino certo — as bibliotecas circulantes — e um público de gosto tido como previsível, a palavra de ordem era vender. Daí a repetição infinita de fórmulas bem-sucedidas e o recurso à imitação. A bem-humorada crítica de Charles Anstey a essa situação, em forma de “receita para um romance”, dá bem idéia desse esgotamento¹². Os modelos eram sempre Richardson, Fielding, Smollett e Sterne, já naquela altura reconhecidos como grandes por seus próprios pares e pelas revistas literárias. O problema, ainda segundo Tompkins, é que os imitadores vão aproveitar-se das “partes menos esplêndidas” dos quatro mestres e o gênero só vai recuperar fôlego na década de 80, com a retomada da experimentação e com o surgimento de novos temas, personagens e cenários.

Toda essa história, desde o momento de formação e consolidação do gênero, de criação da figura do romancista, de constituição do leitor, aparece de forma clara nos prefácios, panfletos, cartas e diários, nas conversas entre personagens que discutem e emitem juízos sobre romances, nas resenhas das revistas literárias. Dentre todos esses espaços de debate, a prática do prefácio parece ser um fenômeno essencialmente próprio do período, tendo inclusive desaparecido quase por completo nos romances do século XIX. Parece haver uma necessidade de o escritor manter um diálogo com seu leitor, mesmo que ele não consiga visualizá-lo, ou talvez exatamente porque este tenha se tornado anônimo. O prefácio é uma forma de aproximar o leitor, permitindo ao escritor dirigir-se diretamente a ele,

A prática do prefácio parece ser um fenômeno próprio do período de formação do romance

num tom de conversa franca e cordial. É também um espaço de debate entre os próprios escritores, que dialogam em seus livros uns com os outros. Cria-se, portanto, um interlocutor, fruto da necessidade de compartilhar a explicitação de propósitos, a investigação de soluções formais, a busca de definições e de justificativas.

Basicamente, os prefácios, artigos e panfletos que discutem o novo gênero ocupam-se de questões fundamentais como: definição do gênero; problemas de forma e técnica; questionamento do conteúdo próprio ao romance; questões éticas; a figura do leitor; o papel do romancista; estratégias narrativas; a relação do romance com outros gêneros, entre outras. Sobretudo, esses textos traçam a história do próprio gênero, suas ramificações, seus caminhos e descaminhos. Vemos confrontadas diferentes concepções, principalmente o modo dramático de Richardson e o “épico” de Fielding. Assistimos ao nascimento do romance gótico, no prefácio de Horace Walpole a *The Castle of Otranto*, de 1765. Testemunhamos a crítica ao culto da sensibilidade feita por Clara Reeve em seu prefácio a *The School for Widows*, de 1791. Ou ainda a proposta de romance de idéias, incorporando o ponto de vista ético ou político de seus autores (Thomas Holcroft, Mary Wollstonecraft ou William Godwin, por exemplo).

A maleabilidade do romance lhe permite apropriar diferentes formas de escrita

Esses textos são testemunho dos problemas enfrentados pelos romancistas. Desde o princípio, quando a palavra “novel” era usada para se referir a uma história de amor sentimental, até o final do século, quando seu sentido moderno se estabiliza, há uma grande confusão entre os termos “novel” e “romance”, freqüentemente usados um pelo outro. Essa dificuldade vai permanecer século afora, com algumas exceções. T. Henry Croker, por exemplo, registra em seu *The Complete Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, de 1765, uma definição que coloca alguns parâmetros essenciais:

romance de idéias, incorporando o ponto de vista ético ou político de seus autores (Thomas Holcroft, Mary Wollstonecraft ou William Godwin, por exemplo).

Esses textos são testemunho dos problemas enfrentados pelos romancistas. Desde o princípio, quando a palavra “novel”

NOVEL, in matters of literature, a fictitious history of a series of surprizing and entertaining events in common life, wherein the rules of probability are or ought to be strictly preserved; in which it differs from a romance, where the hero and heroine is some prince and princess, and the events which lead to the catastrophe, are in general absurd and unnatural.

Nem todos, porém, fazem essa distinção. Se não parece tão fácil decidir sobre o nome desse novo modo literário, que ora é chamado de “romance”, ora de “novel”, ora de “history”, ora de “biography”, há, no entanto, uma concordância de que a matéria desse “new species of writing” é a vida privada do homem comum. Todos também parecem concordar com a exigência da probabilidade. Este é, sem dúvida, um dos termos de mais alta recorrência, aparecendo em diferentes textos e em diferentes épocas.

De modo geral, as dificuldades enfrentadas pela maioria dos romancistas parece advir da própria liberdade que é característica intrínseca ao romance. Se a ausência de modelos e regras é motivo de crítica para muitos, ela também é a propriedade que lhes possibilita o tateio e a experimentação. A maleabilidade é da natureza do romance e lhe permite apropriar diferentes formas de escrita, como cartas, sermões, diários, tratados, etc. O didatismo, o sentimentalismo, a doutrinação, o ensinamento moral, a fantasia gótica — tudo é incorporado por esse gênero sem fronteiras. Por outro lado, essa liberdade e maleabilidade assustam, fazendo com que muitos procurem manter o romance sob estreita vigilância, numa tentativa de colocar-lhe rédeas e estabelecer limites para ele. Esta é com certeza a raiz do conteúdo altamente prescritivo e normativo dos comentários e das resenhas. Assim como Addison e Steele tinham feito com o *Tatler* e o *Spectator*, no início do século, muitos querem atribuir ao romance uma tarefa reformadora, da qual só muito lentamente ele vai se libertar.

No entanto, talvez a acusação de subversão imputada ao romance não seja tão inapropriada e fora de propósito. Não certamente a subversão moral de que falam seus detratores, mas a subversão própria de um

gênero que demonstra, nos seus melhores e mais altos momentos ao longo do século, eludir os próprios objetivos edificantes dos seus autores. A ambigüidade e a complexidade de personagens como Pamela ou Clarissa, por exemplo, são prova concreta das possibilidades do gênero. É bom lembrar também que é dentro desse quadro que Laurence Sterne produz o anti-romance do século, *Tristram Shandy* (1760-1767), todo ele uma reflexão sobre o próprio processo de sua escrita.

De todos aqueles que colaboraram para pensar a questão do romance ao longo do século XVIII, é, sem dúvida, fundamental ressaltar a contribuição de Richardson e de Fielding, cuja reflexão sobre seu processo de criação toma a forma de um conjunto de idéias extremamente coesas. No caso deles, a quantidade e a qualidade dessas idéias se traduzem em duas significativas teorias do romance, que valem não só pelo que apresentam em termos de reflexão sobre o gênero, mas que vão se multiplicar, através dos seus adeptos ou imitadores. O impacto de suas realizações e idéias vai dividir seus contemporâneos em dois campos: os defensores do modo dramático ou do caráter edificante da narrativa epistolar de Richardson e os defensores do modo narrativo do poema épico-cômico em prosa de Fielding, com seus capítulos introdutórios e humor benevolente. Trata-se de duas concepções e dois métodos narrativos em confronto, que vão fazer inúmeros imitadores e diluidores.

O romance não se livra do romanesco

Há, no entanto, um aspecto sobre o qual os dois mestres parecem estar de acordo. E isto porque compartilham da noção de personagem corrente entre seus contemporâneos. O século XVIII ainda retém muito fortemente a noção de personagem teofrástico, e o romance vai ser palco da coexistência entre esta concepção e uma outra mais moderna, ou seja, entre generalidade e individualidade. As evidências desse convívio obrigam a relativizar um dos traços que Ian Watt propõe como definidores do romance no seu período de ascensão, em *The Rise of the Novel*¹³.

Apesar de reconhecer que alguns dos personagens, principalmente nos romances de Fielding, ainda conservam traços do *tipo*, Watt afirma que há uma grande ênfase na individualização do personagem, que ganha nome, sobrenome e endereço, e tem na sua própria experiência a única fonte de aprendizagem, já que não pode mais se basear em modelos. Sem dúvida alguma, esta colocação é absolutamente correta. Na tentativa de fortalecer seu argumento, no entanto, Watt deixa de considerar que há ainda muito de exemplar e representativo nos personagens desse período. Basta ver o que dizem Richardson e Fielding em seus prefácios e como constroem seus personagens nos romances, para perceber que há um propósito de aliar à individualidade deles um caráter exemplar. Clarissa é um ótimo exemplo desse procedimento, no caso de Richardson. Por sua vez, Fielding afirma que a provisão que faz em *Tom Jones* não é outra senão a natureza humana, referindo-se ao que é geral e característico (Livro I, capítulo 1).

Outra questão que fica absolutamente clara, no conjunto de prefácios, é a da sobrevivência do “romance”. Embora tenha se distanciado paulatinamente do romanesco, abandonando o recurso ao maravilhoso, o personagem de poderes sobre-humanos e os eventos sobrenaturais, o romance não se livra de seu antecessor. O romanesco se oculta, se desloca (para usar um termo de Northrop Frye), mas não desaparece por completo. Ainda que inúmeros romancistas o condenem em seus prefácios ou em suas reflexões, muitas vezes ele faz suas aparições em suas obras, usando o recurso de revelações de última hora (em geral relacionadas ao nascimento do herói) ou casamentos entre a moçoila de classe baixa e o aristocrata (Pamela é o mais clássico exemplo do gênero, com sua dose de “wish fulfilment”). A prova mais cabal de sua permanência está na sua reaparição com força total no romance gótico, a partir de 1765.

Se Clara Reeve percebe que o romance moderno nasce das ruínas do romanesco, em seu *The Progress of Romance* (1785), é também ela que vai aplicar, na esteira de Horace Walpole, a mistura do “romance” e do

“novel”, do antigo e do moderno, abrindo caminho para uma nova fase na história do gênero, que vai ter em Ann Radcliffe sua maior representante.

As questões que os prefácios levantam merecem atenção porque podem nos ajudar a compreender melhor qual foi o processo de constituição de um gênero que, se hoje faz parte da nossa tradição literária, já teve que empunhar armas para conquistar seu espaço.

O recurso ao truque do velho manuscrito ou das cartas que foram confiadas ao escritor, que se apresenta como mero editor, atravessa todo o século, aparecendo desde cedo nas obras de Defoe, reaparecendo em Richardson, em Horace Walpole e ainda, em 1785, na advertência ao leitor de *The Recess*, de Sophia Lee. Pedidos de desculpas por corrigir erros gramaticais e falhas de texto também são comuns, como forma de autenticar o relato e fazer parecer ao leitor que o que ele lê não é produto da imaginação, mas sim fato.

São, sem dúvida, recursos de quem quer dar um “ar de verdade” à narrativa, para atender à exigência de plausibilidade e verossimilhança, palavras de ordem

Do ponto de vista de concepção, há um vínculo estreito entre natureza e personagem

no período, desde o prefácio de Mary Delariviere Manley a *The Secret History of Queen Zarah*, de 1705. É certamente em busca de credibilidade que Manley e, mais tarde, o anônimo autor de *The Highland Rogue* (1724) se perguntam como fazer para reproduzir palavra por palavra a fala de um personagem, numa cena em que não poderiam estar presentes sem romper com a verossimilhança de seus relatos. Questões dessa ordem mostram como as convenções foram se construindo a cada passo, até chegarmos ao que hoje chamamos de pacto de ficcionalidade.

Também é no prefácio de Manley que temos, pela primeira vez, a condenação do uso do episódio, que, segundo ela, desvia a atenção do leitor da história principal, enganando sua curiosidade e retardando seu prazer de assistir ao final de um evento. Essa mes-

ma crítica vamos reencontrar em Richardson, que reivindica para *Clarissa* unidade de propósito (“unity of design”), explicando que não há aí uma digressão ou episódio sequer. Essa exigência vai aparecer em outros prefácios, como em *Alicyn*, romance de Thomas Holcroft (1780), muitas vezes aliada ao requisito de unidade de enredo, certamente em função do próprio quadro de referência da tradição clássica. Muitos se utilizam de conceitos como catástrofe, patético, épico, trágico, cômico, terror ou compaixão, aproveitando um vocabulário crítico conhecido para explicar o novo ou, muito provavelmente, para tentar enobrecer um gênero que sabem não ter origem na tradição.

Outros exaltam justamente a acessibilidade do romance, que, diferentemente dos gêneros clássicos, não exige educação ou treinamento para ser apreciado; ou valorizam a proximidade que ele estabelece com o leitor por tratar de eventos a que todos estão expostos e paixões que todos conhecem. O tempo de que trata o romance é o tempo presente e seus enredos revolvem em torno de coisas familiares, circunscrevendo-se ao mundo doméstico e ao “private men in the common walks of life”. Daí certamente a idéia de que romances são cópias da vida real ou pinturas da vida e costumes reais e a valorização do conhecimento da natureza humana. O narrador reitera muitas vezes em seus capítulos introdutórios a *Tom Jones* que, para contar sua história, apenas lê o livro da natureza. Assim como probabilidade, esta é outra palavra de alta recorrência nos prefácios e são muitos os autores que apresentam seus romances como uma “verdadeira descrição da natureza”. Com seu conteúdo geral e característico, o conceito de natureza que aparece nestes textos se vincula à noção de personagem com teor de exemplaridade.

No prefácio a *The Cry*, Sarah Fielding declara pretender que seus personagens signifiquem a natureza em geral, enquanto seu irmão diz, em *Joseph Andrews*, “in most of our particular characters we mean not to lash individuals, but all of the like sort”. Fanny Burney opõe vida (particular, específico) e natureza (geral e característico), propondo-se a “draw characters from nature, though not from life” em *Evelina*. Há, portanto,

do ponto de vista de concepção, um vínculo estreito entre estas duas noções — de natureza e personagem —, que retêm ainda uma dose bastante alta de conteúdo de representatividade. Personagem natural é aquele que é reconhecido pelo leitor e que apresenta uma compatibilidade perfeita entre sua imagem externa e suas qualidades interiores. Não há lugar para inconsistência entre sua reputação e sua interioridade. Richardson, por exemplo, deseja fazer de seu Sir Charles Grandison “a man acting uniformly well” e tanto *Clarissa* como *Anna Howe* são propostas como “exemplar to her sex”.

A discussão de personagem ocupa bastante espaço nos prefácios. E ela está em geral relacionada com a discussão de conteúdo moral. Com algumas exceções, como Charlotte Smith, que procura em seu prefácio a *The Young Philosopher* explicar didaticamente ao leitor que ele deve diferenciar entre os sentimentos e opiniões dos personagens e aqueles do autor, o que vemos é a tentativa de resolver um dilema criado pelo próprio objetivo de copiar a vida real. Como conciliar o desejo de exemplaridade e a cópia? Isto é, como ser fiel na representação da natureza humana, sem tratar de seus vícios? Ninguém deseja criar um “faultless monster”, como diz Richardson, ao tentar explicar “the unpremeditated faults” ou “defects in judgment” de seus personagens. Suas cartas a seus leitores e correspondentes reiteram infatigavelmente suas intenções edificantes e a virtude quase sem mácula de suas criaturas.

Admitir a representação do vício em romances que assumem para si a tarefa de reformar costumes implica uma delicada operação argumentativa que obriga os romancistas a acender uma vela a Deus e outra ao Diabo, na tentativa de resolver a contradição. O prefácio de Daniel Defoe a *Roxana* (1724) é um exemplo desta tentativa:

If there are any parts in her story, which being oblig'd to relate a wicked action, seem to describe it too plainly, the *writer says*, all imaginable care has been taken to keep clear of indecencies, and immodest expressions; and 'tis hop'd you will find nothing to prompt a vicious

mind, but everywhere much to discourage and expose it. Scenes of crime can scarce be represented in such a manner; but some may make a criminal use of them; but when vice is painted in its low-priz'd colours, 'tis not to make people in love with it, but to expose it; and if the reader makes a wrong use of the figures, the wickedness is his own.

Outros, como o anônimo autor de *The Campaign* (1759), preferem admitir que, se desejam compor uma pintura da vida comum, seus personagens terão que ser uma mistura de virtude e vício:

I hope you will not find such unnatural monsters of fine ladies and fine gentlemen in the higher characters, nor such unmeaning absurd buffoonery in those of the lower, as you have met within the common run of novels. I have endeavoured to draw them all, like human creatures as we have about us; some very vicious, some very virtuous, but most, what most men are, a mixture of bad and good. I have not, I freely own, made my hero a perfect character; because I have often observed, that as such characters resemble nobody, so they interest nobody by their example.

A defesa do "mixt character" também aparece em um dos capítulos introdutórios a *Henry*, de Richard Cumberland (1795), e no anônimo artigo *On Novel Writing*, de 1797, com aproximadamente a mesma argumentação.

No entanto, quase imaculados na sua perfeição ou resultado de gradações de luz e sombra, os personagens são ainda e sempre atores em romances que se pretendem veículos de instrução moral.

Solitárias são as vozes que se levantam em defesa do romance como puro entretenimento, em que a fantasia e a imaginação passam a constituir a sua principal razão de ser. É preciso esperar bastante para que alguém possa dizer, como Mrs. Barbauld no prefácio à sua edição de *The British Novelists*, que "entertainment is their (the novels') legitimate end and object".

NOTES

¹Bibliotecas circulantes totalmente organizadas se desenvolveram nas províncias antes de aparecerem em Londres. Há controvérsias sobre a data de fundação da primeira biblioteca em Londres, mas acredita-se que Thomas Wright já tinha se estabelecido ali por volta de 1740. Sobre esse assunto, ver: MCKILLOP, Allan. *English Circulating Libraries 1725-1750. The Library, Forth Series*, v. 4, p. 477-85, 1934; STEWART-MURPHY, Charlotte A. *A History of British Circulating Libraries*. Pennsylvania, Bird & Bull Press, 1992.

²Segundo Dale Spender, há levantamentos que dão conta da existência de cerca de 600 escritoras no período. Ver *Mothers of the Novel*. London, Pandora, 1986.

³MAY, Georges. *Le Dilemme du Roman au XVIII siècle. Étude sur les rapports du roman et de la critique (1715-1767)*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1963, p. 8.

⁴EAGLETON, Terry. *The Function of Criticism*. London, Verso, 1984, p. 18.

⁵Carta de Samuel Richardson a Dr. George Cheyne, datada de 31 de agosto de 1741. Ver CARROLL, John (ed.). *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964.

⁶BURNEY, Fanny. Prefácio a *Evelina*, 1778.

⁷*The Spectator*, n. 37, 12 abr. 1710-1711.

⁸CUMBERLAND, Richard. *Henry*. Livro VIII, cap. I, 1795.

⁹EAGLETON, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁰RICHETTI, John J. *Popular Fiction Before Richardson. Narrative Patterns 1700-1739*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969.

¹¹TOMPKINS, J.M.S. *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800*. London, Methuen, 1961.

¹²ANSTEY, Charles. *The New Bath Guide*, 1766.

¹³WATT, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel. Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. London, Penguin, 1983. Ver especialmente o capítulo I, "Realism and the Novel Form".

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Fiction
Ficção

The Irish under The Southern Cross

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The aim of this paper is to show how Borges “re-reads” the system of significations through which the Irish-Argentinian society understands itself and its relationship with the Motherland and the New Land. In 1861 the British living in Buenos Aires had an Anglo-Irish newspaper, *The Standard*, where their feelings and conditions of living were portrayed. But it was in 1875 that the Irish community got its own newspaper, *The Southern Cross*, and one of its editors was Borges’ great-grandfather, Edward Young Haslam.

A special interest towards Ireland and its people was born in Borges when he was young due to his blood ascendancy. In some of his short stories he portrays the Irish reversing some of the common stereotypes. Thus, his Irish characters assume either the role of the “other” or of the “informer” while he plays with the opposing romantic ideas of traitor and hero. This is the case of “El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan,” “La forma de la espada” and “Tema del traidor y del héroe” in *Ficciones*.¹

In an attempt to give an insight into the imaginative mind of the writer, of how it interacts with the historical and cultural context in his creative process, I will present a dialogic exchange between Borges’ stories and Thomas Murray’s *History of the Irish in Argentina*² from a cultural materialistic perspective.

The British in the Spanish colonies of South America

Historical records show that two “Englishmen” came to the New World with Columbus — Tallarte de Lajes, of unknown origin, and William Yres, Irish from Galvey. Since then, many British with a strong spirit of adventure, later inspired by Raleigh’s writings, joined Portuguese and Spanish expeditions to come to the mysterious lands south of the Equator. Others came in merchant ships looking for the Incas’ treasures and unknown natural products for trading.

As in 1588 Spain was at war with England the English became allies of Portugal and helped the Portuguese in their attempt to conquer the lands of the River Plate. In the 18th and 19th centuries, whenever a British ship came to Spanish colonized regions, it was associated with piracy, smuggling and invasions in the River Plate. Nevertheless, British jesuits were very much concerned with bringing peace, religion and civilization to the natives of the southernmost lands. The precursor of the jesuit missions in the North of Argentina, Paraguay and South of Brazil was Father Thomas Fehily (Field), an Irishman from Limerick in County Munster, who came to the River Plate in 1587.

The Irish community in Argentina: a historical perspective

Between 1600 and the establishment of the Viceroyalty of the River Plate in 1776, many wealthy Irish emigrants who were religious refugees in Spain went to Buenos Aires to open trading houses or to seek em-

ployment with merchants. Then the drifters, the adventurers and colonists arrived by the ways the poor are forced to use and they received the help of the already settled Irish.

The second Irish emigrant movement to South America was due not only to religious and political persecutions in their Motherland but also to the Great Famine after the 1840's. Their primary aim was to own a piece of land because they brought with them the Irish consciousness of the "dispossessed". Thus, the Irish immigrants strove for the possession of the wealthiest lands in the province of Buenos Aires, dedicating themselves to agriculture and sheep-farming.

It is said that the dominant notes of Irish consciousness are land, religion and nationality. Land and religion were already identified with patriotic resistance in 16th century Ireland when partly under the pressure of the Reformation and partly because of the destitution of the mendicant orders, the priests preached loyalty to Rome and revolt against the English. This identification becomes stronger during the Romantic movement by the end of the 18th century and the rise of nationalism in the 19th century when "Catholicism was the fundamental tenet of the political movement of the people-nation in its move towards national self-determination," as David Cairns and Shaun Richards say in *Writing Ireland*.³ Thus, "Irishness" was defined against an English "otherness" while "Englishness" was counterpoised to the national identity of the Anglo-Irish and Irish-Irish communities. However, I want to

Borges redefining "Irishness"

call attention to the fact that the Irish intellectual tradition interprets Irish identity not from a centralising perspective that censors everything through a dualistic logic of "either/or" but from a perspective favouring a dialectical logic of "both/and" exploring what is the "other", as Richard Kearney discussed in *The Irish Mind*.⁴ It is this dialectical consciousness of "Irishness" that was re-interpreted by Borges in his stories about Ireland and its people.

As Borges was attracted by Romantic Ireland he characterizes the Irish primarily within a nationalistic context. In *Atlas* (1984) he describes Ireland as

a country with essentially good people, naturally Christian, seized by the curious passion of being incessantly Irish" ("Irlanda", p. 408).

This passion of being Irish is present in Borges' stories. His Irish characters are placed in a revolutionary context where the dyads treason/loyalty, shame/honour vanish to give way to the Irish dialectical logic of "both/and".

In "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan" ("The Garden with Forking Paths"), Irish dialectical logic is revealed in the meaning of the labyrinth of Ts'ui Pên when the concepts of time and cyclical eternity are related to the metaphor of the "forking paths." It stands for an infinite web of time which cross, depart and/or diverge but it even condenses all the possibilities simultaneously.

The narrative structure also resembles the labyrinth described in the story where the narrator and the reader take various alternative paths looking for the way out only to realise that all of them point back to the beginning again. In this way Borges is recreating the symbols of time of the Boyne people at Newgrange, the neolithic remains of a Celtic civilization. He rebuilds the metaphor of the silent rebirth of the cosmos. Yu Tsun narrates his origins, his desperate but successful enterprise and his near death echoing the natural cycle of birth, fullness and decline. However, Borges attunes his character to the glimpses of an eternal NOW present in the iconographic triple-spiral cross which is manifested in the narrative by the cyclical appearance of a foreigner who plays either the role of a friend or of an enemy in his different lives, as the host explains to Yu Tsun.

Yu Tsun is a yellow spy working for the Germans in World War I and he was discovered by the implacable Captain Richard Madden. He writes that Madden was "obliged to be implacable" because "he was an

Irish under the orders of England." The capture of the yellow spy by the Irish captain symbolizes his need of recognition by the "other." Madden could not be accused of weakness or even of treason despite his Irish identity. The "yellow man" mirrors Madden's situation. He could "save" the German army if he tells them the name of the English town they have to bomb. Nevertheless, the need of recognition implies not only to become part of the other culture but also to reassert his own identity.

The same decentering eagerness for gaining the recognition of *both* cultures was undergone by the Mulhalls, the publishers of the first Anglo-Irish newspaper in Argentina, *The Standard*. Michael and Edward Mulhall were born in Dublin and were clever journalists who defended the rights not only of the Irish but also of all the immigrants in Argentina. They were followers of O'Connell, a national Irish hero who preached for the union of Ireland and England. So, they were loyal to the "Gracious Queen."

The majority of the Irish-Argentines repudiated their Britishness and they did not subscribe to *The Standard*. The Mulhalls gradually turned to those who supported them and became the recognized British entity of the city. Thomas Murray in Chapter VII of *History of the Irish in Argentina*, "The Mulhalls and *The Standard*," condemned their attitude and considered it a "grievous political sin." Nevertheless, they were respected by the society and even by Murray in his historical records of *The Standard*, and for nearly one century their newspaper was to be considered the doyen of the Argentine Press.

The Irish newspaper *The Southern Cross* appeared later in 1875 and it was much more dedicated to Irish affairs than *The Standard*. It was a weekly paper which denounced injustices done to the Irish immigrants and raised funds to help them settle down in the new land, to diminish the debts of the Irish institutions like the Irish Hospital, the Convent and the Orphanage, to help the Irish suffering from yellow fever and cholera, and to send money to the Irish Revolutionary Movement (IRA). Meanwhile, *The Standard* asked for dona-

tions for the monument of O'Connell in Dublin and for British Institutions in Buenos Aires.

The Anglo/Irish conflict in the Motherland was transferred to a foreign battlefield, Buenos Aires, with different contextual weapons: instead of using firearms they used words. Father O'Fahey appealed to his countrymen to make donations to their Irish Institutions and asked them "not to be defeated by the generosity of the English." A list of English donations collected by *The Standard* was published contrasted with the list of Irish donations collected by Father Fahey. The contest took place because many prosperous Irish, the "nouveau riche," gave donations to the British Hospital rather than to the Irish institutions because they wanted to gain recognition of the "other" in their Motherland.

This ambiguous feeling is very well exploited in Borges' narrative which fosters decentredness and heterogeneous meanings permitting the characters to have "two thoughts at a time," as Joyce did, subverting the established modes of linear and sequential thinking.

The "informer," another cultural figure born within the Irish revolutionary movement and which inspired twentieth century Anglo-Irish writers such as Sean O'Faolain, Liam O'Flaherty and Frank O'Connor, was represented by Borges in "La forma de la espada" ("The Shape of the Sword").

The hero of the first story reveals that he is the traitor of the second story

The game of duplicity is cleverly played and the narrator of the story is an "assumed Englishman," who reveals the secret of a moon-shaped scar on his face to a stranger, Borges himself. The author describes his character from different points of view. From the perspective of the native culture he was an "Englishman" who had come from Rio Grande do Sul and settled in the Argentinian "pampas." He was "presumably a *smuggler*" when he lived in Brazil —characteristic associated with the English in the Spanish colonies.

Borges also exploits the perspective of the "other" when he describes him as a heavy drinker, a stereotype of the Irishman in England. From the Irish perspective he is a strict and rude "Englishman" edging cruelty but scrupulously "just" and with an authoritative look. The same character is seen through the light of a prism where the different cultural reflections converge to build up a "new man." Only the narrator reveals his Irish identity against "Englishness" with the fury of the dispossessed when the stranger, trying to be polite and decoding the cultural assumptions, appeals to the "less perspicacious passion, nationalism," and says "England is invincible due to its spirit."

At this climactic moment, the narrator reveals the secret that he was not English. He was a Catholic Republican in 1922 Ireland and he and his group were betrayed by a friend called John Vincent Moon. There is then, a complete reversion of the narrative and the listener/reader is submerged in confusion. A double-bounded story takes shape. The hero of the first story reveals that he is the traitor of the second story. He has told fictional Borges the story of his infamy to be blamed forever. Thus, the image of the hero is broken and demystified.

While in Borges' stories the traitor needs to be redeemed, in Murray's historical records the traitor has no feelings of guilt and is sometimes excused. For example, it was said that the British Consul in Rosario, Dr. Thomas Hutchinson, an Irishman, got his post betraying a friend. However, Murray, following the Irish logic tradition, added that those who knew him believed he was a good man and an eminent doctor who helped the poor. Another historical record is about Thomas O'Gorman, nephew of the Irish doctor Michael O'Gorman, who founded the first medical school in Buenos Aires. Thomas was a smuggler, brought a spy to Buenos Aires and was assigned a political post by General Beresford during the period of the English domination in the River Plate, in 1806. Finally, he escaped when the Argentinians reconquered the city.

To contrast the idea of treason with that of heroism we also find in the history of Argentina many Irishmen

struggling for the independence of the foreign land as they were not successful in their Motherland: General O'Brien participated in San Martín's campaigns for the Independence of South American countries, and General O'Higgins adopted the same political cause too. But Admiral William Brown is the hero of the Irish in Argentina. He escaped to Argentina when his English ship was captured by the French and after the Declaration of Independence he became loyal to the new government and founded the Argentinian Navy defeating the Spanish Army in Martín García island.

The last story I have chosen to discuss is "Tema del traidor y del héroe" ("Theme of the Traitor and the Hero") because it rounds up my theory that Borges reverses pre-established beliefs to reconstruct a new Irish awareness in a foreign land. In this story he openly deconstructs the opposing historical concepts of treason/heroism and the implications of reversing the idea of exclusion into that of inclusion.

"Tema del traidor y del héroe" is situated in Ireland, in 1824, and Borges, the first person narrator, rewrites a story written by another narrator, Ryan, great-grandson of the heroic Fergus Kilpatrick, in order to deconstruct the concepts of historical and fictional truth.

George Steiner in *After Babel* says:

The slamming of a door on the long galleries of historical consciousness is understandable. It has a fierce of innocence... But it is an innocence destructive of civilization... Without the true fiction of history, without the unbroken animation of a chosen past, we become flat shadows.

In order not to become "flat shadows" and to follow "the ancient generous shadows" that reveal the Irish past, Borges embedded a story within another story and demonstrated that history is never a literal recounting of facts; it is rather "a figurative reading of events by means of human thought and language."

The story is about Ryan's search for a historical truth about Kilpatrick's death, a conspirator who "like

Moses, could not see the Promised Land” because he was assassinated before the victorious Rebellion. There was a traitor in the group. The enigma was revealed by Ryan after a close textual analysis of historical records. He found out that there were cyclical repetitions of an old historical fact interlaced with fiction — Julius Caesar’s death with Shakespeare’s tragedy *Macbeth*— and some present facts: Kilpatrick received a letter which he did not open and where someone foretold that it was dangerous to go to the theatre that night; a bad omen was published in the local paper: there was a fire in the round tower of Kilgawan (his birthplace); a poor man said some words to Kilpatrick which resembled Shakespeare’s words in *Macbeth*; the name of the traitor was erased in the document where Kilpatrick had signed the sentence of death.

Historical facts are constructions of the mind

Borges, the narrator, wrote a kind of thriller and gave us, readers, an Ariadne’s thread that would help us to find our way out of the labyrinth. However, he revealed in the end that there was an eternal repetition, a circular time thrusting us back to the beginning: Ryan discovered that the traitor was Kilpatrick himself but the anti-hero asked his friends to kill him in circumstances that could redeem him so that they could use his death as an instrument of emancipation.

Ryan, the biographer, found himself at a crossroads. How could history plagiarize fiction turning the whole world into a stage so that an individual tragic “actor” could play the role of a hero? It is true that art represents reality, that fiction re-interprets history but what would happen if it is history that copies fiction? In this story Borges points out that both history and fiction are reconstructions of the mind. Ryan faced an epistemological dilemma: to reveal the “truth” or to “construct” another “history.” He decided to silence the evidence and to write a biography of the hero instead of the traitor leaving the intertextual clues for

someone else to re-read the deleted facts of his own work in the future.

Since long ago, Borges firmly believes in what Terry Eagleton later writes:

tradition is the practice of ceaselessly excavating, safeguarding, violating, discarding and reinscribing the past. (...) History is not a fair copy, but a palimpsest, whose deleted layers must be thrust to light.

The three stories analysed here reveal that historical facts are constructions of the cultural mind and that the Irish immigrants in Argentina read them partly in the light of established beliefs and partly from a self-defining perspective. Borges’ decentering narrative follows the Irish philosophical logic of “both/and” to emphasize unity-in-difference and to recreate the idea of “Irishness” at the intersection of the three cultures in a foreign land.

I think that if the dialectical recurrence of new experiences, cultural identity, marginalization and exile were interlaced with a historical, political and philosophical tradition, the Irish in South America would be able to redefine their identity from a postcolonial perspective, renewing their relationship with the three cultures through an enriching exchange.

NOTES

¹BORGES, Jorge Luis. *Ficciones*. Buenos Aires, 1944.

²MURRAY, Thomas. *Historia de los irlandeses en la Argentina*, 1919. It was re-published in the form of separate articles in *The Southern Cross* in 1987.

³CAIRNS, David & SHAUN RICHARDS. *Writing Ireland. Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*. Great Britain, Manchester University Press, 1988, p. 71.

⁴KEARNEY, Richard. *The Irish Mind. Exploring Intellectual Traditions*. Dublin, Wolfhound Press, 1985.

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TRANSLATING AMERICAN LITERARY THEORY TO BRAZILIAN READERS: THE CASE OF FREDRIC JAMESON¹

MARIA ELISA CEVASCO

“As in material so in intellectual production.” It took some time for this part of the *Communist Manifesto* to be well formulated on Brazilian terms. At least since Independence from Portugal, in 1822, Brazilian intellectuals have been trying to come to terms with our peculiar lot in the international division of labor, including intellectual work.

Of course Portugal itself was never a “central” country. Ideas were also cumbersome loans in the Portuguese context as João da Ega, a character in Eça de Queirós’s *Os Maias* (1888), puts it:

Here we import everything. Laws, ideas, philosophies, theories, subjects of conversation, aesthetics, sciences, style, industries, fashions, mannerisms, jokes, everything comes in boxes on the boat. Civilization is expensive, what with the customs dues and it’s all second hand, it wasn’t made for us, it’s short in the sleeves.²

Transplanted to the colony, this problem has fuelled intellectual debate on various fronts. The two most obvious “solutions” to the dilemma of imported ideas have usually been reducible to two aspects of the same contradiction. For one thing, it has led many to deplore

copying — as if it were avoidable — and to concentrate on stifling our culture in some putative authenticity, thus reinforcing the picturesque — in one word, a sort of “banana republic” attitude as seen on cultural terms. The other solution is, of course, to relish copying, thus perpetuating our “backwardness” by constantly and fruitlessly trying the impossible: to keep up in a race in which we started late, and on the wrong horse.

This duality — ape or create anew — has always locked the debate in a “no-way-out” situation, which claimed for an approach which clarified the interconstitutive nature of the problem. It remained for dialectical thought to try and unknot the unreal oppositions, and to allow us to see

the share of the foreign in the nationally specific, of the imitative in the original and of the original in the imitative.³

Travelling Theory
Viagens Teóricas

To my knowledge, the best formulation for this concrete situation comes from Brazilian Marxist thought, in Roberto Schwarz's working out of the theory of "misplaced ideas." According to Schwarz, foreign ideas and theories, whose material determinants are elsewhere, fail to describe the local system of problems and contradictions. He shows this derailment already at work in 19th century Brazil, where the dominant ideology is liberalism — the imported ideology of all the newly emancipated American countries — and local production is based on slavery. Of course Schwarz is fully aware that those ideas were also an ideology in Europe. But, in our context, they become ideologies of the second degree, since "they do not describe reality, not even falsely, and falsely, and they do not move according to laws of their own."⁴ Thus, ideas and theories are misplaced in more than one sense. They may not describe concrete life in Brazil, but the specific ways of their being misplaced clarify not only the local, but also its interdependence on social and economic determinants whose orientations are systemic and totalizing.

But, as Paulo Arantes demonstrates in his historical account of the formation of Brazilian cultural criticism — *Sentimento da dialética na experiência intelectual brasileira* (1992) —, Roberto Schwarz's formulation is part of a process of comprehension of Brazilian social dynamics which found its more productive intellectual expression in the works of a group of thinkers who set themselves the task of rewriting Brazilian history in terms of what has become loosely known as "dependency theory." In this light, "the internal dynamics of peripheral countries is seen as an specific aspect of the more general dynamics of the capitalist world,"⁵ which, in its turn, is a result

not only of the singularized ways of its expression on the periphery of the system, but also of the ways in which international capitalism articulates itself.⁶

***A generation of literary critics
was brought up on unthinkingly
and uncritically imported
critical fashion***

Thus, the opposition between the internal and the external is cancelled and the interconstitution of center and periphery is highlighted. As Marx taught, it is on the periphery that the truth of capitalism is seen at its clearest.

It is enlightening to trace, alongside Paulo Arantes's account,⁷ the trajectory of the foreign ideas which helped the formulation of an interpretative model that could effectively come to terms with Brazilian historical experience. Most of the theorists of dependency took part in the fifties and sixties in the "Marx Seminar," a group of young assistant professors at the University of São Paulo — historians, sociologists, economists, philosophers, and one literary critic, Roberto Schwarz himself —

who got together to read *Capital*. In this group's collective rethinking of Brazilian socio-historical reality is delineated a new understanding of local and world developments. In this sense, Marxist thought was an effective agent of the deprovincialization of intellectual life.⁸

Meanwhile, with military dictatorship (1964-1985) a new/old idea of nationalism and a reedition of simply aping foreign ideas came to the fore. As Roberto Schwarz wryly notes:

In 1964 right wing nationalists branded Marxism as an alien influence, perhaps imagining that fascism was a Brazilian invention.⁹

The target here is not simply the most obvious political dangers of Marxism but also its totalizing instance that effectively helps to explain away misplaced ideas. Ironically, the most current accusation levered at Marxist cultural theory has been that it represents a reduction of the fine complexities of culture to something as "crass" as material conditions.

But those of course had their way. The effort of "modernization" — in fact a political and military alliance with American interests — carried out by a succession of presidents of a *res-less-and-less-public* may

have played a decisive role in the revival of the same unquestioning imitation that dependency theory should have done away with. The seventies saw the strengthening of the uncritical importation of ideas that was going to flourish in the eighties. A generation of literary critics — to give an example from my own area — was brought up on unthinkingly and uncritically imported critical fashions. The main aim was to be up to date, and change critical ideas as one changes sunglasses. To exemplify the absurd that this wish to be updated can reach, one could do worse than pointing out that one of the plays staged in a São Paulo theatre in 1993 was based on Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*, and actually reproduced parts of the book in dialogue form. Misplaced ideas in a misplaced country, a grain of truth in an ocean of irrelevancy.

It is within this context that I want to make my case for Fredric Jameson. My contention is that in the Brazilian intellectual atmosphere, just like in Brazilian material conditions, we see the truth of capitalism with fewer mediations. Thus the instrumentalization of thought, rampant throughout the Western world and so clearly exemplified in the area of literary studies in the incessant flow of new-isms, is the hegemonic trait of Brazilian intellectual life. We tend to “apply” new fashions in theory without any care as to which context they respond to, what they want to accomplish and how they deal with the relation between culture and the world. My case for translating Jameson to this intellectual milieu relies not only on the totalizing stance of his Marxism, but also on the barriers that his style tries to build between thinking through the contradictions of contemporary reified life and lending this mode of thought as another easy prey to commodification.

Marxism and Form was translated in 1985. (The translator attended Jameson's courses at Yale between 1975 and 1977, just as I attended his course at Duke

in 1992, another instance of how theory travels, though a bit slowly, to Brazil.) In the preface to the Brazilian edition, the translator called the reader's attention to the key aspects of *Marxism and Form* — a book of

mediation that wishes to establish a connection between what we may call the Marxist cultural theory canon and the problems of the present. It is also a book of conversion, a kind of epistle to the Americans, in which the good news of the dialectic is reinforced in the context of the empirical Anglo-saxon academy, adverse to this kind of totalizing thought.¹⁰

For the Brazilian reader, the emphasis is on this “teleological totalizing thought,” and on the interrelation between texts and their material determinants.

Under a totalizing gaze, the periphery is seen as it is — an invention and a product of a center that defines itself against it. The kind of criticism which is advocated in the last part of the book does not, in and

by itself, instantaneously put misplaced ideas in their right place, but it does tell us, as the “Dialectical Criticism” it exemplifies, that we ought to “place” ideas in time and compare the *inside* — say Brazilian cultural production — with the *outside* —

our historical position in the backyard of modern capitalism and on the periphery of late capital's “successful” colonization of Western world; *existence* — the data of our experience — and *history* — say, why those data have to be read in a foreign language.

It was also the totalizing stance of Jameson's Marxism which helped to account for the specific impact of the translation — also in 1985 — of his seminal article “Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.” Simplifying a little, we could say that up to its publication in a high-brow magazine “postmodernism” was, for most Brazilian intellectuals, another chapter of French ideology, something any self-respecting leftist should hold at arm's length, for rea-

**The Political Unconscious
demonstrated the critical validity
of Marxism as an hermeneutical
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restoring history to literary texts**

sons which may not be very clear in the United States, where, given peculiar cultural conditions, the most famous branch of French ideology — deconstruction — was able to sound a libertarian note.

By one of those very few happy historical juxtapositions, the belated translation of *The Political Unconscious* (1992) coincided with the heyday of anti-hermeneutical stances and dogmatic denunciations of the dogmatism of closures at a time when a “new world order” and the uncontested victory (!) of capitalism helped turn cultural theorists into convicted pluralists and relativists. *The Political Unconscious* demonstrated the critical validity of Marxism as an hermeneutical mode, the only one capable of restoring history — and thus human experience — to literary texts. It showed not only that “il-y-a d’hors text” but also that this “hors” is not easily separable from the text.

In our context, this book was especially helpful in clarifying the need for discriminating and “placing” theory. It was also significant that this Marxism came from the States, whose most visible critical legacy to Brazilian literary studies was, in the sixties and seventies, New Criticism, both a welcome insistence on the study of the literary text as text and a powerful step towards the severance of this “well-wrought-urn” from the “messiness” of socio-economic life. With the aid of its materialistic lenses, *The Political Unconscious* helped show the mileage that could be had with a political reading of literary texts. For an audience trained in formalism — always helpful in times of political turmoil — and dazzled by the buzz words of post-structuralism (not least because of the many illusory attractions for a peripheral country of a theory that proclaims that there is no center and no origin, and, there being no original, the copy is in no way inferior, as if by denouncing an orientation in the human sciences we would be granted equal material conditions with the ex-center) — *The Political Unconscious* helped relocate the debate in more relevant and less rhetorical terms.

But so far I have been concentrating on Jameson’s *Marxism* as his most productive contribution to the specificity of Brazilian cultural life. I want now to finish

by examining the contributions that his *Form* has to give to our habits of misplacing ideas.

Of course the Jamesonian paragraph is well-known for its... peculiarities. The many evaluations of his style run from my own chatty arguments with my Duke colleagues that as a good reader of Benjamin, Fred’s thoughts form a constellation and therefore his sentences have to make the extra effort of delineating totality amidst fragmentation, to Eagleton’s parody and Colin MacCabe’s assertion that its difficulties “must simply be encountered.”¹¹ I think MacCabe is right in more ways than one. Reading the Jamesonian paragraph is the material experience of the difficulty of “thinking real thoughts” in our fragmented, reified, and therefore reifying, society. In this sense, reading, for example, the chapters of *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* is an experience under the sign of contradiction — by going through its reading, we brush postmodernism against the grain, and we actually glimpse what postmodernism negates, a *Bildung*, a capacity for thinking through postmodernism and coming out at the other end (*Aufhebung*), both retaining and surpassing it.

I can see the urgency and relevance of this mode of presentation in a commodified “post-industrial” society like the one in the United States. But I am more apt to talk about the ways in which the possible efficacy of this style is even more apparent in a country like Brazil.

I have already described how the conditions of possibility of travelling theory to Brazil have condemned us to ceaselessly and uncritically import ideas. It was so in the 19th and early 20th century with France, it is even more so with the United States in this later part of the 20th century. To repeat a slogan widely current in the sixties and seventies, “Whatever is good for America is also good for Brazil.”

Just as we import technologies and ways of living and “apply” them to our different material circumstances, so we tend to “apply” theories to our cultural phenomena, in a perverse reproduction of the instrumentalization of thought which characterizes our time.

Jameson’s form — a true decantation of a historical content — may be seen as something like an anti-

instrumentalization device, an effort to preclude its selection as the latest fad in cultural theory, and its use as a "scheme" which can be easily applied to whatever you want to analyse.

Surely Jameson himself has insisted on the voraciousness of the commodification process in our days. Doubtlessly there are people in Brazil reading Jameson

just because he is "in." However, if one tries to imagine, say, a character in a play delivering Jameson's sentences, where the materiality of language and form struggles to avoid the pasteurization it denounces and foretells, one begins to get an answer as to why it is especially relevant to translate this mode of materialistic thought in the country of misplaced ideas.

NOTES

¹Paper presented at the Convention of the Modern Language Association, in Toronto, December 1993.

²Apud GLEDSON, John. Introduction. In: SCHWARZ, Roberto. *Misplaced Ideas*. London, Verso, 1992, p. xi.

³SCHWARZ, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴Id. *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵ARANTES, Paulo Eduardo. *Sentimento da dialética na experiência intelectual brasileira*. São Paulo, Paz e Terra, 1992, p. 48.

⁶CARDOSO, Fernando Henrique. *O modelo político brasileiro*. São Paulo, Difel, 1970, p. 126 (also quoted by Paulo Arantes).

⁷This aspect has been pointed out by Roberto Schwarz in a debate with Fredric Jameson and Paulo Arantes on August 14th, 1992, at *Folha de S. Paulo*.

⁸See ARANTES, op. cit. p. 65.

⁹SCHWARZ, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁰SIMON, Iumna Maria e XAVIER, Ismail. O apóstolo da dialética. In: JAMESON, Fredric. *Marxismo e forma*. São Paulo, Hucitec, 1985, p. ix.

¹¹MACCABE, Colin. Preface. In: JAMESON, Fredric. *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992, p. ix.

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O rato que ruge¹: o discurso crítico-literário pós-colonial como suplemento

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Said², seguindo Foucault, define *discurso* como um conjunto de textos que procuram descrever um determinado fenômeno com o intuito de formar um arquivo de conhecimentos a respeito desse fenômeno; tal conjunto de textos, porém, não apenas descreve, mas também cria o seu objeto. Com o passar do tempo o arquivo formado por esses textos acaba estabelecendo um cânone ou uma tradição. No caso da literatura pós-colonial, os críticos literários pós-coloniais procuram questionar o discurso (arquivo/cânone/tradição) do centro imperial adotando uma postura dialógica e oposicional em relação a essa crítica eurocêntrica. Terdiman³ chama essa postura de *contradiscursiva*.

Nosso objetivo neste trabalho é tentar abordar algumas das diversas estratégias contradiscursivas na crítica literária pós-colonial para que, como discurso, seja compreendido tanto na sua diversidade quanto na sua unidade. Como tal, discutiremos as estratégias contradiscursivas dos críticos Abdul Jan Mohamed, Homi Bhabha e Wilson Harris, que a nosso ver representam tendências marcadamente diferentes no discurso crítico-literário pós-colonial em língua inglesa, em termos de suas origens (África, Índia e o Caribe, respectivamente) e influências.

Enquanto Jan Mohamed utiliza uma abordagem marxista, Bhabha vale-se de uma linguagem psicanalítica e pós-estrutural; Harris, por sua vez, emprega uma linguagem altamente particularizada e esotérica. Entre os críticos que seguem a linha marxista como Jan Mohamed, estão Ngugi, Amuta, Chinweizu e Gikandi; entre os críticos pós-estruturalistas pós-coloniais, como Bhabha, estão Parry, Tiffin, Brydon, Ashcroft, Slemmon, Sharpe e Spivak; finalmente, os críticos com tendências esotéricas/mitológicas como Harris incluem Soyinka e Brathwaite.

Pelas suas características dialógicas de rebater, “escrever em resposta” ao centro imperial, esse discurso crítico, tanto quanto as literaturas pós-coloniais, tem sido relegado a um segundo plano com relação ao discurso crítico e às literaturas ditas metropolitanas. Essa posição marginal lhes é atribuída em grande parte porque pressupõe-se que, por ser pós-colonial, esse discurso veio depois de, e imita, seus correspondentes metropolitanos. Instaura-se assim uma perspectiva de conflito centro/margem, original/simulacro, progenitor/primo-gênito, que por sua vez está calcada na perspectiva maniqueísta de superior/inferior. O resultado mais tangível dessa perspectiva é muitas vezes a relegação das literaturas e crítica pós-coloniais aos apêndices institucionais ou guetos acadêmicos. A nossa leitura desse discurso inscreve-se nesse contexto como uma tentativa de contribuir para a transfiguração desse quadro.

No contexto da problemática do maniqueísmo da exclusão e o dialogismo das respostas, o tropo mais produtivo, a nosso ver, para ler as estratégias contradis-

cursivas é o tropo do *suplemento* de Derrida⁴. Tal tropo está inscrito na economia de *différance* e de escritura de Derrida e gera o que mais especificamente ele chama de “economia do suplemento”⁵. Para Derrida, essa economia do suplemento é marcada por dois aspectos ambivalentes que são “estranhos porém necessários”. Por um lado, o suplemento pode ser visto como plenitude/presença, em si completo, na posição de *adjunto* à coisa suplementada, que por sua vez também pode ser vista como plenitude/presença. Nesse sentido, o suplemento é *aditivo* e acumula presença/plenitude em justaposição ao “original” ou coisa suplementada. Por outro lado, o suplemento também pode ser um mero *apêndice* que acrescenta algo a um “original”, adquirindo assim a função de suprir uma lacuna existente na plenitude/presença do “original”. Dessa forma, porém, o suplemento, embora *subalterno*, aponta e compensa uma falha, uma lacuna no “original”; ao fazer isso, coloca em dúvida a putativa plenitude do “original”. O suplemento, assim, derruba a autoridade do original ao insinuar sua subalternidade nos interstícios desse “original”. Para Derrida, essa ambivalência do duplo movimento do suplemento é simultânea e inces-

***Guerra de manobra, guerra
de posição, guerra de
dupla-agenda: três estratégias
contradiscursivas***

sante, instaurando e ameaçando a plenitude/autoridade, representando o temor da morte e o prazer de seu adiamento num movimento implacável e perigoso; é aqui que se instaura a violência perversa do suplemento.

Na nossa leitura da crítica literária pós-colonial, partimos do tropo do duplo movimento da economia do suplemento para elucidar aspectos fundamentais desse discurso e suas estratégias contradiscursivas: como derrubar o poder centralizador do centro? Como derrubar a marginalidade da margem? Pode a margem

ser o centro e o centro margem? O centro é apenas centro enquanto a margem é margem? Ou vice-versa?

A violência implícita na economia do suplemento remete à violência da colonização e à violência anticolonial advogada por Fanon⁶ como estratégia única de libertação. Fanon caracteriza o processo de descolonização como o encontro de duas forças opostas uma à outra, no qual o destronamento do colonizador só pode se dar por uma inversão violenta. Em face desse quadro de violência e contraviolência discursivas, uma maneira de compreender as estratégias contradiscursivas pode talvez ser através de uma perspectiva guerreira. Nesse sentido, Chatterjee⁷ sugere os termos de Gramsci: o termo *guerra de manobra* refere-se à estratégia de ataque frontal em larga escala, concentrada e contundente contra o inimigo. O termo *guerra de posição*, por sua vez, refere-se à estratégia de atuar em vários *fronts*, minando o terreno do inimigo, cavando trincheiras para melhor aniquilá-lo. Identificamos, porém, uma terceira estratégia contradiscursiva que denominamos *guerra de dupla-agenda*⁸, na qual alguns autores pós-coloniais, não tendo mais um *logos* pré-colonial ao qual recorrer para substituir o discurso colonizador, passam a atacar esse discurso, criando um terceiro discurso, híbrido mas consciente do terreno minado sobre o qual qualquer discurso se constrói.

O papel do autor de literatura colonial é o de transformar o nativo em objeto de consumo e razão de ser da economia colonial

Assim sendo, a guerra de manobra visa a substituição do *logos* colonial pelo *logos* pré-colonial através de um confronto direto. Na guerra de posição o *logos* colonial é questionado como *logos*, sendo que tal questionamento estende-se a todo tipo de *logos*, colonial ou anticolonial. Finalmente, na guerra de dupla-agenda visa-se, como na guerra de manobra, substituir fron-

talmente o *logos* colonial; por outro lado, como na guerra de posição, a estratégia da dupla-agenda procura evitar um confronto direto e prefere abrir trincheiras, consciente de que seu *logos* novo, pós-colonial, híbrido como todo *logos*, será vulnerável.

Em nossa leitura do discurso crítico-literário pós-colonial, associamos a estratégia de guerra de manobra com o discurso de Jan Mohamed, a guerra de posição com o discurso de Homi Bhabha e a guerra de dupla-agenda com o discurso de Harris.

A objetificação do sujeito colonizado, transformado no discurso literário colonial em objeto estereotipado

Para ilustrar as diferenças entre essas três estratégias contradiscursivas, focalizaremos o aspecto da construção da identidade do sujeito colonizado nas literaturas coloniais e pós-coloniais, fazendo ecoar o apelo de Fanon⁹ para que a descolonização levasse à criação de um “novo homem”.

A estratégia contradiscursiva de guerra de manobra de Abdul Jan Mohamed gira em torno do conceito da “alegoria maniqueísta” de Fanon:

O modelo predominante das relações de poder e de interesse em toda sociedade colonial é a oposição maniqueísta entre a alegada superioridade do europeu e a suposta inferioridade do nativo. Esse eixo, por sua vez, constitui a característica central da estrutura cognitivista colonialista e da representação literária colonialista: a alegoria maniqueísta — um campo de oposições diversas, porém intercambiáveis, entre branco e preto, bom e mau, superioridade e inferioridade, civilização e selvageria, inteligência e emoção, racionalidade e sensualidade, o eu e o outro, sujeito e objeto¹⁰.

Buscando aproximar as influências político-econômicas e suas conseqüências discursivas, Jan Mo-

hamed¹¹ aponta a *objetificação* do sujeito colonizado, transformado no discurso literário colonial em objeto estereotipado e usado dessa forma como fonte inesgotável de matéria-prima para alimentar a máquina literária colonial. Esse processo de objetificação consiste na negação da individualidade e da subjetividade do colonizado, fazendo com que seja percebido como um ser genérico, que possa ser substituído por qualquer outro colonizado, uma vez que todos “são iguais” — selvagens, preguiçosos, não-confiáveis, traiçoeiros, imorais etc. Como aponta Said¹², a produção dessa imagem estereotipada do colonizado pressupõe sempre a posição superior do europeu em qualquer que seja o tipo de relação travada com o colonizado. Assim, Jan Mohamed conclui que o papel do autor da literatura colonial é o de transformar o nativo, assim como a matéria-prima encontrada nas colônias, em objeto de consumo e razão de ser da economia colonial (ver por exemplo as obras de autores como Rider Haggard, Kipling, Conrad, Forster, Carey etc.).

Para Fanon, o objeto da colonização e da alegoria maniqueísta era retratar o colonizado como uma população de degenerados com base em sua origem racial — degenerados porque, não sendo racionais, não constituíam sujeitos íntegros:

visto como um outro, o esquema corporal se despedaça; é substituído por um esquema epidérmico racial (...) Não se trata simplesmente de se enxergar na terceira pessoa, mas como uma pessoa tríplice (...) Eu fui massacrado pela mística dos tambores, do canibalismo, da deficiência intelectual, pela exuberância sexual (...) eu não enxergava mais a minha própria presença. Era como se fosse uma amputação, uma hemorragia, que cobria meu corpo com sangue negro¹³.

Esse retrato negativo do colonizado justificava sua conquista e a subsequente instituição de sistemas de administração, exploração econômica e instrução. Para Homi Bhabha¹⁴, o discurso colonial é a forma mais subdesenvolvida de discurso, uma vez que se articula em torno de formas estereotipadas de alteridade (ver, por exem-

plo, os estereótipos raciais e sexuais em Forster, Dinesen/Blixen, Joyce, Carey, Kipling e Rider Haggard). Na sua estratégia contradiscursiva da guerra de manobra Jan Mohamed postula a necessidade de recuperar a identidade pré-colonial do colonizado como sujeito íntegro; recomenda a troca da imagem denegrida do colonizado por uma imagem mais positiva, mais “autêntica”, sendo essa uma função principal da literatura pós-colonial. Mohamed cita como exemplo dessa autenticidade o personagem complexo de Okwonkwo no romance nigeriano de Achebe *Things Fall Apart*.

O objetivo principal da estratégia contradiscursiva da guerra de manobra, portanto, é a *inversão* do mecanismo discursivo da alegoria maniqueísta, que passa a produzir estereótipos do colonizador e imagens autênticas do colonizado — o que certamente não implica a eliminação ou neutralização da alegoria maniqueísta.

Essa procura pela autenticidade está calcada no conceito semiótico de uma realidade putativa extradiscursiva e uma realidade extra-sígnica na qual estaria o referente autêntico do sujeito colonizado.

***O estereótipo, como fetiche,
representa, por exemplo, todos
os colonizados, ao mesmo tempo
que, como estereótipo, não
representa nenhum***

Na estratégia contradiscursiva da guerra de posição de Bhabha, a mera inversão de imagens é rejeitada como inútil e mal-informada, uma vez que toda imagem e todo referente são vistos como construções discursivas. Assim, não se pode falar em imagens “autênticas” ou “falsas” porque toda imagem, como todo signo, representa algo ausente, adiado, que está em outra parte, inatingível. Toda imagem é ao mesmo tempo metafórica e metonímica: é metafórica porque

substitui um putativo referente por uma imagem-sígnico; é metonímica porque lembra a ausência desse mesmo referente (Bhabha chama essa ambivalência sígnica de “metonímia da presença”¹⁵).

Enquanto Jan Mohamed quer substituir uma presença (colonizadora) por outra (do colonizado), Bhabha acredita que a chave da subversão do processo colonial esteja em reconhecer e aproveitar-se das ambivalências e brechas no bojo da máquina colonial. Essa ambivalência pode ser facilmente identificada no conceito do *estereótipo*.

Bhabha vê o estereótipo de forma psicanalítica como um *fetichê*; o fetichê é algo psiquicamente contraditório porque representa o desejo pela totalidade/completude ausente (ou seja, o desejo de superar a falta do falo materno) e, simultaneamente, lembra a ausência/falta dessa mesma totalidade/completude. Em outras palavras, o estereótipo, como fetichê, representa, por exemplo, *todos os colonizados*, ao mesmo tempo que, como estereótipo, não representa *nenhum*. Nessa forma de recusa da alteridade o estereótipo pressupõe simultaneamente o reconhecimento de uma diferença e a recusa dessa mesma diferença. É justamente no cerne dessas contradições discursivas que a estratégia contradiscursiva de Bhabha fundamenta sua subversão do discurso colonial.

A partir da constatação dessas contradições Bhabha recusa a visão da simetria hierárquica colonizador/colonizado ao mostrar nas suas leituras da história oficial da colonização a presença metonímica constante da alteridade do colonizado — uma alteridade que não se opõe binariamente ao sujeito colonizador mas que participa intrinsecamente da construção da identidade desse mesmo sujeito. A alteridade é vista como uma “sombra amarrada”¹⁶ do sujeito, sendo que ambos se constituem dialogicamente.

A estratégia de subversão da guerra de posição consiste, portanto, em *habitar* o vazio entre o sujeito e o outro, entre o significante e o significado, entre a metonímia e a metáfora, vazio esse que Bhabha postula como as areias movediças de uma “certa incerteza” (ver por exemplo o ar de uma “certa incerteza” que

permeia romances coloniais como *A Passage to India*, *Kim*, *Heart of Darkness*, *The Raj Quartet* etc., onde essa incerteza é indesejada, recusada e não “habitada”, em pleno contraste com os romances pós-coloniais de Rushdie e Wilson Harris, por exemplo, que procuram “habitar” esse vazio e tirar o máximo de proveito dessa “certa incerteza”).

Na estratégia da guerra de posição, conseqüentemente, não pode haver meras inversões, como quer a estratégia da guerra de manobra, uma vez que, como diz Derrida, “entre a oposição de dois elementos não há uma fronteira mas sim uma distribuição econômica. É com essa regra que as diferenças são mapeadas”. Na economia do suplemento o binarismo é insustentável.

Derrida¹⁷ postula ainda a inversão das *hierarquias violentas* discursivas como apenas o *início* de um processo de desestabilização que levará a uma transformação. À luz disso, uma inversão deve ser vista apenas como

O caminho para a construção do sujeito pós-colonial consiste na descoberta da alteridade

um *processo* ou *meio* e não como um *produto final* ou *meta*. É nesse sentido que, para Bhabha, uma estratégia contradiscursiva deve perceber a inversão da hierarquia colonial como o *ponto de partida* de um processo subversivo e não como objetivo máximo; para ele, essa estratégia como suplemento ao discurso colonial *acrescenta mas não soma* (“adds to but doesn’t add up”).

Na estratégia de dupla-agenda de Harris¹⁸, o sujeito nunca é íntegro ou unitário, fixo ou estável, mas sempre dividido e multifacetado, sempre podendo ser o *outro de si mesmo*. Esse sujeito dividido é visto por Harris como algo positivo (“There are strangers in the self”)¹⁹ e reflete a possibilidade de mudança, de atingir a verdade e transpassar a ilusão do sujeito íntegro. Para Harris o caminho para a construção do sujeito pós-

colonial consiste na *descoberta da alteridade*; essa alteridade, porém, é considerada interna, e está no sujeito, o que implica a inseparabilidade do eu e do outro na constituição da identidade do sujeito. A estratégia contradiscursiva de Harris consiste em desvelar essa alteridade ou contraponto aterrorizador que existe no processo de construção da identidade de todo sujeito, fazendo com que a imagem ilusória do eu consciente seja nutrida pelas imagens múltiplas do inconsciente coletivo. Harris recomenda a descida pelas profundezas do inconsciente para descobrir o verdadeiro eu, um eu superior, metafísico e divino. A procura desse eu equivale, para ele, à procura de uma nova realidade e uma nova identidade pós-coloniais.

As identidades enterradas nas profundezas da psique também são intrinsecamente relacionadas com a identidade do eu consciente

Harris propõe fazer isso através de estratégias “re-visionárias” que consistem em “re-ver”, “ver de novo” o que sempre se tomou por pressuposto, para descobrir brechas e falhas, para vislumbrar algo novo que surgirá de forma numinosa das incertezas da psique.

Enquanto Fanon e Jan Mohamed procuram “re-membrar” o corpo mutilado do sujeito colonizado, Harris vê na violência do desmembramento do sujeito colonizado algo positivo; rememora a mutilação como algo ritualístico e sacrificial, algo a partir do que surgirá um novo ser representando a diversidade na unidade, a alteridade na homogeneidade²⁰. A violência para Harris possui uma força criativa que consiste no desmembramento da superfície do sujeito manifesto ilusório para permitir a descida pelas profundezas do inconsciente. A *fragmentação*, para ele, necessariamente precede a *reconstrução*; é necessário voltar ao útero “sacrificial das origens” (“the sacrificial womb of origins”) para poder nascer de novo, renovado e mais fortalecido.

Harris dá como exemplo o narrador/autor pós-colonial que deve permitir que sua identidade de sujeito se apague para deixar transparecer a multiplicidade de identidades enterradas nas camadas profundas da história no inconsciente coletivo. Para ele, todas essas identidades estão interligadas dentro de sua concepção de uma *realidade quântica* em que todos os elementos do universo são vistos como sendo compostos de partículas de luz ou energia em movimento, em que a matéria consiste apenas em partículas em um grau de vibração mais denso. Portanto, a aparente separabilidade dos elementos no universo não passa de uma ilusão de ótica para Harris. Da mesma forma, as identidades enterradas nas profundezas da psique também são intrinsecamente relacionadas com a identidade do eu consciente. Dentro dessa visão holística é impossível separar o criador da criação, e, seguindo as estratégias de re-visão, o autor/narrador é indistintamente produtor e produto de seu texto. A consequência mais retumbante dessa visão holística é que o universo é composto por suplementos e não por elementos independentes. Assim, cada identidade de sujeito também é suplemento de outra identidade, igualmente suplementar, formando uma rede que constitui no infinito uma identidade cósmica total e transcendental, transpessoal e transcultural. Essa identidade, porém, é apenas tangível metonimicamente nas imagens e identidades ilusoriamente separáveis do eu e do outro, do colonizador e do colonizado. Enquanto Bhabha postula o suplemento como algo que “acrescenta mas não soma”, para Harris o suplemento parece “acrescentar mas soma, totaliza, apenas no infinito”.

Cada uma das três estratégias contradiscursivas impõe de forma diferente seu distanciamento do centro imperial; apenas Bhabha e Harris, no entanto, inscrevem suas estratégias no vazio que as separa do centro; a razão disso é que, paradoxalmente, esse vazio só se torna perceptível quando o binarismo centro/margem se esvaece. Jan Mohamed, na sua crença em identidades fixas e estáveis, acaba postulando um centro e uma margem independentes onde não se elimina, de fato, o centro: apenas dá-se-lhe as costas.

Bhabha, ao apontar a interdependência dos elementos de hierarquias binárias, adota o vazio que “separa” esses elementos como tropo do hibridismo pós-colonial, representando a crise da autoridade e o fim das certezas; Bhabha “habita” esse vazio com uma proliferação de suplementos. Harris também percebe o vazio e busca explorá-lo e penetrá-lo na certeza de encontrar na proliferação de suplementos que lá se vislumbram algo novo, uma nova sobrevida pós-colonial.

E, dessa forma, o discurso crítico pós-colonial exalta seu caráter de suplemento, instaurando e derrubando incessantemente, violentemente, inviabilizando a noção de um centro imperial fixo, ileso, impune e incontestado, desvelando a alteridade no âmago da identidade “homogênea” eurocêntrica.

É assim que, sub-repticiamente, o rato da fábula suplementa a invencibilidade do leão, transformando seu silêncio, sua subalternidade, em rugido.

NOTAS

¹Na fábula esópica, um rato, ao ser capturado por um leão, implora para que lhe seja poupada a vida, jurando que, um dia, poderia vir a ser de grande utilidade para o leão. Incrédulo e surpreso com o pedido, o leão resolve poupar o rato. Tempos depois, o leão cai preso numa rede de caçadores da qual não consegue se libertar. Ao ouvir os rugidos desesperados do leão, o insignificante rato aparece e, roendo as cordas da rede, liberta o rei da floresta.

²SAID, E. *Orientalism*. New York, Pantheon, 1978, p. 94.

³Apud ASHCROFT, B., GRIFFITHS, G., TIFFIN, H. *The Empire Writes Back*. London, Routledge, 1989.

⁴DERRIDA, J. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

⁵Id., *ibid.*, p. 141-64.

⁶FANON, F. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1961.

⁷CHATTERJEE, P. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World — A Derivative Discourse*. London, Zed Press, 1986.

⁸Apud SLEMON, S. *Modernism's Last Post*. In: ADAMS, L., TIFFIN, H. (eds.). *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post Colonialism and Post Modernism*. New York, Harvester, 1991.

⁹FANON, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁰JAN MOHAMED, A. *The Economy of Manichaean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonial Literature*. *Critical Inquiry*, n. 12. 1, 1988.

¹¹JAN MOHAMED, A. *Manichaean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa*. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1983; *The Economy of Manichaean Allegory...*, *cit.*

¹²SAID, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹³FANON, F. *Black Skin, White Masks*. London, Pluto Press, 1986. Tradução nossa.

¹⁴BHABHA, H. *Signs Taken for Wonders. Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817*. *Critical Inquiry*, n. 12.1, 1985; *The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism*. In: BARKER, F., HULME, P., IVERSEN, M. (eds.). *Literature, Politics and Theory*. London, Methuen, 1986; *Foreword: Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition*. In: FANON, *Black Skin...*, *cit.*

¹⁵BHABHA, *The Other Question...*, *cit.*

¹⁶Id., *ibid.*

¹⁷DERRIDA, J. *Posições*. Lisboa, Plátano, 1972.

¹⁸HARRIS, W. *Tradition, the Writer and Society*. London, New Beacon, 1967; *The Radical Imagination*. In: RIACH, A. (ed.). *The Radical Imagination: Lectures and Talks by Wilson Harris*. Liège, University of Liège Press, 1992.

¹⁹HARRIS, *The Radical Imagination*, *cit.*

²⁰HARRIS, *Tradition...*, *cit.*

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Language
Linguagem

*Idiomaticity and
Conventionality
Idiomaticidade e
convencionalidade*

A BILINGUAL DICTIONARY OF VERBAL COLLIGATIONS ENGLISH-PORTUGUESE PORTUGUESE-ENGLISH IN PROCESS

STELLA E. O. TAGNIN

Before discussing the project for a bilingual dictionary of verbal colligations, there are a few notions I would like to dwell on. These notions are **idiomaticity**, **conventionality** and **colligation**.

I believe we have all heard, or even read a little about idiomaticity or idioms, but if we get together to discuss the subject we may find that our understanding of the notion is not consensual. For some, mainly for linguists, an **idiomatic expression** is an expression whose meaning is not compositional, that is, its meaning is not the sum total of the meanings of its lexical components. In other words, to use a more than classic example, "kick the bucket" does not mean "hit a pail with one's foot" but "die." For others, to say that an expression or text is **idiomatic** will mean that "it uses words in a way that sounds natural and grammatically correct to native speakers of the language," as defined in the Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary. For our purposes we will be using the term **conventional** for this latter concept. So, **conventional** are words or expressions that "are accepted as normal and right by most people in a

particular [linguistic community]" (Cobuild). However, we would like to add the notion of **arbitrariness** to it. A combination is said to be **arbitrary** when it is not motivated, i.e., it cannot be explained on syntactic or semantic grounds. This would also include all idiomatic expressions. In sum, **conventionality** is the overall area which comprises both literal, i.e., transparent, compositional expressions as well as idiomatic, i.e., opaque, non-compositional expressions. Therefore, all idiomatic expressions can be said to be conventional but not all expressions that are conventional can be said to be idiomatic.

WHAT IS A VERBAL COLLIGATION

Verbal colligations, which are the subject of the proposed dictionary, are mostly literal expressions as their meanings are compositional, i.e., transparent. What then is conventional about verbal colligations? Their very combination! That is, the choice of the verb that combines with the noun. Why do we say *take a*

walk and not *make a walk or even *give a walk, which would be the English word for word translation of the Portuguese *dar um passeio*? Why do we say *make a decision* in American English, *take a decision* in British English, and *tomar uma decisão* in Portuguese?

So, a **verbal colligation** is an unpredictable combination of verb plus a noun which can be its object or subject. And the unpredictable part is the **verb** itself because the noun is the element we do remember. An interesting criterion to determine whether a certain verb + noun combination is actually a **verbal colligation** is to resort to translation. If the verbs used in certain combinations are different across two or more languages then it means that these combinations are **arbitrary** and therefore a verbal colligation. Another very good example is *take a step*, which translates as *dar um passo* (*give a step) in Portuguese, *einen Schritt machen* (*make a step) in German, and *fare un passo* (*do or make a step) in Italian. This will enable us to establish *take a step* as an arbitrary occurrence with *step*, thus classifying *take a step* as a **verbal colligation**. But obviously translation is just one criterion and it will not be possible to discuss all of them here.

WHAT THE VERBS MAY COMBINE WITH

Having defined a verbal colligation, let us see what the verbs may combine with.

To start with, a **verbal colligation** is a verb + noun combination. The noun in the combination is usually the object of the verb, as in *take advice* (*aceitar conselho*), *give an address* (*fazer discurso*) or *fold one's arms* (*cruzar os braços*).

However, the noun can also be the subject of the verb, as in *a river flows* (*o rio corre*), *a volcano erupts* (for which there is no equivalent Portuguese colligation as we only have the noun *erupção*) or *a film/play opens* (*um filme/uma peça estréia*).

The verb may also co-occur with two other categories: adjectives and adverbs. When co-occurring with an adjective, the verb is usually a copula: *fall asleep*

(*cair no sono, adormecer*), *run dry* (*secar*) or *come true* (*realizar-se*). Interestingly, their Portuguese translations, as can be seen, are usually monolexemic inchoative verbs.

With an adverb the verb tends to be a verb of movement which, in Portuguese, is followed by a prepositional phrase: *climb aboard* (*subir a bordo*), *go ashore* (*descer à terra*), *lead astray* (*levar para o mau caminho*, an idiom in Portuguese) or a stative verb: *sit/stand astride* (*sentar/ficar de pé de pernas abertas*).

VERBS THAT MAY OCCUR IN A VERBAL COLLIGATION

From a semantic point of view, a large number of combinations is formed by a class of verbs which are considered "general" or almost semantically "empty" verbs: *make, do, put, get, have, take, and give*. According to Allerton¹ they usually combine with a deverbal noun "forming an expanded form of the verb," whose meaning would correspond to the simple verb from which the noun is derived: *make a suggestion = suggest, do a calculation = calculate*. However, this does not seem to be always so. Would *put a question* correspond to *question*? It might also be interesting to note that sometimes, based on an existing combination, one might expect the occurrence of a similar noun which, nevertheless, proves not to be possible. Such is the case of *have a drink*, in which *drink* is a deverbal noun, versus **have an eat*.² Besides, these verbs may also occur with non-deverbal nouns as in *give a paper* (*apresentar um trabalho*) or *give alms* (*dar esmola*).

But the array of verbs that may occur in verbal colligations is definitely not restricted to these "general" verbs, rather it is quite extensive and does not seem to follow any specific pattern or belong to any definite semantic field, as can be seen from the following examples: *settle* (*an account*), *commit* (*murder*), *press* (*charges*), *reach* (*an agreement*), *dissolve* (*an alliance*), *lay* (*a snare/an ambush*), *enter* (*a plea*), *clear* (*the air*), *follow* (*sb's advice*), *keep* (*accounts*), *manage* (*affairs*), *save* (*face/appearances*) and the list could go on and on and on.

SYNTACTIC ARRANGEMENT OF VERBAL COLLIGATIONS

Another aspect worthy of mention is the syntactic arrangement of the verbal colligation. So far we have been talking of a verb + noun combination. Maybe it would be best to refer to it as a verb + Noun Phrase combination as very often the noun is preceded by some kind of determiner. When the determiner is an indefinite article, it is mostly the case that a definite article may also occur instead: *He gave an interesting address at the conference. The address he gave was even mentioned in the local papers.* There are also verbal colligations in which the noun must be defined: *clear the air, enter the army.* This is most certainly a problem of definiteness, which deserves further investigation.

Other verbal colligations require a possessive pronoun: *take sb's advice (acatar o conselho de alguém), make sb's acquaintance (travar conhecimento com alguém).* Others still need a personal pronoun which is co-referential with the subject of the verb: *Frank took his leave and left the room.* Other examples are *lose one's appetite, fold one's arms.* It is interesting to note that the Portuguese translations take no pronoun at all: *perder o apetite, cruzar os braços.*

In other cases, no article whatsoever precedes the noun: *get applause (receber aplausos), cast anchor (jogar âncora), deny access (negar acesso), take aim (fazer pontaria).* Some verbal colligations may be optionally followed by a Prepositional Phrase, depending on the structure they occur in: *He took aim and shot. He took aim at the target and shot.*

Furthermore, it may also be the case that the noun must occur in its plural form: *exchange amenities (trocar gentilezas), make advances (fazer investidas), manage affairs (gerir negócios), make allegations (fazer alegações), make amends (fazer reparações), save appearances (salvar as aparências).*

Phrasal verbs may also be part of a verbal colligation: *put on an act (fazer uma cena), make up an agenda (preparar a agenda), take up a habit (pegar um hábito/uma mania), keep up appearances (manter as aparências), take up arms (pegar em armas).*

In some cases a Prepositional Phrase is obligatory

so that the adequate preposition should be mentioned following the colligation: *make atonement for (reparar), take advantage of (tirar proveito de), draw attention to (chamar a atenção para).* Sometimes the colligation has a preposition preceding the noun in one language but not in the other: In English one *takes up arms* but in Portuguese we say *pegar em armas.* Likewise, *abuse one's authority* is *abusar da autoridade* and *ride a bicycle* is *andar de bicicleta.* On the other hand, *come of age* is translated into Portuguese with no preposition *atingir a maioridade* and *meet with opposition* becomes *encontrar oposição.*

All this information must, of course, be indicated in the entry.

HYPONYMY AND SELECTIONAL RESTRICTION

Semantically, the dictionary will also have to account for a few phenomena. One of them is the aspect of **hyponymy**. In *take time* we could say that *time* is a superordinate so that *take* may then occur with any of its hyponyms. This seems to be true as we also say *take an hour, take a few minutes, take a second,* etc. The entry for *time* then would indicate that in combination with *take* it is a superordinate, therefore allowing any of its hyponyms to co-occur with *take*. In turn, the entries for the hyponyms, though featuring examples, would make a reference to the superordinate word.

The second point refers to **selectional restrictions**. The verb *commit*, for example, always occurs with a noun that has a negative connotation. Notice *commit murder, commit arson, commit a mistake* but not **commit a blessing* or **commit a good action*. In this case there is no overall term one could use to denote this aspect, so that there will have to be a separate entry for each of its occurrences and each one will have to indicate that the head word (*murder, arson, mistake*) has a negative connotation. It is this kind of restriction that makes a remark like "I'm actually a teacher but I've committed a few translations now and then" sound humorous.

POSSIBLE SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC INFORMATION FOR A VERBAL COLLIGATION

A third aspect the entry would indicate is the semantic relation between the predicate and its arguments. There are different ways in which this can be accomplished.

The *BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English — A Guide to Word Combinations*³ has chosen three broad categories of **lexical collocations**, which are discussed in the Introduction: CA, comprising collocations that denote creation and/or activation: *make an impression (creation)*, *fly a kite (activation)*; EN, which denotes eradication and/or nullification: *break a code (nullification)*, *quench one's thirst (eradication)*; and a third group which denotes an action characteristic of the person or thing designated by the noun: *a river flows*, *a bee stings*, *a bomb explodes*, etc. However, in the entry itself the dictionary gives no indication as to which group the collocation belongs to.

Melc'uk⁴ in his *Dictionnaire explicatif et combinatoire du français contemporain* makes use of **lexical functions** (LF) to present the set of lexical cooccurrences of a certain lexeme. In relation to our verbal colligations, Melc'uk's lexical functions also express certain semantic and syntactic roles between the verb and its arguments. For example, one LF is **Oper** and denotes a semantically empty verb which takes the first participant of the situation denoted by the head word as its grammatical subject and the head word as its direct object as in

Oper₁ (attention) = faire — pay — prestar

He paid attention.

Oper₂ (attention) = attirer — call — chamar

Her dress called my attention.

The subscript index 1 gives the semantic information that the subject is the agent, while index 2 informs

that it is the patient in this example. Out of his almost 40 lexical functions, there are approximately 11 LFs which are applicable to verb + noun combinations.

Although Melc'uk's model certainly covers all semantic and syntactic information for a verbal colligation, it remains to be seen how feasible its applicability to a complete dictionary is. His own DEC only covers 50 head words. The entry for **coeur** alone runs up to 15 pages! As our dictionary will only cover a specific type of cooccurrence, that is, verb + noun, adjective or adverb, the information load will be significantly reduced, but even so this model might prove to be too complex and abstract for an ordinary user.

Our purpose is to find a notation that will give the consultant enough information to enable him to understand and use the colligation correctly without making it so complicated that he would have to resort to the theoretical introduction every time he looks up a word. At this point we are investigating the possibility of either using a thematic role approach or maybe combining this in some way with Melc'uk's model. In any case, as all entries will be followed by actual examples, this should already give the reader the verbal colligation's syntactic structure as well as the participants' roles in the situation.

A FEW SAMPLE-ENTRIES

At this stage we have assembled approximately 2,500 verbal colligations in English and 2,200 in Portuguese, but only around 2,000 examples, mostly in English. There is still an enormous amount of data which has been collected but still needs to be processed.

So that you may have an idea of what the dictionary will look like, here are a few sample-entries with the information available to date:

ENGLISH-PORTUGUESE

advice *n.* 1. to take sb's * *Take my advice, don't ever do that again!* → seguir o **conselho** de alg. *Siga meu conselho, nunca mais faça isso!*

attention n. 1. to pay * (to) *Will you please pay attention? Please pay attention to these symbols.* → prestar **atenção** (a) *Preste atenção, rapaz! Preste atenção à aula;* 2. to call, draw * to ... *not wanting to call attention to himself. To draw attention to their financial weakness was risky.* → chamar **atenção** para; 3. to call sb's * (to) *And if that doesn't call your attention back to your path... By calling your attention to feelings and problems...* → chamar a **atenção** de alg. (para) ... *olhando o relógio a cada instante e chamando a atenção do Chefe do Gabinete Militar;* 4. stand at * → ficar em posição de **sentido**.

umbrage n. ['offense'] 1. to give * → ofender; 2. to take * at *He took umbrage at the chairman's comment.* → ficar **ofendido** *Ele ficou ofendido com o comentário do presidente.*

PORTUGUESE-ENGLISH

plantão s. 1. dar * → be on **duty**; 2. dar * *Durante o dia, um batalhão de repórteres deu plantão na porta da TV Globo, mas um rígido esquema de segurança impediu o acesso aos estúdios.* → stand **guard**.

recorde s. bater um * *Juntos eles conseguiram bater recorde em cima de recorde.* → break a **record**.

vontade s. 1. deixar à * → put at **ease**; 2. deixar pouco à vontade *Havia nele uma firmeza perturbadora, uma segurança que a deixava pouco à vontade.* → put ill at **ease**.

NOTES

¹ALLERTON, D.J. Three (or four) Levels of Word Co-occurrence Restriction. In: *Lingua* 63, North-Holland, 17-40, 1984.

²For a semantic account of this phenomenon, see WIERZBICKA, Anna. Why Can You *Have a Drink* When You Can't **Have an Eat*? *Language*, v. 58, n. 4, p. 753-99, Dec. 1982.

³BENSON, Morton, BENSON, Evelyn and ILSON, Robert. *The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English — A Guide to Word Combinations*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 1986.

⁴MELC'UK, I. *Dictionnaire explicatif e combinatoire du français*. Montreal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1984.

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EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE: a contrastive analysis in English and Portuguese

CRISTINA ARCURI ELUF KINDERMANN

*Idiomaticity and
Conventionality
Idiomacidade e
Convencionalidade*

This study is intended to account for the use and function of formulaic expressions of gratitude in both languages. The need to study the perception of politeness from a cross-cultural perspective was originally motivated by the experience I had during the time I lived and worked in the United States. Since 1984 I have been working on the aspect of polite verbal interaction across those two cultures.

Brown and Levinson¹ have argued that politeness is an expected socially required norm of behaviour and that generally interactants are aware that they are to act according to some rules of such expected mode of behaviour. Thus, being polite is something that must conform to culture-specific codes of behaviour. Each individual is expected to behave properly according to a kind of contract which is to be respected by those who belong to the same group.

THEORY OF POLITENESS

According to Brown and Levinson politeness could be explained largely in rational terms and they propose a comprehensive theory of politeness. They postulate principles of politeness and from such principles some politeness strategies are derived. In their study these principles are grouped into five categories but among these just two categories are best treated in my research:

the redressive strategies of positive politeness and negative politeness. According to Brown and Levinson

one recognizes what people are doing in verbal exchanges (e.g. requesting, offering, criticizing, complaining, suggesting, etc.) not so much by what they overtly claim to be doing as in the fine linguistic detail of their utterances (together with kinesic clues) (p. 61).

The authors state their want to account for the observed cross-cultural similarities in the abstract principles which underlie polite usage and they "attempt to account for some systematic aspects of language usage by constructing, tongue in cheek, a Model Person." According to them all Model Persons (MP) "consist in a wilful fluent speaker of a natural language, further endowed with two special properties — rationality and face" (p. 63). Brown and Levinson took their notion of "face" from that of Goffman (1967). They assume that

all competent adult members of a society have (and know each other to have) "face": the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting of two related aspects: (a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction — i.e. to freedom of action and freedom of imposition, (b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or "personality" (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (p. 66).

For Brown and Levinson there are acts which intrinsically threaten face (*face-threatening acts*, or *FTAs*) such as orders, advice, offers, compliments, expressions of hatred, criticism, disagreement, etc. Speakers may, sometimes, want to do an FTA with maximum efficiency but in other cases s/he will try to avoid the face threat and minimize it by choosing an appropriate strategy. This may also be done by performing a redressive act along with the FTA. In their theory of politeness they postulate that on one hand "positive politeness is redressive action directed to the addressee's positive face wants" and on the other hand "negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" (p. 134).

It is known that this notion of individuals and their rights plays an important role in American culture. The kind of cross-cultural comparison postulated here has not only proved this evidence but has also tried to establish some differences between American and Brazilian cultural behaviour through the analysis and comparison of the data gathered by the questionnaires. In some cases, as it is going to be examined further, an act was considered an FTA for Brazilians but wasn't taken as threatening by Americans, and in others Americans, but not Brazilians, were threatened.

However, one has to bear in mind that as far as interaction is concerned societies are not the same, therefore many cross-cultural misunderstandings may result when two different cultures are in contact without previous knowledge of their rules of behaviour.

METHOD

A questionnaire was handed to 30 native speakers of each language. The 10 situations that I selected for the final questionnaire represented a range of formality that required either no expression of gratitude, a short expression of gratitude or a more elaborate expression of gratitude. I chose to study situations in which gratitude was expressed in response to receiving a gift, favor, offer or advice.

Following the advice of Wolfson², I carefully described the roles and the relationships of the interlocutors, along with the setting and the events when determining the situations in the questionnaire. (See a copy of the questionnaire on the next page.)

The participants were mostly professors and students at two universities in the United States and at two universities in São Paulo, Brazil.

The informants were asked to put themselves in the situations and assume that in each instance they would say something in the space provided. However, they could respond in any way that they wished by taking into account three basic elements:

- (a) the relationship between speaker and hearer;
- (b) the situation; and
- (c) the social distance.

As far as the analysis itself is concerned it was necessary to determine specific strategies to examine the use or lack of formulas in the responses. The following are such strategies which were taken as a means of determining whether the expressions of gratitude were formulaic ones:

1. thanking
2. intensifier
3. dismissal of necessity
4. question/exclamation
5. explanation
6. compliment

Data analysis and results

I will consider in this section each of the strategies and the results drawn in the comparison of the data.

Strategy 1 — Thanking: the use of conventionalized expressions that contained words like: *thank, appreciate, obrigado(a), grato(a)*.

Strategy 2 — Intensifier: the use of emphatic terms such as adverbs and intensifiers like: *much, very much, a lot, really, very, muito, mesmo*, etc.

Here is a copy of the questionnaire used in the research. Exactly the same situations were presented to speakers of American English and Portuguese.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Occupation: _____

Marital Status: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please put yourself in the following situations and assume that in each instance you will, in fact, say something. Write down what you would say in the space provided. Make sure that you read the whole situations carefully before you respond.

1. You are on a bus. It is very crowded. Somebody offers you a seat.

.....

2. You are at a supermarket. You've got just two or three things to pay. You get to the cash register and there's a long queue. Somebody offers to let you pay beforehand in order to avoid such a long wait.

.....

3. One of your friends comes to you one day with a present. It's not your birthday or any other special occasion either. (S)he gives you something you really needed.

.....

4. Your girlfriend/boyfriend (husband/wife) comes to you one day with a present. It's not your birthday or any other special occasion either. (S)he gives you something you really liked.

.....

5. Your husband/wife (boyfriend/girlfriend) helps you do the washing-up one evening. This is really something unusual.

.....

6. You are travelling by train. You're by yourself. You've been trying to lift your heavy luggage onto

the rack but just can't manage. A gentleman comes and offers to help you.

.....

7. You want your husband (father) to lend you his car. You have been arguing about it but finally he lets you use the car.

.....

8. Today is your birthday. Some of your friends who live in another city give you a surprise. They come from a long distance just to wish you a happy birthday.

.....

9. You are riding your motorbike along a highway. A lady comes and asks you to stop. She tells you about some policemen that are stopping cars and bikes for a routine check. Unfortunately you haven't got your helmet on... If you went on driving that way they would probably get you... She saved you...

.....

10. Your son (daughter) has suffered an accident. (S)he is in hospital now. Many friends come to see him (her). Today a distant relation comes from another city to pay you a visit. He stays with you overnight at the hospital. He's leaving in the morning...

.....

Strategy 3 — Dismissal of Necessity: the use of all expressions which represent refusal of a favor, gift, offer such as: *no, not, but, não precisa, não se preocupe*, etc.

Strategy 4 — Question/Exclamation: the use of a wide range of different expressions representing signals of surprise, irony or disbelief such as: *What's that?, You gotta be kidding!, Are you sick or something?, Não é possível!, O que aconteceu?, Você está doente?* etc.

Strategy 5 — Explanation: the use of more elaborate and extended expressions such as: *It's very kind of you but I'd rather stand, I don't know what I'd have done without your help, Obrigada mas não vai resolver meu problema, Já vou descer logo ali*, etc.

Strategy 6 — Compliment: the use of expressions in which attention is addressed to the hearer such as: *Oh, how sweet of you!, Oh, sweetheart!, Você é um anjo!, O que seria de mim sem você?*, etc.

After completing the analysis of the data collected the strategy that produced greatest number of responses was strategy 1. In such responses, natives indicated that they made these statements automatically, almost without thinking. In situations 1, 2, 6, and 9, in which offers are made and interactants are strangers, the expression of thanks seems to be a social amenity. However, these phatic responses seemed to occur more frequently in American English than in Portuguese.

Based on the results a difference between the two languages was the strategy *compliment*. It was much more frequent for English speakers and in some cases they were not even found in Portuguese responses. This expresses a lack of complimenting in Portuguese responses in such routine situations. For Americans such use is an expression of positive politeness. The mechanism of a positive politeness strategy was used to satisfy the hearer's desire to act in accordance with the speaker. Therefore, when interactants cooperate they are, somehow, sharing objectives and can act with redressive action to satisfy the desire of the hearer's positive face.

For situations 3, 4, and 8, in which surprises were made between friends or relations, the informants usually produced a quick expression of thanks that was, in most cases, followed by a question or a joke, reflecting the potentially embarrassing situation. Here strategies *question/exclamation* and *compliment* were mostly detected. The responses of Americans were very much characterized by an expression of a compliment. However, a striking difference between English and Portuguese was found in so far as the strategy *dismissal of necessity* is concerned. In all four situations Portuguese speakers tended to refuse the surprise by using negative expressions and trying to avoid it. In such cases it is obvious that for Brazilians their faces were threatened while Americans simply did not even try to avoid it. This is clear from the results in question 3, in which for Portuguese the index 5 contrasted with the English index 0. Such a difference seems to be a cultural one since when refusing an offer or a gift Brazilian speakers might be trying to protect their faces. They did so by using positive politeness such as the use of in-group membership expressions of affection.

For question 5, in which an uncommon behaviour of a family member surprises the speaker, the strategy *question/exclamation* presented the highest score. In such a situation a change of behaviour causes surprise and the tendency of Brazilians to use negative politeness when not accepting the situation was once again detected. According to Brown and Levinson³ the first strategy of negative politeness is the one of being conventionally indirect. It seems that Portuguese speakers may have faced opposite tensions since they could have accepted the change but actually didn't. The actual opposition is the desire of giving a choice of attitude to the hearer by being indirect and the desire to act *on record* with a clear communicative intention. We must bear in mind that when speakers use irony the act is performed *off record* since it is not possible to assign to it just one clear communicative intention. Therefore in all instances when speakers acted *off record* they could have avoided the responsibility of interpretation of potential face threat. For example in

those expressions such as *Are you sick or something?*, *Are you out of your mind?*, *O que você está querendo?*, *Você está doente?*, etc., the speakers could have been using irony, acting *off record*, without having run the risk of being coercive.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that, on one hand, the extended thanking expressions with longer sets were produced mostly under conditions such as **FTAs**. Shorter thanking, on the other hand, reflected greater social distance between interactants. For the most part the *thanking* strategy and the *question/exclamation* were used much in the same way in both languages.

With respect to the degree of formality between interactants social distance intensifies the use of formulas in the English language. However, in Portuguese the pattern of such formulas seems to have a less characterized form. Also, in Portuguese there seems to be a great number of possible ways of thanking and therefore a lack of routine formulaic expressions.

By examining the preferred strategies there are a couple of differences which deserve comment. Portuguese speakers tended to avoid face threatening and demonstrated care in interaction more frequently than Americans did. Portuguese speakers did so through the use of the strategy *dismissal of necessity*. By refusing and using negative expressions Portuguese responses differed from the American ones in this sense. It doesn't mean that for Americans territories weren't threatened.

In fact the difference lies in the kind of strategy used by them. The more distant and threatening, the more formulaic expressions are used by Americans. This piece of evidence, then, suggests a cultural difference between the two societies.

Finally, there's evidence that Portuguese speakers did not make use of situational formulas of gratitude as much as Americans did.

When considering the use of such results it seems more likely that speakers of Portuguese learning English as a second language could use various formulaic expressions in case they knew what to say and when to say it. However, speakers of the English language learning Portuguese could face difficulties interacting due to the lack of such fixed expressions in Portuguese.

It is assumed that these results could be applied in the teaching of English as a second language under a socio-cultural perspective.

NOTES

¹BROWN, P. & LEVINSON, S. *Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena*. In: GODOY, Esther N. (ed.). *Questions and Politeness*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978.

²WOLFSON, N. *Compliments in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. *Tesol Quarterly*, v. 15, n. 2, p. 17-125, 1981.

³BROWN & LEVINSON, *op. cit.*

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Analisando as Visões de Leitura em Língua Estrangeira de Alunos de 3.º Grau

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A concepção de leitura da instituição escolar (co-produzida por professores e alunos) e a concepção de leitura de pesquisadores da área (cujos trabalhos em muito avançaram nos últimos quinze anos) parecem estar mais distantes do que, a princípio, poderíamos imaginar.

No âmbito do ensino de leitura em Inglês como língua estrangeira (daqui para frente LE), algumas mudanças foram observadas: textos não-adaptados passaram a ser utilizados com maior frequência, a preocupação com o desenvolvimento de estratégias de leitura pôde ser percebida nos materiais didáticos utilizados e a metalinguagem relativa ao processo de leitura passou a ser compartilhada por mais pessoas.

No entanto, na maioria dos casos, essas mudanças foram superficiais e não conseguiram ao longo dos anos modificar a(s) concepção(ões) de leitura produzidas na instituição-escola. Como resultado temos professores e alunos que falam em estratégias de leitura, processos mentais envolvidos no ato de ler, objetivos de leitura, etc., mas o "saber" sobre/da leitura continua sendo um saber que *apenas se mostra novo*.

A ênfase dada à decodificação do texto como depositário de informações e à palavra como unidade mínima reveladora do significado continua marcante e marcada nas condições de produção de leitura de grande parte dos alunos. Da palavra passa-se à frase,

da frase ao parágrafo e do parágrafos ao texto; ao final da tarefa, com a somatória dos significados, desvendam-se as intenções do autor.

Percebe-se, conforme demonstram os trabalhos de vários pesquisadores¹, uma grande resistência para mudanças mais significativas na medida em que há dúvidas quanto à relação teoria e prática por parte dos responsáveis pelo ensino e, principalmente, porque não foram esgotadas as discussões acerca dos conflitos decorrentes de possíveis mudanças.

Tendo em vista esse panorama, o objetivo do presente trabalho é verificar quais os efeitos de uma (ou mais) concepção "institucionalizada" de leitura na universidade, a partir de respostas dadas por 92 alunos de Letras-Inglês a um questionário sobre leitura.

Partimos do pressuposto de que a visão desse grupo de alunos (de primeiro e terceiro semestres do curso) reflete, pelo menos parcialmente, a(s) sua(s) visão(ões) de leitura que resulta(m) de sua(s) história(s) de leitura², marcada(s) pela visão da instituição-escola (através do professor) pela qual todos passaram.

O questionário em questão (v. Anexo) teve como foco central a discussão de alguns aspectos usualmente ligados à leitura em LE, tais como: velocidade e compreensão, nível de desconhecimento de vocabulário e compreensão, pronúncia/leitura em voz alta e compreensão, o papel da gramática na leitura, gradação/

simplificação de textos, estratégias utilizadas para o desenvolvimento da habilidade de leitura.

Aos alunos que colaboraram para esta pesquisa foi solicitado que discutissem brevemente os itens em pequenos grupos e que respondessem às questões individualmente. A primeira etapa — discussão em pequenos grupos — garantiu o entendimento das questões propostas (quanto à sua clareza e terminologia específica) e a segunda, a exposição individual de crenças e valores sobre leitura. Vinte dos questionários respondidos não foram incorporados à discussão por não fornecerem informações relevantes e/ou suficientes para a análise, que buscou agrupar elementos comuns e/ou casos isolados que se mostrassem reveladores de outras concepções.

Dessa forma, privilegiamos no presente trabalho uma abordagem qualitativa dos dados que nos permite a discussão de grandes concentrações nas respostas e das exceções também presentes nos resultados.

Leitura e compreensão

Várias concepções norteiam as visões do que vem a ser leitura e compreensão³. O conceito aqui adotado advém da Análise do Discurso de linha francesa, que, ao contrapor-se a uma visão de leitura como decodificação lingüística e a um sentido único, fornecido pelo texto, apresenta uma visão que inclui o histórico-social como constitutivo do discurso:

a leitura é o momento crítico da produção da unidade textual, da sua realidade significante. É nesse momento que os interlocutores se identificam como interlocutores e, ao fazê-lo, desencadeiam o processo de significação do texto (...)⁴.

Numa perspectiva discursiva, a produção dos sentidos não é realizada por um autor onipotente que deixa marcas no texto para o desvelamento do significado, mas por sujeitos situados historicamente, que ocupam um “lugar” e que produzem sentidos a partir desse lugar que ocupam:

READING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Reading in a foreign language should be careful and relatively slow.
2. The meaning of unknown words should be sought in the dictionary. Then noted down in a notebook and memorized.
3. To read well, it is important to know how to pronounce the words of the text.
4. The vocabulary and grammar of foreign language reading texts should be controlled so that the student may understand.
5. The content of the text does not matter much. More important is language practice (vocabulary, grammar).
6. Reading an unsimplified foreign language text would be beyond most learners.
7. Reading in a foreign language is rather frustrating, except for people who really master the language.
8. The ability to read in a foreign language is necessary, but does not take up a lot of time and effort.
9. What should you do when you come across words you have never learned?
10. What do you *actually* do when you come across unknown words?
11. What do you think about the following held beliefs?
 - The faster reader is not able to appreciate.
 - Higher speeds give lower concentration.
 - Average reading speeds are natural and therefore the best.
12. What hints would you give a beginner who wants to read authentic texts in English?

Quando lemos estamos produzindo sentidos (reproduzindo-os ou transformando-os). Mais do que isso, quando estamos lendo, estamos participando do processo (sócio-histórico) de produção de sentidos e o fazemos de um lugar e com uma direção histórica determinada⁵.

Este tipo de noção não se apresenta em nenhum momento nas respostas fornecidas pelos alunos. O que os dados indicam é que quando se fala de leitura e compreensão em LE, um processo diferente daquele desenvolvido em língua materna se instaura: o foco deixa de ser a leitura e passa a ser a língua como um fim em si mesma, conforme atestam os depoimentos abaixo⁶:

A5: A leitura é o melhor método de aprender gramática, melhorar o vocabulário e “sentir” o uso da língua.

A22: Quando aprendemos uma outra língua, o conteúdo do texto não é tão importante quanto a prática da língua, mas um assunto pouco interessante pode fazer com que se associe a aprendizagem de língua a algo pouco interessante.

A55: Penso que a coisa mais importante na leitura é praticar as palavras, sua pronúncia, a gramática do texto.

A62: Dependendo do objetivo do texto, o conteúdo não é importante.

É clara nas falas acima a dicotomização forma x conteúdo, sendo que a leitura não é entendida como *feito de sentido entre interlocutores*⁷, mas como processo de decodificação no qual a forma tem primazia. Mesmo em outros depoimentos nos quais os informantes dizem ser o conteúdo do texto importante, a relevância restringe-se a aspectos motivacionais e não à questão de produção de sentidos:

A18: Penso que é muito mais fácil ler um texto sobre um assunto interessante porque você se envolve e fica motivado. Mesmo quando a linguagem é complicada você não desiste. No final do texto, você percebe que aprendeu todas as estruturas apresentadas sem problemas.

Constata-se desse modo a permanência de uma concepção de leitura que acreditávamos ultrapassada com a grande penetração dos modelos cognitivos e psicolinguísticos de leitura divulgados nos últimos

anos. Na verdade, o arraigamento a modelos anteriores é mantido na escola, conforme demonstram os resultados da pesquisa realizada por Leffa⁸ com alunos de 1.º grau. Segundo o pesquisador, os alunos tendem a ver a língua como um conjunto de palavras; portanto, aprender uma língua é aprender palavras, memorizar listas de palavras e usar o dicionário.

A leitura, neste sentido, é apenas mais um meio de ter um domínio (ilusório) sobre a língua como um todo. E a idéia/ilusão de completude e da perfeição desejável aparecem:

A31: Tudo é muito importante para o leitor pois ele precisa ser capaz de saber o significado das palavras e a gramática perfeitamente...

A38: Textos não simplificados são o único meio de aprender as chamadas “palavras difíceis”. Com a prática chegamos à perfeição.

Um outro aspecto que teve um grande número de ocorrências nas respostas foi a concepção de que a leitura em LE depende do nível de compreensão/produção oral do aluno:

A20: O significado das palavras é muito importante mas para ler com perfeição o aluno deve treinar sua pronúncia. Caso não o faça, não será capaz de adquirir fluência na LE.

O mesmo informante, no entanto, reconhece que algo mais é necessário, apesar de continuar mantendo a língua separada do pensamento e da produção de sentidos:

A20: É lógico que é importante que o aluno desenvolva uma leitura rápida e com boa pronúncia mas seria interessante que ele/a começasse a pensar na LE.

No depoimento a seguir o aluno justifica por que o conhecimento da pronúncia das palavras é vital para a compreensão:

A62: Na minha concepção, ler é pronunciar mentalmente as palavras. Como alguém pode ler sem conhecer a pronúncia correta das palavras? Portanto, é essencial que se tenha pelo menos uma idéia da pronúncia correta.

Para muitos dos alunos a leitura está diretamente associada à literatura tendo em vista a sólida base que recebem nessa área no Curso de Letras. Isso nos ajuda a compreender alguns dos casos nos quais os alunos defendem que o bom leitor deve ter domínio de pronúncia e entoação:

A69: Para ler bem é altamente desejável saber como as palavras são pronunciadas, especialmente quando lemos poesias ou peças, porque os textos com muita frequência baseiam-se no som das palavras e no seu significado.

Esse tipo de observação apareceu em outras questões relativas à leitura, fato que parece indicar que, para esse grupo de alunos, o ato de ler está diretamente associado à leitura de textos literários:

A8: A leitura nos expõe intensivamente à natureza humana, portanto, quando escolho um livro na estante, estou escolhendo todo um conjunto de experiências para viver, um tipo de viagem através de caminhos “menos trilhados” por mim. A leitura de textos literários não requer de minha parte um grande esforço em termos de estratégias de leitura. A atenção e concentração aparecem naturalmente. Isto não acontece, contudo, quando leio para outros fins.

A34: Eu traduzo textos técnicos e não considero isso leitura porque todos eles são muito parecidos e eu não presto muita atenção quando os leio.

No entanto, alguns conflitos decorrentes da falta de conscientização/discussão do que está envolvido na leitura aparecem manifestados nos depoimentos em referência a vários tipos de insatisfações não-problematizadas:

A35: O interesse dos alunos diminui porque os professores ligam estudo com leitura. Nós não podemos ler pensando apenas no vocabulário. Temos que tentar esquecer que estamos lendo numa língua que não é a nossa e agir-mos como fazemos quando lemos um texto em Português.

A39: A maioria dos professores diz que devemos procurar as palavras desconhecidas no dicionário. Eu não faço isso; procuro sempre inferir os significados.

A4: Ao contrário de grande parte dos alunos que escolheram o curso que escolhi, não considero a leitura como fonte de prazer. Encaro a leitura como uma fonte importante de obtenção de informações e conhecimento (...). As leituras que fiz me proporcionaram um enriquecimento acadêmico e profissional apesar de que em sua maior parte foram “impostas”.

Percebe-se o conflito vivenciado por esses alunos a partir das imagens pressupostas⁹ do que venha a ser aluno, da imagem que têm dos outros alunos, da imagem que têm do professor e da instituição e da imagem que têm do objeto de estudo, no caso específico, o texto como parte essencial do mundo acadêmico.

No primeiro caso (A35) o aluno reconhece que o ato de ler não deve estar necessariamente ligado à questão acadêmica, mas submete-se, resolvendo o conflito, já que reconhecidamente a universidade é local de estudo. No segundo caso (A39), o aluno subverte o seu papel e resolve o conflito; o professor sabe e diz que devo fazer X, mas faço Y. Este, a nosso ver, está também atrelado às imagens, mas a imagem que tem de si próprio, no caso um bom leitor, autoriza a subverter o modo sugerido para lidar com o referente — o texto. O último depoimento (A4) revela um conflito não-resolvido. A imagem que esse aluno faz de si próprio é a de que ele é diferente do grupo, pois os outros vêem a leitura como fonte de prazer, enquanto ele não. Isto faz com que se justifique dizendo que as leituras foram impostas. Toma o cuidado de utilizar as aspas pois sabe que está respondendo a um professor que é parte de uma instituição e que, portanto, deve pensar e ser como os outros

professores. Busca equilibrar sua insatisfação dizendo que, apesar de tudo, as leituras foram proveitosas.

Voltando à questão das imagens pressupostas, ressaltaríamos a imagem que os alunos têm do professor como detentor do “saber” e, por isso, controlador da aprendizagem. A maior parte das respostas ressalta a responsabilidade do professor de graduar a aprendizagem:

A41: No começo é importante que o professor controle o vocabulário e a gramática dos textos que os alunos devem ler.

A45: O professor deveria controlar as atividades de leitura para motivar seus alunos.

É clara a necessidade de gradação de materiais e a crença de que a aprendizagem se dá linearmente, começando do mais simples para chegar ao mais complexo. Não está claro para os alunos o que determina maior ou menor complexidade; mas, ao dar exemplos, citam músicas, contos e textos jornalísticos como os mais simples, e textos literários como os mais difíceis. Quem detém o saber do “todo” é o professor, que, por direito (atribuído a ele pela instituição), deve saber o que é melhor.

Não pretendemos aqui retirar do professor sua responsabilidade, nem defender a posição de que a autonomia do aluno é obtida automaticamente quando de seu ingresso na universidade. Ao contrário, o professor é responsável pela promoção da aprendizagem e pela conscientização dos alunos quanto às possíveis limitações e modos de superá-las. Nesse sentido, concordamos com a reflexão de Arrojo e Rajagopalan¹⁰ sobre o papel do professor, o jogo ideológico estabelecido nos processos de significação (do qual a leitura é parte) e principalmente sobre a responsabilidade de conscientização:

Também dependerá da conscientização e, conseqüentemente, da postura do professor a possibilidade de que seus alunos retirem de sua formação aquela que talvez seja a mais importante de todas as lições: a noção de que esses papéis, essa instituição e essa comunidade, como

os textos que lêem, são “significados” necessariamente produzidos pelo homem, a partir de interesses e motivações igualmente humanos e que, portanto, poderão apenas ser mudados pelo próprio homem.

Nessa perspectiva a gradação do conhecimento e a apreensão do “todo” não passam de construções humanas; não contêm “verdades”, não são o único meio de aprender algo. Ao contrário, são flexíveis, podem ser modificadas e, principalmente, fazem parte de um jogo que se apresenta harmônico — a eficiência na aprendizagem — mas que é conflituoso por exigir mudanças constantes. É essa consciência que professores e alunos devem ter; a de que não há receitas infalíveis, mas modos de produção de conhecimentos circunscritos histórica e socialmente.

Tal consciência não se reflete nas respostas obtidas, principalmente quando os alunos tiveram que se posicionar com relação à sua aceitação ou não de textos simplificados e aos passos que acreditam todo leitor principiante em LE deve seguir.

Quanto a textos simplificados, a grande maioria dos alunos os considera adequados especialmente para os principiantes que não têm domínio de estruturas e vocabulário. Para estes, fornecer o texto original seria frustrante por ser extremamente complexo para quem tem conhecimentos rudimentares. De um deles, retiramos os passos considerados adequados para principiantes:

A62: Primeiro o principiante deve aprender as estruturas básicas da língua. Depois deve adquirir o máximo de vocabulário possível. Em terceiro lugar, deve começar a ler textos que tenham o vocabulário controlado. Por último, o principiante deve ser paciente.

As seguintes justificativas para a utilização de textos simplificados foram também apresentadas:

A57: Para uma boa leitura, um texto simplificado em LE está mais próximo da maioria dos alunos. E é melhor ler um texto simplificado em detalhes do que ler o texto não-adaptado de modo global.

A62: Ler um texto não-simplificado está além da capacidade de muitos alunos porque em sua maioria eles já têm dificuldades de compreensão na sua língua materna.

No primeiro caso, o aluno acredita que ler é necessariamente ir ao texto em busca de detalhes, revelando, desse modo, uma concepção de leitura que entende o processo como recuperação de todas as informações do texto. O segundo informante, por sua vez, menciona o fato muito debatido entre educadores e especialistas de que os alunos pouco lêem ou apenas lêem o que é sugerido (ou imposto) pela escola. Essa vivência limitada com textos repete-se quando da aprendizagem de LE sobretudo porque o aluno-leitor tende, conforme mencionado anteriormente, a concentrar-se na forma (no lingüístico).

Por outro lado, ao mesmo tempo que os alunos fazem referências a objetivos de leitura, inferência lexical, leitura para obtenção de idéias gerais e específicas do texto, além de leitura detalhada, nenhuma menção é feita aos elementos não-verbais presentes no texto.

Mitos relativos à velocidade em leitura e a compreensão ainda permanecem tendo em vista que, ape-

sar de defenderem ritmos diversos para leitores e textos diversos, os alunos, em sua maioria, acreditam que uma leitura bem-feita é necessariamente mais lenta.

Por fim, é necessário ressaltar que as visões de leitura reveladas (pelo menos parcialmente) neste levantamento atestam que o leitor não é visto como produtor de sentidos, o texto é entendido como lugar de informações¹¹ e toda leitura envolve uma “descoberta” de significados (com a ajuda da gramática e do vocabulário) marcados no texto por um autor onipotente.

Perguntaríamos, então: com esses parâmetros, como desenvolver a consciência crítica na sala de aula? Se utilizarmos a via da “decifração” o resultado inevitável é o da paráfrase, da mimese, da recuperação de um sentido original ilusório.

Enquanto as visões/reflexões acerca da leitura ficarem circunscritas a aspectos lingüísticos ou a estratégias de abordagem de textos, pouco se avançará. Isso porque na perspectiva da Análise do Discurso a leitura remete a processos de significação determinados ideologicamente e a consciência crítica refere-se à reflexão sobre esses processos.

NOTAS

¹Ver: CORACINI, M. J. R. F. As experiências anteriores em aula de leitura de LE. *Letras*, UFSM, n. 4, p. 41-9, jul./dez. 1992; KLEIMAN, A. *Leitura: ensino e pesquisa*. Campinas, Pontes, 1989.

²Cf. ORLANDI, E. P. *Discurso e leitura*. São Paulo/Campinas, Cortez/Ed. da Unicamp, 1988.

³Sobre as concepções privilegiadas em diversos momentos e suas contribuições, ver: KATO, M. *No mundo da escrita*. São Paulo, Ática, 1986. Série Fundamentos; KLEIMAN, op. cit.; CARMAGNANI, A. M. G. Relendo modos de ler a leitura. *Contexturas — Ensino Crítico da Língua Inglesa*, São Paulo, APLIESP, n. 1, p. 33-40, 1992.

⁴ORLANDI, *Discurso e leitura*, cit., p. 10.

⁵ORLANDI, E. P. O inteligível, o interpretável e o compreensível. In: ZILBERMAN e SILVA (orgs.). *Leitura — Perspectivas interdisciplinares*. São Paulo, Ática, 1988, p. 59. Série Fundamentos, 42.

⁶Por questão de organização das respostas, foi atribuído a cada informante um número. Assim, por exemplo, o depoimento transcrito A5 é do aluno 5. Convém ressaltar que as res-

postas foram dadas em inglês e que optamos pela tradução por considerarmos os dados relevantes para estudiosos de outras línguas estrangeiras. Procuramos, contudo, manter a fala original, mesmo que incompleta.

⁷ORLANDI, E. P. *A linguagem e seu funcionamento*. 2. ed. Campinas, Pontes, 1987.

⁸LEFFA, V. J. A Look at Students' Concept of Language Learning. *Trabalhos em Lingüística Aplicada*, São Paulo/Campinas, IEL/Unicamp, n. 17, p. 57-65, jan./jun. 1991.

⁹PÉCHEUX, M. *Analyse Automatique du Discours*. Paris, Dunod, 1969. Trad. português: GADET, F. e HAK, T. (orgs.). *Por uma análise automática do discurso*. Campinas, Ed. da Unicamp, 1990.

¹⁰ARROJO, R. e RAJAGOPALAN, K. O ensino da leitura e a escamoteação da ideologia. In: *O signo desconstruído*. Campinas, Pontes, 1992, p. 87-91.

¹¹GRIGOLETTO, M. O ensino de leitura e uma visão de texto como lugar de informações. *XXI Anais de Seminários do GEL*, São Paulo/Jaú, v. II, p. 792-99, 1992.

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A CONCEPÇÃO DE TEXTO E DE LEITURA DO ALUNO DE 1.º E 2.º GRAUS E O DESENVOLVIMENTO DA CONSCIÊNCIA CRÍTICA

MARISA GRIGOLETTO

Em artigo anterior¹, apresentei os resultados parciais de uma pesquisa sobre os modos de leitura e a concepção de texto dos alunos de língua estrangeira — Inglês — da escola pública de 1.º e 2.º graus. Meu objetivo, neste texto, é discutir algumas implicações dessas concepções para a constituição do aluno como leitor na língua estrangeira e para a pedagogia do ensino de leitura.

A interpretação e discussão dos dados e das seqüências para o ensino serão feitas a partir da perspectiva teórica da Análise de Discurso de linha francesa, que considera as condições de produção como determinantes para a construção de sentidos dentro de um evento discursivo (no entendimento de que toda situação de uso de linguagem constitui um evento discursivo). Em termos específicos do evento de

produção de discurso que interessa investigar no presente artigo, as condições de leitura de um texto em uma aula de língua estrangeira são determinantes dos modos como o texto será abordado e compreendido.

Os sujeitos — professor e alunos — da situação de discurso investigada (a aula de leitura) refletem, em suas concepções sobre aspectos da aula, tais como ensino e aprendizagem, texto e leitura, e em seus com-

portamentos nessa situação, a formação e exposição que tiveram na própria escola. Todos esses elementos irão, se não determinar, ao menos influenciar fortemente os sentidos produzidos na aula de leitura. De outra parte, a própria situação de leitura de um texto em aula — texto proposto pelo professor e/ou contido no livro didático, situação inserida no ritual pedagógico de ensino e avaliação — é determinante das relações interativas que ocorrem entre os componentes desse evento discursivo (alunos, professor e texto). São essas condições de produção que devem ser mantidas em mente na análise e discussão dos dados porque são elas que servirão como ponto de referência e de determinação para a produção da leitura em aulas de língua estrangeira.

MODOS DE LEITURA E CONCEPÇÃO DE TEXTO

A discussão acerca de implicações para a prática pedagógica da leitura deve ser precedida por uma exposição sucinta dos resultados da minha investigação sobre o(s) modo(s) de leitura dos alunos de 1.º e 2.º graus em língua estrangeira.

A análise das minhas observações de alunos em aulas de leitura em língua estrangeira e das entrevistas e protocolos de leitura² realizados com pequenos grupos ou com alunos individualmente levaram-me a concluir que predomina, entre esses alunos, uma visão “componencial” de texto e da atividade de leitura, que vai do fragmento para o todo, numa tarefa linear. O texto seria um conjunto de palavras, algumas conhecidas, outras desconhecidas (sobretudo por se tratar de língua estrangeira), que, no ato da leitura, vão sendo unidas pelo leitor em uma somatória que resultaria na recuperação do sentido do texto. As palavras *recuperação do sentido* têm o propósito de invocar a noção, tão difundida pelo senso comum, de que o sentido encontra-se no texto pronto para ser apenas recuperado pelo leitor competente. E, no caso da língua estrangeira, soma-se a essa a idéia de que a recupe-

ração se dá pela tradução termo a termo. A exposição que segue sobre a perspectiva discursiva de texto, leitura e produção de sentido tornará claro que se trata de uma concepção ilusória determinada por uma certa formação ideológica.

Em decorrência dessa visão de texto como um aglomerado de palavras que contêm em si todo o significado, esses alunos parecem acreditar que a tarefa do leitor resumir-se-ia em ligar as palavras umas às outras e traduzi-las, na maior parte das vezes, para chegar à totalidade de um sentido predeterminado e único.

São exemplos dessa postura as seguintes falas extraídas de entrevistas com os alunos sobre a atividade de leitura que tinham acabado de realizar em aula:

A1: Peguei as palavras que eu já sabia e as que eu não sabia // eu ia tentando associar.

A2: Fui associando as palavras que eu não sabia pra tentar descobrir o significado e entender o texto.

A1: Sempre aparecem palavras diferentes / a gente aprende // aí futuramente pode aparecer a mesma palavra / a gente já vai saber.

A1: Gostaria de traduzir o texto inteiro.

A3: Fui traduzindo as palavras.

A4: Aí então a gente traduz esses textos / exercita bastante o inglês.

Essas conclusões foram confirmadas na tarefa de protocolo de leitura. Os alunos tendem a se apoiar sobremaneira nas palavras conhecidas apenas (que podem ser cognatas ou termos já aprendidos e assimilados) na tentativa de compreensão do texto. A tendência é eleger uma hipótese de conteúdo para o texto a partir de uma palavra conhecida ou supostamente familiar e se fixar nessa hipótese mesmo quando ela se revela inadequada.

Vejam os alguns exemplos de falas durante o protocolo que ilustram esse procedimento:

A5: É difícil de entender / porque tem palavras que eu não sei o significado.

A6: Aqui também tem palavras que eu não sei. [A informante vai tentando traduzir o trecho palavra por palavra, pulando as que não sabe.]

A7: Eu tô um pouco destreinado e um pouco distraído / Eu falei um negócio / depois me contradisse // Por causa dessa palavrinha.

A8: Os ingleses parece que gostaram do jogo / sei lá / não sei se tá certo.

Pesq.: Por que cê acha isso?

A8: Essa palavra aqui / *like* Brazil.

IMPLICAÇÕES PARA A CONSTITUIÇÃO DO ALUNO-LEITOR

Talvez pela dificuldade que o aluno sente em entender o lingüístico, na língua estrangeira, esse lingüístico adquire proporções totalizantes: o texto é o lingüístico. Pode-se deduzir, como decorrência, que, na concepção do aluno, o texto cujas palavras revelam um único significado será compreendido na sua totalidade se todas as palavras forem conhecidas. Talvez, nessa situação ideal, a atividade de leitura em sala de aula não seja mais nem necessária nem relevante. A compreensão de todas as palavras esgotaria o propósito da atividade, ao menos em língua estrangeira.

A interpretação de que há uma tendência de redução do texto ao lingüístico é corroborada também pelo procedimento sistemático dos alunos que realizaram o protocolo de leitura de não recorrer às ilustrações do texto na construção da compreensão, nem mesmo a uma das ilustrações que apresentava um conteúdo verbal. Apenas um aluno, que tem um nível de

conhecimento e de proficiência na língua inglesa superior ao dos demais, “leu” as ilustrações, o que só reforça a interpretação de que quanto menos proficiente na língua, maior é, no aluno, a sensação de “esmagamento” pelo lingüístico, que não lhe permite considerar outras perspectivas de abordagem do texto. O lingüístico gera um *poder do texto de significar* algo que o aluno não capta; qualquer outro componente do texto ou qualquer outra dimensão de significação são apagados.

O texto significa independentemente do aluno-leitor, como se, nas palavras de Bourdieu, o signo tivesse “existência fora de um modo de produção lingüístico concreto”³. Ou, nos termos da Análise de Discurso, é como se o texto significasse fora das suas condições de produção, que pressupõem, na leitura, a constituição ideológica do leitor (o leitor se insere em determinada formação ideológica que, por sua vez, determina as formações discursivas⁴ a partir das quais ele vai “significar” o texto) e, como consequência, a determinação ideológica do sentido.

Ora, o aluno que tem tal concepção de texto não o percebe na sua dimensão discursiva de significação (que somente significa dentro de suas condições de produção, etc.), nem a tarefa de leitura como construção de sentidos determinados pela ideologia do leitor, pela sua história de leituras e pela inserção desse mesmo leitor dentro de um contexto sócio-histórico determinado. O texto não é abordado como documento revelador de uma dada ideologia, de determinadas crenças e valores; nem é levado em conta o fato de que sua circulação se dá dentro de veículos de transmissão de discursos e, indiretamente, também de crenças e valores. Tampouco se concebe que todos esses fatores vão compor nossa significação do texto, isto é, vão exercer influência sobre a significação que construímos para o texto.

Se essa dimensão discursiva não é reconhecida, o texto passa, de fato, a ser concebido como uma unidade de significado que tem um funcionamento interno autônomo construído pela coesão e coerência (também concebidas como valores independentes do leitor e das condições de produção da leitura) e que se resu-

me a um mosaico de palavras que, na leitura competente, recompõem o desenho predeterminado pelo autor e resgatam a coesão e coerência por ele atribuídas. E o aluno mantém-se preso a uma atitude de reprodução de um significado predeterminado pelo texto.

O professor de língua estrangeira pode argumentar que é preciso primeiramente desenvolver a capacidade lingüística e/ou estratégias de leitura para a compreensão geral do texto. Mas essa postura não deixa de ter as suas conseqüências: limitar-se ao desenvolvimento lingüístico ou cognitivo (treino de estratégias) implica anular a constituição do aluno-leitor na sala de aula como leitor real, para o qual seu contexto sócio-histórico, sua ideologia e sua história de leituras não podem ser apagados do processo de construção de significados durante o ato da leitura. A inserção das tarefas da aula de leitura dentro da dimensão discursiva da significação deve necessariamente modificar o enfoque com que o texto será trabalhado, mesmo quando, em alguns momentos da aula, se opte pelo desenvolvimento da capacidade lingüística ou de estratégias de leitura.

A Análise de Discurso postula que o sujeito é constituído pelo discurso e interpelado pela ideologia (através das formações discursivas determinadas por formações ideológicas). Mas, por outro lado, é próprio da condição de sujeito a ilusão de sua autonomia constitutiva, isto é, a ilusão de que o sujeito é unidade e não dispersão, de que possui um discurso autônomo e original. Em outras palavras, é próprio do sujeito não perceber seu assujeitamento ideológico. É um assujeitamento sob a forma da autonomia, conforme esclarece Pêcheux⁵: “a interpelação do indivíduo em sujeito se efetua pela identificação (do sujeito) com a formação discursiva que o domina”.

Um indicio desse assujeitamento ideológico é que os alunos pesquisados têm falas muito semelhantes que apontam para uma concepção única de leitura, de texto, de leitor e autor e de significação (ao menos como atividade didática de sala de aula): existiria uma única forma de abordar o texto (começa-se a ler da primeira linha, vão-se juntando palavras umas às outras, traduzem-se palavras, trechos ou o texto todo); um

sentido único para cada texto, independente do leitor, como parte da ilusão detectada de autonomia das palavras; um autor que fixa o sentido, um leitor que simplesmente o resgata. No entanto, o que o aluno faz é inconscientemente reproduzir um discurso atrelado a determinada formação discursiva (e ideológica) quando produz falas tais como aquelas exemplificadas acima.

É certo que não há como fugir disso, uma vez que sua constituição em sujeito é sua interpelação pela ideologia e que essa injunção ideológica vai sempre ser apagada na ilusão da autonomia; não há como adquirir uma consciência plena que coloque o indivíduo acima e fora de tal injunção. Isso significaria postular um sujeito cognoscente, que é o sujeito concebido pelo idealismo, isto é, o ser que se revela na plenitude da sua cognoscência pelo pensamento. Mas há que se encontrar formas de explicitar esse mecanismo da ideologia para o aluno.

IMPLICAÇÕES PARA A ATRIBUIÇÃO DE PAPÉIS NA SALA DE AULA

Em minha pesquisa anterior concluí também que os alunos se apóiam predominantemente no professor para a sua compreensão do texto. Isso se dá de várias formas: não questionam as respostas que recebem do professor (ao verificar que a sua resposta difere daquela do mestre, a atitude mais usual do aluno é apagar o que havia escrito e copiar o que está sendo transmitido como “oficialmente correto”); esperam uma única resposta certa para cada questão do exercício (que é invariavelmente aquela do professor); seguem os passos propostos pelo mestre para a realização da tarefa.

Tal comportamento revela uma concepção, destarte esperada do aluno na escola, dos papéis de aluno e de professor na sala de aula: o professor comanda, o aluno executa; o professor detém o saber, o aluno recebe esse saber; o discurso do professor é mais legítimo⁶ (autorizado pela instituição escolar) que o do aluno.

A implicação dessa concepção do aluno é a fixação de relações de poder hierarquizadas na sala de aula. No caso da aula de leitura, não se trata somente da assimetria da relação entre professor e aluno, mas também entre leitor e texto, leitor e autor. O professor tem a competência lingüística⁷ para revelar o sentido do texto, dar a resposta certa, fazer a “boa” leitura; o autor, através de seu texto, tem o poder de fixar o sentido correto, ao passo que o aluno se concebe como desprovido de toda e qualquer autoridade para significar.

De fato, pode-se dizer que é verdade que a autoridade do professor e do autor através de seu texto existem, considerando-se as condições de produção e circulação dos discursos na escola e o lugar ocupado pelo aluno na hierarquia escolar. Mas é preciso justamente explicitar, na sala de aula, que há injunção à significação sobre os sujeitos e seus discursos dentro das instituições (no caso, a escola). É preciso não assumir nenhuma postura que negue tal injunção (ao se acreditar na transparência da linguagem e dos sentidos), nem outra que creia na libertação do indivíduo (alunos) por meio do desenvolvimento de uma consciência plena não-ideológica.

IMPLICAÇÕES PARA O ENSINO

Pensar em desenvolvimento da “consciência crítica” (as aspas são propositais, porque, ao final da minha argumentação, não desejo que o leitor interprete esse termo no sentido de uma consciência plena que, ao atingir a plenitude, alcançaria igualmente a desideologização) deve implicar levar o aluno a perceber os seguintes aspectos envolvidos na leitura de textos em aula.

O aluno deve saber que há sentidos previstos para um texto. Essa previsão advém das condições de produção da leitura de um texto. Na situação de sala de aula, uma leitura prevista com certeza é a do professor, que, através das atividades didáticas que propõe, direciona o sentido que o aluno deve atribuir ao texto. Se o professor utiliza material didático publicado (ou, de

qualquer forma, feito por outros), pode-se dizer que há uma leitura (com sentido predeterminado) prevista pelo material, na forma dos exercícios que acompanham o texto. O aluno deve perceber também que a sua leitura particular pode ter um espaço menor na aula, se o tiver, em vista da ênfase sobre as atividades didáticas propostas. Outros sentidos previstos são aqueles determinados pelo veículo de publicação do texto, pelo perfil de leitor que aquela publicação quer atingir, mesmo em se tratando de um livro didático. Quando lemos um texto incluído em um determinado livro, revista, jornal, fazemos uma interpretação acerca dos sentidos que julgamos previstos tendo em vista nosso conhecimento dos objetivos e finalidades da publicação (incluindo a ideologia subjacente nela), o tipo de leitor que, julgamos, se pretende atingir, etc. Se não o fizermos, corremos o sério risco de tomarmos o texto como o fazem os alunos pesquisados: como um conjunto de palavras que vão se compondo para revelar o sentido do texto na sua transparência e fixidez; transparência só concebível para aquilo que é, sempre foi e sempre será: a *verdade* do texto.

Mas, além disso, é preciso que o aluno perceba que mesmo a nossa interpretação dos sentidos previstos para um texto em uma dada condição de produção é ilusoriamente autônoma, quando, na verdade, ela é fruto das formações ideológicas e discursivas que nos constituem como sujeitos.

É preciso também explicitar para o aluno que as condições de produção da leitura de um texto dentro da sala de aula como parte das atividades didáticas vão necessariamente influenciar a construção do sentido; ou seja, ler um texto, qualquer que seja ele, nessa situação vai produzir sentidos diferentes da leitura do mesmo texto em uma situação não-didática. Por exemplo, um texto de jornal ou revista, um excerto de texto retirado de um livro ou manual, um folheto (informativo, de propaganda, etc.) ou anúncio transportado para compor as atividades de uma aula de língua provocarão, por imposição da própria situação, leitura(s) diversa(s) daquela(s) provocada(s) por outras condições de produção.

Deve-se também deixar claro para o aluno que existe uma injunção ideológica que se revela nas posições hierarquizadas da sala de aula e, conseqüentemente, na relação professor-aluno.

Por fim, lidar com textos em sala de aula deve, a meu ver, ser qualitativamente diferente das atividades de extração de informações que comumente são feitas; atividades que reforçam a concepção de texto como um conjunto de palavras que contêm um sentido a ser resgatado pela leitura certa (a do professor, do material didático ou do autor); atividades que forçosamente criam no aluno a concepção e a ação de leitura descritas anteriormente.

Lidar com textos na sala de aula é explicitar a ilusão que cada leitor tem de que há uma única leitura “boa” e certa para um texto.

Na situação de ensino, essa leitura certa é, do ponto de vista tanto do professor quanto dos alunos, a leitura do próprio professor, que, quando necessário, “interpreta” o autor; intérprete legítimo, legitimidade conferida pela instituição escolar.

Lidar com textos é, enfim, discutir a ilusão da “consciência plena” que nos faz acreditar na única leitura, no bom sentido, na *Verdade* que justamente essa consciência nos fez ilusoriamente alcançar.

NOTES

¹GRIGOLETTO, M. Processos de significação na aula de leitura em LE. *Intercâmbio*, 4.º INPLA, PUC-SP, 1994 (no prelo).

²O protocolo de leitura foi realizado com cinco alunos individualmente e obedeceu ao seguinte procedimento: foi apresentado um texto em inglês ao aluno e foi-lhe pedido que durante a tarefa de leitura (silenciosa) ele/ela tentasse expressar quaisquer comentários que lhe viessem à mente, seja sobre possíveis dificuldades na leitura, seja sobre sua compreensão do texto. A pesquisadora procurou limitar suas intervenções a estímulos para que fosse expresso o maior número de comentários possível.

³BOURDIEU, P. A economia das trocas linguísticas. In: ORTIZ, R. (org.). *Bourdieu*. São Paulo, Ática, 1983.

⁴Na definição de Pêcheux, com base em Foucault, *formação discursiva* é “aquilo que, numa formação ideológica dada, isto é, a partir de uma posição dada numa conjuntura dada (...) determina o que pode e deve ser dito (articulado sob a forma de uma arenga, de um sermão, de um panfleto, de uma exposição, de um programa, etc.)” (PÊCHEUX,

M. *Semântica e discurso: uma crítica à afirmação do óbvio*. Campinas, Ed. da Unicamp, 1988, p. 160). Complementam Orlandi e Guimarães: “as palavras recebem, pois, seu sentido de formação discursiva na qual são produzidas. A formação discursiva é, enfim, o lugar da constituição do sentido e da identificação do sujeito” (ORLANDI, E. P. e GUIMARÃES, E. *Unidade e dispersão: uma questão do texto e do sujeito*. *Cadernos PUC*, São Paulo, EDUC, n. 31, p. 58, 1988).

⁵PÊCHEUX, op. cit., p. 163.

⁶No sentido dado por Bourdieu (*A economia das trocas linguísticas*. In: ORTIZ, R. (org.). *Bourdieu*. São Paulo, Ática, 1983; *A economia das trocas simbólicas*. São Paulo, Perspectiva, 1987), que nos mostra que o direito à palavra e a legitimidade do discurso são regidos pela sociedade através de suas instituições (a escola entre elas). É mais competente linguisticamente quem tem o direito à palavra; possui uma linguagem legítima quem detém a linguagem autorizada (de uma autoridade).

⁷Cf. BOURDIEU, *A economia das trocas linguísticas*, cit.

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Bilingualism
Bilingüismo

Discourse markers in Anglo-Brazilian codeswitch mode¹

MARINA MACRAE

THIS PAPER SUMMARIZES SOME OF THE findings of a study on the discourse markers in the speech of four first generation female adult balanced bilingual members of the Anglo-Brazilian community in São Paulo, Brazil. The analysis was part of a larger research on the codeswitching behaviour of this group, in which their use of quotations, discourse markers and repetitions was investigated. The corpus was obtained through conversations which relied, to varying degrees, on an adapted version of Labov's² sociolinguistic interview. There were eleven informants originally, eight women and four men, but only the discourse markers of three of these female speakers were analyzed, since the data in which they occurred contained the widest variety of discourse types and codeswitched instances. The fourth informant was the researcher herself, also a member of that community, who actively participated in the exchanges with the speakers. Before going into the discourse markers themselves, I would like to give the reader a general view of the problematic.

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CODESWITCHING Codeswitching is one of the alternatives bilinguals have among the possibilities to be found in their communicative repertoire. It is as old as bilingualism itself, that is, it has been an intrinsic feature of the linguistic events taking place whenever two languages come into contact with each other. It can be defined as the alternation in the use of two languages and occurs when a bilingual person engages in discourse with another bilingual person. Codeswitching can be distinguished from borrowing in that you do not have to be a bilingual to use a loan word; yet to codeswitch you do. For many years codeswitching was looked down upon, not only by monolinguals but by codeswitchers themselves, who can be unaware of their behaviour and are sometimes seen to vigorously deny doing it. Only relatively recently have the linguistic skills involved in this kind of language behaviour been acknowledged, thanks to studies like the ones undertaken by such scholars as Blom & Gumperz,³ Gumperz,⁴ and Poplack,⁵ to name but a few.

Codeswitching has been attracting the steady interest of linguists for more than a decade, and this has proved to be a very fruitful area of investigation due to the wide range of issues it has raised and insights it has brought to linguistics. The bulk of the studies, however, deal with codeswitches occurring between English and another language.⁶ Many different aspects have been studied too: from the syntactic perspective⁷ to its use in literature.⁸ A few studies of discourse markers in bilingual settings have also been made.

DISCOURSE MARKERS I have based this study on Schiffrin's book on discourse markers.⁹ She classifies them as "*sequentially dependent* elements which bracket units of talk" (emphasis original). This definition allows for items such as *and*, *but*, and *because*, which have a clear syntactic function and a semantic interpretation, to be included in the same category as those which only have pragmatic functions, such as the marker *oh*, the semantic and syntactic function of which is hard to specify. I adopt Schiffrin's definition for discourse markers since, along with Mar-

cuschi,¹⁰ I take the interactional and intratextual properties of discourse markers to be relevant in *speech events*.¹¹

The status of discourse markers has been discussed in the bilingual literature, but not extensively. Clyne,¹² in his study of the speech of Australian bilinguals, sees them as proper codeswitches, as opposed to Gumperz and Hernández-Chávez,¹³ who, in their study of Chicano Spanish English bilinguals, take a different position. They see these markers as part of the style of these bilingual speakers who use them as ethnic identity markers. Poplack¹⁴ called the alternation of interjections, tags and idiomatic expressions *emblematic switches*, as opposed to generalized codeswitching, which she sees as an overall discourse mode. In other words, Poplack found that the discourse markers her informants used functioned as codeswitches.

The most extensive work in the area of bilingual use of discourse markers seems to be the one by Salmons,¹⁵ a study of American German varieties spoken in central Texas. He found that German discourse markers were excluded from the speech of these German-English bilinguals. As a result, speakers use a similar discourse marking system in the two languages. He suggests that the discourse marking systems of German and English in that community have undergone convergence.¹⁶

His informants ranged from third to sixth generation in the United States, and spoke German before they learned English. However, he does not specify how fluent they are in the language, and vaguely states that they can deal easily with a range of everyday topics in German. But, because they have only the English option of discourse markers to draw on, he suggests they have replaced the German markers with a borrowed set from English. He argues that even recent immigrants, with an active German marking system, acquire the English markers used in that specific variety. He then suggests that this is an indication that emblematic codeswitching¹⁷ in other language contact settings needs to be classified as convergence and/or loan words rather than primarily as codeswitches.

This point is further emphasized by Salmons,¹⁸ because of the fact that in some language situations there

is a bidirectional process at work regarding the markers, i. e. Texas Mexicans use Spanish markers in English and English markers in Spanish and in the codeswitch mode. He does not think the speaker has to switch into the other language to generate the marker. It is all a part of the same language they are employing at the time.

If, however, these markers were really borrowings or resulting from convergence, we would not expect them to work as triggers for codeswitches. He does not mention this point in his study, so we do not know if there were any such instances. In my opinion, if a marker does trigger a switch, then it has to be considered a switch in itself.

I do not believe that there can be a universally accepted categorization of discourse markers as switches or borrowings or convergence. As we have seen, each of the above researchers has come up with different results. There seem to be different specific features at play in each of the different studies and situations. The social setting of the informants in this research is different from that of the others. However, because the discourse markers employed by my informants also functioned as triggers for switches into the donor language, I will take them to be codeswitches.

THE STUDY The speech situation of the Anglo-Brazilian community in São Paulo is very complex and liable to change in the following years. There are many factors at work in this process,

some of which contribute towards the maintenance of the English language in the community,¹⁹ while others help towards its demise.²⁰ However, my informants are all active members of the community, and they are in contact with the English language every day.²¹ They need to use English in their professional lives.

The conversations with these three informants, which lasted approximately one hour each, were recorded, transcribed and then given a conversation analysis treatment. The most frequent markers each speaker employed were investigated, in the three modes, i.e. English, Portuguese, and the codeswitch (CS) mode. Their functions were compared to those discussed in Schiffrin²² and Marcuschi.²³

Table 1 below shows the number of times each of the speakers used the most frequent English discourse markers in the course of their conversations with the researcher. Cathy is the first informant, Ann the second and Helen the third. Marina is the researcher.²⁴ Beside each of these columns, the table presents the markers produced by the researcher during each of these encounters.

Because was the device which appeared most frequently during the recordings, followed closely by *so*. The fact that the data was obtained mostly through casual interaction, where there were many narratives and explanations, could probably account for the high frequency of this marker, since its intrinsic nature shows it to be the bearer of the *cause* in a fact-based structure, of the *warrant* in a

Markers English	M	C	M	A	M	H	Total
Well	10	16	18	10	8	10	72
Y'know	6	28	18	25	1	20	98
So	13	32	19	24	7	28	123
Because	14	30	9	25	10	39	127
Total	43	106	64	84	26	97	420

Table 1. Distribution of the informants' most frequent English discourse markers as compared to the ones produced by the researcher during each of the conversational exchanges. C stands for Cathy, A for Ann, H for Helen, and M for the researcher.

knowledge-based information state and the *motive* in an action-based action structure.²³ These are structures to be frequently found in these kinds of speech events.

Helen was the informant who most made use of *because*, while Cathy produced more *so*'s and *y'know*'s. Marina produced the majority of *well*'s during her interaction with Ann and it served many functions in that corpus. Cathy presented the highest occurrence of markers in English, followed closely by Helen.

Table 2 illustrates how these markers were used in the different environments, i.e. English, Portuguese, and the CS mode, during each of the interactions.

This table shows that there does not seem to be a tendency for the use of English discourse markers when the informants are employing the Portuguese mode. This can be seen from the fact that *y'know* was the only marker to be used at all in that environment, and it only appeared once. (1) shows the reader how it was inserted into an utterance in Portuguese.

Markers English	C.E	C.F	C.C	A.E	A.F	A.C	H.E	H.F	H.C	M.E	M.F	M.C	Total
Well	16			10			10			31		5	72
Y'know	26	1	1	19		6	17		3	24		1	98
So	29		3	17		7	22		6	37		2	123
Because	20		10	21		4	39			31		2	127
Total	91	1	14	67		17	88		9	123		10	420

Table 2. Distribution of the informant's discourse markers according to the environment in which they occurred. *E* stands for English, *P* for Portuguese, and *C* for the codeswitch mode; *C* for Cathy, *A* for Ann, *H* for Helen, and *M* for Marina.

Well was only employed by one of the informants, the researcher, in the CS mode (at a CS boundary) and it occurred during her conversation with Ann, which was the least interview-like of all the encounters. (3) is an example of how it was used.

- (3) M: Gosh, *mas é um barato*. **Well** then, another three hours of that and...
(that's brilliant)

- (1) C: *Eu não acho graça, y'know, não acho a mínima graça. Pra mim é horrível ter que passar por aquilo.*
(I don't find it funny, y'know, it's not at all funny. I really find it terrible to go through.)

Ten percent of all the instances in which *y'know* was used were in the CS mode. All of the markers, except for *well*, appeared in codeswitch environments in the speech of all the informants. (2) shows Ann using *so* in such a way

- (2) A: ... the Mackenzie school, and **so**, *eles nunca entram em acordo com nada...*
(they never seem to agree about anything)

So here introduces the main unit in the story she was telling me²⁶ and it occurs at the boundary of a switch. This is the type of environment both *so* and *because* were seen to occur in the CS mode: at switch boundaries.

Next, let us examine the informants' use of Portuguese markers. Table 3 below presents the reader with their distribution in each of the events.

The first thing that stands out in this table is the fact that the Portuguese markers, as a whole, were employed less than half of the times the English devices were used (201 in Portuguese and 420 in English), if we compare table 3 to table 1. Ann was the only one to have more Portuguese markers than English ones

Markers Portuguese	M	C	M	A	M	H	Total
Né	0	32	6	37	2	14	91
Sabe	0	7	2	28	0	0	37
Então	0	6	2	30	0	1	39
Porque	0	6	2	23	0	3	34
Total	0	51	12	118	2	18	201

Table 3. Distribution of informant's discourse markers in Portuguese as compared to the ones produced by their interlocutor. C stands for Cathy, A for Ann, H for Helen, and M for the researcher.

(118 as opposed to 84). While the researcher was seen to produce most of the devices in the interaction with Ann, she produced two with Helen and none during the conversation with Cathy²⁷. *Né* is the device all the informants prefer; this is very obvious, especially in the speech of the researcher, since it was the only marker I employed during my interaction with Helen. Table 4 below shows the distribution of the devices in each of the three different modes.

Né is the only marker to appear in the English mode in the speech of all of the informants, with the exception of Marina, who did not employ any of these markers other than in the Portuguese mode. Cathy employed

né in English more times than any of the other informants, and she was the only one to use *sabe* in that environment. The interesting thing is that *sabe* did not appear in her speech in the Portuguese mode. (4) is an example of how *né* was employed by the third informant in the English mode.

- (4) H: ...but my theory was that one is aware of everything, *né*? And all they did was criticize me. (right)

The next example (5) shows *sabe* in an English environment, in the speech of the first informant.

Markers Portuguese	C.E	C.F	C.C	A.E	A.F	A.C	H.E	H.F	H.C	M.E	M.F	M.C	Total
Né	7	12	13	4	27	6	1	4	9		8		91
Sabe	2		5		24	4					2		37
Então		4	2		28	2		1			2		39
Porque		4	2		20	3		3			2		34
Total	9	20	22	4	99	15	1	8	9		14		201

Table 4. Distribution of the informant's Portuguese discourse markers according to the environment they occurred in, i.e. E stands for English, P for Portuguese, and C for the codeswitch mode; C for Cathy, A for Ann, H for Helen, and M for Marina.

- (5) C: My God, you didn't have to boast, *sabe*, he is a Leo, with a Leo ascendant...
(y'know)

These markers were also found at switch boundaries working as switch triggers as can be seen in the example below. *Né*, in (6), is acting as a trigger for a switch into Portuguese in the speech of the first informant.

- (6) C: ... ah, the sea there is very calm, *né?* *Vai numa boa...*
(right? It's very smooth going...)

RESULTS From the analysis of the data presented in tables 1 to 4 above we can see that the informants do not use their English discourse markers when speaking in the Portuguese mode; only one of the informants was seen to do this and only once, which accounted for less than 1% of the occurrences. On the other hand, there is a tendency for them to use Portuguese markers when speaking English.²⁸

Two of the informants showed a much higher relative frequency rate of the occurrence of Portuguese markers in the codeswitch mode than they did with the English counterparts: Cathy employed 43% of the Portuguese markers in codeswitches as opposed to only 14% of the English devices in that environment; although Helen only used one of these Portuguese markers in the codeswitch mode, *né*, it still occurred 45% of the times in that mode. The interesting point about these figures is that both of these informants spoke much more English during the interactions than they did Portuguese or codeswitch. It is possible to infer

from these figures that the codeswitch variety employed by these informants tends to resort to the markers in Portuguese. This is not surprising since, although they are in close daily contact with other members of the community and they must speak English most times, the exposure to Portuguese is a fact that can not be underestimated. Marina did not use markers from a language when speaking the other. The different speakers showed different tendencies in the use of the markers in the codeswitch mode: while Ann and Helen produced more in English, Cathy's speech presented more in Portuguese and Marina did not employ any in Portuguese at all.

CONCLUSIONS Although it is not possible to generalize from these results, the different pressures upon the Anglo-Brazilian community contribute to the undergoing of a change in the language behaviour of its members. Although my informants were all first generation speakers who depend on their knowledge and use of the English language in their professional lives, the study of their discourse markers signals that a shift away from the English language seems to be taking place. This is also perceptible from the fact that, not only do the members of the community see the codeswitch mode as something natural, but they admit to employing it quite frequently. It was found that my informants employed more Portuguese markers in the CS mode than their English counterparts. Most significant of all was the fact that they were seen to use Portuguese markers while speaking English, while there were practically no instances of English markers in their Portuguese mode.

NOTES

¹See MACRAE, M. *Some Language Strategies of four Anglo-Brazilian Bilinguals*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of São Paulo, 1993.

²LABOV, W. *The Transformation of Experience in Narrative Syntax*. In: *Language in the Inner City*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972.

³BLOM, J.-P. & GUMPERZ, J. J. *Social Meaning in Linguistic Structures: Code-switching in Norway*. In: GUMPERZ, J. J. and HYMES, Dell (eds.). *Directions in Sociolinguistics*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

⁴GUMPERZ, J. J. *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

⁵POPLACK, S. *Sometimes I'll Start a Sentence in Spanish y*

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Linguistics, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, v. 18, 1980.

⁶POPLACK, op. cit.; CLYNE, M. *Perspectives on Language Contact. Based on a Study of German in Australia*. Melbourne, Hawthorne, 1972.

⁷SANKOFF, D. & POPLACK, S. A Formal Grammar for Code-Switching. *International Journal of Human Communication*, Edmonton, v. 14, n. 1-4, 1981.

⁸OMOLE, J. Codeswitching in Soyinka's "The Interpreters". *Language and Style*, v. 20, 4: 385-95, 1987.

⁹SCHIFFRIN, D. *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

¹⁰MARCUSCHI, L.A. Marcadores convencionais do português brasileiro: formas, posições e funções. In: CASTILHO, Ataliba (ed.). *Português culto falado no Brasil*. Campinas, Ed. da Unicamp, 1989, p. 281-91.

¹¹HYMES, D. Toward Ethnographies of Communication: The Analysis of Communicative Events. In: GIGLIOGLI, P. (ed.). *Language and Social Context*. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972, p. 21-44.

¹²CLYNE, op. cit.

¹³GUMPERZ, J. J. and HERNÁNDEZ-CHÁVEZ, E. Bilingualism, Bidialectism, and Classroom Interaction [1971]. In: LOURIE, M. and CONKLIN, N. (eds.). *A Pluralistic Nation: The Language Issue in the United States*. Rowley, MA, Newbury House, 1978.

¹⁴POPLACK, op. cit.

¹⁵SALMONS, J. Bilingual Discourse Marking: Code Switching, Borrowing, and Convergence in some German-American Dialects. *Linguistics*, n. 28, p. 453-80, 1990.

¹⁶GUMPERZ, J. J. & HYMES, D. Introduction. *Directions in Sociolinguistics. The Ethnography of Communication*. New York, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1972.

¹⁷POPLACK, op. cit.

¹⁸SALMONS, op. cit.

¹⁹From the high status its members enjoy to the strong institutional support behind it.

²⁰These include the increase in the number of marriages between members and people from outside the community to the fact that English is no longer heard as frequently within the premises of the British school.

²¹The fact that they are female speakers gives rise to many issues. These include the difference between the language used by women and men, women talking to women as opposed to women talking to men, the conversational norms involved in these interactions, etc. Unfortunately, I cannot deal with them in greater detail in this paper for lack of space.

²²SCHIFFRIN, op. cit.

²³MARCUSCHI, op. cit.

²⁴All these names, except that of the researcher, have been changed so as to preserve the anonymity of the informants.

²⁵Cf. SCHIFFRIN, op. cit.

²⁶This is probably due to the fact that that was the first of the conversations and, because at the time I was interested in finding out what made the informants switch from English into another mode, I kept going back to speaking English whenever I realized we had been speaking Portuguese for a while. The second and third conversations were not characterized in such a way and I was not conscious of what language I was speaking.

²⁷This informant, however, did use fillers in Portuguese, such as *sei lá* and *não sei o quê* many times during this interaction.

²⁸I probably did not produce any markers in Portuguese when speaking to Cathy because I did not want to call her attention to that language during our conversation. I am also more conscious of the way I speak, specially because it is closely linked to my professional life, which would explain the total absence of the markers in Portuguese and the small amount of switches.

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Crop

Translation
Tradução

Crap

TRANSLATION:

The vital link for survival in developing countries¹

REGINA HELENA ELIAS ALFARANO

Translation has not only played its many different traditional parts in the Brazilian culture but added on a most vital one: the survival link. And by survival we mean everyday business routine, scientific research, political agreements, educational programmes, financial contracts — all of these not only carried out exclusively in foreign languages but depicting a “foreign culture within,” which implies at least an immediate double task for translation, added to all the other tasks we are so aware of.

Brazil is a giant, with gigantic issues. Translation is not only vital in a huge 17-million people urban centre like São Paulo, or tourism paradises like Rio de Janeiro and the northeastern white sand beaches, or even the 75% of what is actually read in the country, but also in the Amazon rain forest exotic, natural lung. Urban centres, as we know, are always boiling with the financial and trading markets, technology and sciences; tourism requires its own segment, and the Amazon requires basic survival for the people — native Brazilians trying to communicate not only with fellow countrymen, Portuguese speakers, but with the foreign population as well. And this communication goes beyond traditional human or commercial relationship: it has to do with survival in the forest — medical assistance to fight diseases. It has to do with teams of research scientists. It has to do with a sort of practice which is referred to in *English*, by Portuguese speakers, as “bleed and fly,” which means — researchers on malaria and epidemiology make very brief visits, collect blood — the population is not aware of what is going on, mistake them for official representatives as they do not and cannot communicate — and then they fly away carrying

native population’s blood and the possibility of real research, ethical procedures and proper treatment. According to B.M. Dickens:

the implications of the study are not limited to the scientific or medical implications, such as taking a drug or vaccines. There are also psychological or sociological ones that are changing the way people think about themselves, the way they interact themselves within bigger communities and the way communities’ self esteem and look for the future can be affected.²

Had there been interaction, had there been basic oral/written information in the mother tongues (Indian languages and/or Portuguese) and this rupture would not exist. Had there been the vital link for survival present — orally or in writing — and one more door would have been open and not slammed shut.

Not only malaria, but AIDS research is another important task for translation. A country like Brazil — as well as our South American and Central American neighbours — is in bad need for information exchange, scientific studies, medicines, updated research work. The Aids Prevention Support Group is very active in Brazil, especially in São Paulo. Newsletters are not only periodic but highly informative. A group of post-graduate students have been in charge of translating the material for the Group to have published and spread around. The timing has been quite efficient, and updated studies have circulated concurrently to their home basis in the mother language (usually English). The journalistic-like, lay/scientific interface format is very accessible to the target population, to allow immediate

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reference and a possibility for treatment. Only recently have the first studies started being published in Portuguese, and of course these, too, must go abroad.

Brazil has stood out as a research centre in various areas — especially medical sciences. So, the time for exchange has come. The country has just stood out, too, — and for the first time after official pronouncement from international institutions — as one of the few high potential economies once its national standards and parameters are considered, which means to be appraised in Portuguese, in Brazilian terms, taking the domestic currency as reference, as a country in itself and part of one of the Americas and the world. This is a brand new approach! The international institutions finally reversed the awkward and weird appraisal system where the country being assessed was always at the last end, being always referred to, and never the reference point.

The challenge of having translation stand on its feet professionally

Global economy is not new to Brazil, or to any other developing countries dependent on foreign technology, foreign investments, foreign book references, foreign debt — in other words, to countries that are, to quite an extent, foreign to themselves. What, then, is the interface between the cultures involved? How to avoid what Alan Duff has denominated “The Third Language,” which would inevitably lead us to a “third culture?” How to handle the question of “cultural identity?”³

If we are to consider translation as “necessarily a political gesture: it at once discloses and contests the nationalist ideology” as does Venuti, serving

two specifically political functions, one critical, clarifying its potential role in precipitating social transformation, the other utopian, illuminating possibilities for social life that are not yet conscious or realized in the present,⁴

then we must, again following Venuti, agree that

it becomes essential to recognize that translation in its many aspects (...) wields enormous power in the construction of national identities and hence can play an important geopolitical role.⁵

Brazil clearly illustrates the twofold political functions of translation: not yet precipitating social transformation, but, alas, trying to illuminate the possibilities for social life.

There is a great difference between technology transfer, business trading and political experience exchanged and shared among developed countries and the inter-relation established between developed and developing countries. And the basic, fundamental difference can be translated in two words: reciprocity/non-reciprocity. When real reciprocity occurs, the exchange will sponsor at least two languages/cultures, if not three or four. When no reciprocity is achieved, then one language/culture predominates — this is also where *survival* comes in. It is usually an avalanching situation, where the merry-go-round of business, politics, science and finances gives no room for reflection, for clear thinking and ordering of mind. Thus, a biased translation process treads a winding — if not dotted — road. The consequence is the “third culture” — a blurred image veils the translator. The translator is not *visible*. So, translation, as the vital link, by being invisible is hardly recognized.

Quite aware of this, Brazilian translators have put efforts into the challenge of having translation stand on its feet professionally. Although it has not been an easy task, we have the consolation of being in quite good company with other nations — the only positive aspect is, actually, solidarity, though.

Such effort has included the creation of the National Translators Union in Brazil, in 1988, which had its seed in the Brazilian Translators Association, founded in 1974. Considering the country's continental size the first great challenge is to bring translators together. Activities have been mostly concentrated in a slim, diamond-shaped area covering São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, Florianópolis and Porto Alegre, which would physically represent approxi-

mately 1/20 of the potentially active territory, being the Amazon excluded. The area does represent, though, the actual economic heart of the country. Having set foot on this mission (around 500 members as of June/94), and having succeeded in having the profession officially recognized as of 1988, the key target at this point in time is the translator regulatory status. An attorney-assisted work group is working on this issue. An attempt to reach an agreement with publishing houses is also in course at this moment. The Union has it clear that once translators acquire legal status, the agreement with the publishing houses will be a consequence. In the meantime, though, we understand there is no passive watching and waiting.

Translation now enjoys "a little" visibility, it is seen as "vital"

Another important step in trying to remove barriers was the foundation of the Brazilian Association of Researchers on Translation, April/92, as well as the Translation and Terminology Centre at the University of São Paulo, late 1992. As of June/94, the Association counts approximately 80 members.

Through hard work, these groups have been trying to reverse the traditional status of the "lonely worker," as the translator is always seen, and strengthen collective positioning. This has undoubtedly yielded some results, being the first one the official recognition of the translator's professional activity (and therefore a distinct official profession code in the Income Tax Form), sporadic publication of translator's name in newspapers book reviews, book listings or book selections, the invitation for the president of the Translators Union to participate in a government panel discussion on book policies in Brazil in 1993. As fundamentally vital as the Union's work has been this is not the only reason why translation now enjoys "a little" visibility. No doubt political and economic circumstances have sponsored it. Brazil has reversed its protectionist attitude and has opened its doors to imported products, equipment and technology. A natural

consequence was not only the demand for translation of materials, but official requirement for labels and directions in Portuguese. One newspaper (São Paulo Capital District, April/92) brought headlines alerting towards the validity date of products: "translation alters validity dates of products." If on one hand the translator is exposed to "negative visibility" here, on the other, translation is seen as "vital." Without acknowledging it, what this newspaper did was to recognize the importance of translation and to confer its proper authority.

Survival through translation can be seen, then, as literally vital and fatal in the cases of malaria epidemiology in the Amazon (although the whole issue does bear a much wider scope, of course) and AIDS research (although, again, this is actually a worldwide communal effort) because they stand out at this point in time in Brazil. We have not mentioned the wide variety of technology fields, scientific research, and last but not least, literary translation. How refreshing and gratifying to worry about and dedicate our energy to literary translation. How appealing to handle scientific research and know-how. How urgent, though, to assist the survival process: to be able to translate recovery in its widest sense — the recovery of the very basic human right for information on social/medical assistance, the recovery of the very basic human right for dignifying relationship between peoples, the recovery of the basic human right of citizenship.

NOTES

¹Partially presented at the XIII FIT CONGRESS: TRANSLATION — THE VITAL LINK, 6-13 August 1993, for the workshop *Public Image and Public Status: Status in the Americas*.

²DICKENS, B.M. *Rev. Inst. Med. Trop. S. Paulo*, 34, suppl. 9, p. 54, 1992.

³DUFF, A. *The Third Language*, 1981.

⁴VENUTI, Lawrence (ed.). *Rethinking Translation*, p. 10, 1992.

⁵Id., *ibid.*, p. 14.

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“The nurse’s waist”: the translator as censor

JOHN MILTON

IN THIS PAPER I SUGGEST that one of the most traditional roles of the translator has been that of censor. I shall look at the role of the censoring translator in 17th century France and Augustan England, analyse the way in which Charles Fourier’s works were censored when translated into English, then examine the alterations of novels translated from English to Portuguese in Brazil in the second half of this century. I shall also mention the translation of detective novels from English to French in the post-war period.

All translation scholars are familiar with the *belles infidèles*, the French 16th and 17th century translations which adapted all works which entered France to the French norms of *beauté, clarté* and *bon goût*. Plots had to be tidied up, loose ends cut away, clarifications made where necessary, scatological references omitted, and all characters from the translated work had to follow the rules of polite society. Pierrot d’Ablancourt, who mostly translated Latin authors, is one of the best-known translators of this period¹. He made considerable stylistic adjustments to his translations of Tacitus to try to achieve a sweetness of style and frequently used sentences with the twelve syllables of the Alexandrine to give the translated work a certain nobility. “Less civilized” behaviour had to be softened: Tacitus’

references to the Macedonians’ drunkenness and homosexual practices, the rape of Britannicus by Nero and the adultery of Agrippina and Pallas were all euphemised. Servants had to know their place. In his translation of *Arrien* (1646), Alexander’s lieutenant addresses his master with much less familiarity in the translation than in the original. The character must behave according to his social position. A noble must also die with dignity: D’Ablancourt suppresses Germanicus’ anger when he dies as this would not be inkeeping with his social position. Indeed, in his own time, d’Ablancourt was even called a *tradcorrateur*.

The French style of translation was dominant in the second half of the 17th century and in the 18th century and was imitated to a great extent by English

translators and commentators on translation. Fanshawe, Dryden, Cowley, Johnson, Pope, and Tytler² all believe that the translator should have considerable liberty to alter and omit, even add. Probably the most famous translation of the period, Pope's *Iliad*, seems to the modern reader to be much more Pope than Homer. In the first complete book ever written on translation, *An Essay on the Art of Translation*³, Tytler believes that it is even part of the job of the translator to improve the original. He must

never to suffer the original to fall. He must maintain with him a perpetual contest of genius; he must attend him in his highest flights, and soar, if he can, beyond him: and when he perceives, at any time, a diminution of his powers, when he sees a drooping wing, he must raise him on his own pinions.

Tytler is a card-carrying neo-classicist. A "beautiful idea may be added," but a titillating reference must be left out: "His translation (Pope's of Homer) has with much propriety left out the compliment to the nurse's waist altogether." Dryden should have omitted the "vulgar and nauseous" "spews a flood." But Pope is able to upgrade Homer on another of the few occasions he falls below himself. When Homer offends by introducing "low images and puerile allusions," these defects are "veiled over or altogether removed" by Pope.

French translations of Shakespeare are heavily cut and altered right up until Vigny's translation in 1829. Although Shakespeare's brilliance was admired, his total disregard of the unities, his mixing of the tragic and the comic and his bawdiness was anathema to French neo-classicism. Thus he had to be altered⁴. Stage versions, of which Ducis' rewritings were the most famous and widely performed, often have little more than a vague link with the original. Even translations

just meant to be read, such as those of La Place, had considerable alterations. For example, in his translation of *Othello* (1745), La Place cut all the passages he considered unnecessary and foreign to the text, all the scenes he considered indecent such as the drinking scene and the scenes with Bianca, and those scenes he considered too long or trivial. *Othello* becomes a pseudo-French classical drama in which the action is hurried along and which is dominated by the character of Othello as Iago loses many of his speeches and Emilia and Roderigo are completely cut.

Ducis stage adaptation of *Othello* (1792) makes huge changes. Othello's skin is lighter, more yellow than black. The names of most of the characters are changed: Iago becomes Pézare and Desdemona Hédelmone, a name which conveniently rhymes with *soupponne, donne, ordonne*, and even, as Vigny remarked, with *aumône* and *anémone*. Above all, the play itself becomes a moral drama, a lesson to disobedient daughters in which the passion is replaced by fatality. It also has a firm topical and revolutionary background: Othello is seen as a Rousseau like child of Nature and is called a "sans-culotte"; references are also made to the Republic. We may scorn Ducis' version, but it was highly successful right into the 19th century 'in many countries.

In *L'épreuve de l'étranger*⁵ Antoine Berman criticises the French style of translation and praises the style of translation put forward by the German Romantics, Novalis, the Schlegel brothers, Humboldt, Schleiermacher and Goethe. This

kind of translation remained much closer to the original and tried to introduce elements of the foreign language into the target language. Indeed, Voss' translations of Homer and the Schlegel-Tieck translation of Shakespeare were highly important in the foundation of the national German literature. In *L'auberge du lointain*⁶ Berman criticises traditional novel translation and makes a plea for a translation which, like the ideas put

**The
éthnocentrique,
hypertextuelle
and
platonicienne
translations**

forward by the German Romantics, will be much more open to the stylistic features of the original. He also points to three general qualities of the traditional novel translation: it is usually *ethnocentrique*, like the *belles infidèles*: it adapts everything to its own culture; *hypertextuelle*, it produces a new text, an adapted text or a pastiche over the original text; and *platonicienne*, the translation is merely interested in the meaning. He also looks at

“Hello, you!”

But it didn't budge. So I hollered again, and then Jim says:

“De man ain't asleep—he's dead. You hold still—I'll go and see.

“He went and bent down and looked, and says:

“It's a dead man. Yes, indeedly; nakedly too. He's been shot in the back. I reck'n he's ben dead two or three days. Come in, Huck, but doan' look at his face—it's too gashly.”

I didn't look at him at all. Jim threwed some old rage over him, but he didn't need done it; I didn't want to see him. There was heaps of old greasy cards scattered around over the floor, and old whisky bottles, and a couple of masks made out of black cloth; and all over the walls was the ignorantest kind of words and pictures, made with charcoal. There was two dirty old calico dresses, and a sun-bonnet, and some women's underclothes, hanging against the wall, and some men's clothing, too. We put the lot into the canoe; it might come good. There was a boy's old speckled straw hat on the floor; I took that too. And there was a bottle that had had milk in it; and it had a rag stopper for a baby to suck. We would a took the bottle, but it was broke. There was a seedy old chest, and an old hair trunk with the hinges broke. They stood open, but there warn't nothing left in them that was any account. The way things was scattered about, we reckoned the people left in a hurry and warn't fixed so as to carry off most of their stuff.

the specific characteristics of this kind of translation, among them to use the general instead of the specific, a tendency to upgrade the register of the text and a tendency towards explanation and clarification.

I have noticed these tendencies in a study of novels in English translated to Portuguese that I have been carrying out. I have compared translations of *Huckleberry Finn* with the original⁷. Let us look at an example:

—Helo! Helo! gritou Jim, sem que obtivesse resposta. Também fiz o mesmo, e nada. Jim resolveu pular a janela, e logo depois exclamava: É um homem! Está morto!... Foi atirado pelas costas, deve fazer uns dois ou três dias. Entre Huck, mas não olhe para o rosto dele. Até assusta a gente.

Jim cobria o cadáver com alguns trapos, precaução inútil, pois não me sentia propenso a examinar-lhe a fisionomia. Pelo assoalho, espalhavam-se cartas de um baralho ensebado, garrafas de “whiskey” e duas máscaras de pano preto. Na parede, garatujas e desenhos feitos a carvão. Pendurados num cabide dois vestidos, um boné e roupas de homem. Pusemos tudo na canoa—talvez nos fosse de alguma valia. Apanhei também um chapéu de palha a um canto, e teria feito o mesmo a u'a mamadeira, se não estivesse trincada. Vimos uma canastra já de muito uso e com as fechaduras forçadas. Nada continha que nos interessasse. Os assaltantes com toda a certeza, haviam abandonado a casa às pressas.

(Translation: MONTEIRO LOBATO)

Much detail is omitted and the specific is made concrete. The colourful sub-standard forms of the English of the poor whites of the South are all homogenised to a dull middle-class Portuguese. The colloquial repetitions of "and," giving the text a rhythm, are omitted. The text is made more genteel for the delicate reader. Indeed, this is a process that *Huckleberry Finn* often suffers at the hand of editors and compilers and condensers as it is prepared for the children's literature market. A Brazilian condensed edition omits all of Huck's reflection on whether he should hand runaway slave Jim over or not, possibly the most important moment of the book, and concentrates merely on narration⁹. What interests us most in the above is the censorship that this section undergoes. The "ignorantest kind of words and pictures" become merely "scribbles," and the women's underclothes disappear, very much in the tradition of the *belles infidèles*.

The original text may contain ideas that just will not be accepted by the target society. A prime example of this are the changes that the works of Charles Fourier undergo when they were translated into English in the United States⁹. Fourier's phalanxes were cooperative units in which all the members would receive dividends proportional to their contributions in work, capital and talent. But they also aimed at the dissolution of the family and traditional monogamous marriage. Instead, there would be complete sexual liberation. Fourier's 19th century American translators and popularisers, Albert Brisbane, Henry Clapp Jr., Parke Godwin and George Ripley, focused on the social reform which were essential to Fourierism and ignored the proposed sexual liberation. Although 19th century American transcendentalists supported many of Fourier's ideas such as the need for human and social reform, the possibility of post-lapsarian happiness, the

There is a general process of uniformization. The works are tailored down to fit a certain clientele

dignity of man's nature, the equality between the sexes and the need for self-reliance, sexual liberation was just not on the cards at this time. Indeed, Albert Brisbane even radically altered Fourier's ideas in his translation, suggesting that the traditional marriage ties can indeed be maintained within associations like Fourier's phalanxes.

It might seem at first sight that popular fiction might be subject to different treatment. However, this does not seem to be the case. In "The Normative Model of Twentieth Century *Belles Infidèles*: Detective Novels in French Translation"¹⁰ Clem Robyns looks at the translation of the detective novels of the *série noire*, published by Gallimard, from the late fifties to the early seventies. He finds that just about all the novels he analyses undergo considerable changes in translation. There is a general process of uniformization: deviations, reflection and dreams, long descriptions, ideological statements

and erotic scenes are omitted. The works are tailored down to fit a certain clientele, often reduced to a certain number of pages for production and commercial reasons.

So it seems that the translator may even have an (innate) tendency to correct his or her author. The author may be untidy, confusing and bawdy. It is the job of the schoolmarmish translator to polish the rough diamond, cut out the hanky-panky and put him on the rails again. Yet the blame is not always that of the translator. In the *série noire* the translated work had

to fit into a certain number of pages. This is the case in much trivial literature. Translators of fiction are seldom in a secure enough position to demand that their translations be published uncut. I recently helped to revise a translation into Portuguese of Anthony Burgess' autobiography, which contains some very sexually explicit comic rhyme. The translator had made very accurate translations, but was then asked

by the owner of the small publishing house to moderate his language. There may also be institutional barriers. Many of the “shit”s and “fuck”s in television interviews with film and rock stars are softened in the subtitles. Of course, this will enable the programme to get past any existing censorship and be shown to younger audiences.

The censoring translator is typical of societies which are closed to outside ideas, to the Other and which have a superiority complex in relationship to other

languages and cultures. Nowadays, many translations accept the so-called “dangerous” elements of the original. However, as I have suggested, I believe the tendency of the translator to cut, alter, and even add, to censor the original work, is still very much with us. And I suggest that with the growing influence of political correctness in the publishing world we may be entering a new period, if not of *belles infidèles*, of *politiquement correctes infidèles*.

NOTES

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³TYTLER, Alexander Fraser. *Essay on the Principles of Translation*. London, Everyman (no date).

⁴See GILMAN, Margaret. *Othello in French*. Paris, 1925.

⁵BERMAN, Antoine. *L'épreuve de l'étranger*. Paris, Gallimard, 1980.

⁶BERMAN, Antoine. L'auberge du lointain. In: *Les Tours de Babel*. Ed. Antoine Berman. Mauvezin, Trans-Europ Press, 1985.

⁷TWAIN, Mark. *Huckleberry Finn*. London & Edinburgh, Nelson (no date); *Aventuras de Huck*. Translated by Monteiro Lobato. 4th ed. São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1957.

⁸*Aventuras de Huck (Huckleberry Finn)*, retold by Herberto Sales. Rio de Janeiro, Edições de Ouro, 1969.

⁹All the information on Fourier comes from O'SHEA, José Roberto. *The Handiness of Selective Translation: Charles Fourier's Writings in Nineteenth New England* (unpublished).

¹⁰ROBYNS, Clem. *The Normative Model of Twentieth Century Belles Infidèles: Detective Novels in French Translation*. *Target* 2:1, Amsterdam, Johns Benjamins, 1990.

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What did translation mean in the Middle Ages?

LUÍS CARLOS BORGES

Translation
Tradução

Dr John Milton in his *O poder da tradução*¹ uses for his considerations on theories of translation from the Augustan Age to the present day remarks made by John Dryden in the prefaces to his many translations; he demonstrates that Dryden's tripartite classification of modes of translation has survived practically intact to our own days, sometimes overtly apparent, sometimes only hinted at, its face, one might say, peering intently among a shrubbery of new-fangled terms, dislocated emphases and topical elements which, after careful pruning, will reveal the notorious conceptualization, the product of an age hungry for refinement, shattered by the growth of the middle classes, reaching for a cultural model, a paragon of aesthetic respectability firmly rooted on a basis of clarity and reason.

Conceptualizations of any kind are not created *ex nihilo*. It would be naive to pretend that Dryden — or anybody else for that matter — would prove to be an exception. Dryden's ideas should be seen as the almost inevitable and expected outcome of a process which had its roots in the late 15th century and is most unmistakably obvious after the discovery of new worlds, the appearance of the moveable type, the challenge to the all-powerful papacy. It was the birth of a new world, enthusiastic, self-confident and hopeful about man's capacity and reason, a world dazed by the brilliance of Rome and Greece, and half-ashamed of the intervening past, the Medium Aevum, in all its ambiguity of grave and cradle, grave of the civilization they tried to emulate, cradle of their nations. Classical culture would be lost without the work of medieval scholars.

This heritage however was not handed on intact. The flootsam and jetsam of Classical civilization was a dangerous treasure, a huge body of knowledge almost inextricably interwoven with paganism. Throughout the process of preserving, copying and using it was broken down, interpreted, critiqued, reshaped. I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that one of the mainstays of medieval culture was the pruning of this intractable legacy of the pagan world; and in this textual enterprise translation, as might be expected, had an important part.

Machan advocates that we “need to be flexible in our understanding of the scope and nature of medieval translation.”² Very flexible indeed if we consider for instance that Dryden's classification could not be born out of — or even make sense in — such a kind of cultural milieu. The *prima mater* was as yet shapeless and thus half-known at the best.

Reflex and at the same time cause of this formlessness, terminology may help us to see into the heart of the matter. We may begin by the very word which gives name to the subject, *translation*. There is in the word a single basic sense which although qualified remains essentially unchanged. Latin *translatio*, modelled on the Greek μεταφορά, μετα, *trans*, φέρειν, *ferre*, past part. *latus*, serves at the same time to designate transplantation, the legal transfer of real estate, moving away to another house, metaphor, i.e. “the figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object to which it is not properly applicable,³ and even translation whatever that might

mean. The advent of Christianity will further specialize the meanings during the Middle Ages. French scholars will lovingly theorize on the *translatio studii* to justify Paris's assumption to be Christendom's seat of knowledge. *Translatio* will be the transfer of a bishop to another see as well as the removal of a saint's relics to another shrine. The term will be adopted by the medieval vernaculars of Europe.

There was an almost disregard for an element of paramount importance today — authorship

The verb *translater* with both the meaning of physical movement and of transposal of a message from one language to another is recorded in French in the 12th century.⁴ The term will be adopted in English and the diversity of meanings will be preserved. The Bible of Wycliffe will use it with its two basic meanings. The word occurs in the rendering of the story of Enoch found in Hb 11:5:

Fide Henoch translatus est ne videret mortem, et non inveniebatur: quia transtulit illum Deus (...) Bi feith Enok is translatid, that he schulde not se death; and he was not founden, for the Lord translatide him.⁵

And also in the Prologue:

the best translating is out of Laryn into English, to translate aftir the sentence, and not oneli aftir the wordis.⁶

But even when the meaning is clearly restricted to the idea of transposal of a message into another language we should not be tempted to see this activity as corresponding exactly to our present idea of what a translation is or should be. The correspondence does not hold even on the level of basic concepts such as fidelity or adherence to a well-established source-text let alone on that of theoretical considerations or specific methods.

Let us examine for example the problem of sources. Most of us will take for granted that the activity implies

the existence of a single text which must be rendered into a target-language, an assumption one must leave aside when dealing with the Middle Ages since an idiosyncratic series of features prevent it altogether. Original texts copied down by scribes existed in many versions and were subject to a series of risks of variable extent — physical destruction, scribal error, censorship, “correction,” the adding up of glosses, expansion, abbreviation and even suppression. These practices evince an almost complete disregard for an element of paramount importance today — authorship. Our present concern for the author did not and could not exist. Effectiveness of communication, the perfect understanding of a given subject was the aim to be attained — translators would avail themselves of as many sources they could lay their hands on:

But considre wel that i ne usurpe not to have founden this werk of my labour or of myn engyn. I n'am but a lewed compiler of the labour of old astrologiens, and have it translatid in myn Englishsh only for thy doctrine.⁷

And, not very surprisingly if one takes into account the fluctuations of meaning mentioned above, sources need not always be textual as for example in the case of *The Life of St. Werburge of Chester*, in which the translator/compiler/author, after listing his many sources, implies that “his is a translation into English of Werburge's *lyf* rather than any specific text.” Similarly, Osbern Bokenham calls “translacyoun” the assembling of a number of sources both oral and written into his English life of St. Margaret.⁸

Expansion and abbreviation of texts were common and may be due to various reasons, most of which might be credited to the disregard of the author as *auctoritas*, as the “owner” of a finished and inviolable text. A source-text, *materia*, could be an excuse for the display of literary skill, a conception inherited from Roman culture and most notably apparent in Ciceronian ideas on *aemulatio*, a mode of transposal primarily concerned with the target-language; changes might spring from a necessity of adaptation of one set of cultural features to another; some remarkable instances of this proce-

ture were picked up by J.D. Burnley from *Kyng Alisaunder*, an English romance which draws his materia from Thomas of Kent's *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*. The seasonal images which establish the major divisions of the story are recognized as clichés by the English writer and duly replaced by English images taken from native lyric poetry:

Quand l'aube de jur creve e chantent ly oisels,
L'alowe e la chalandre, malviz e estornels,
Don montent cil de l'ost en lur chevals ignels.

In tyme of Maij the nighttyngale
Jn wood maketh mery gale.
So don the foules, grete and smale,
Summe on hyles and summe in dale.
The day daweth, the kyng awaketh;
He and hise men her armes take.⁹

Theoretical texts on translation are sparse and most of them naive and perfunctory by modern standards (e.g. John Trevisa's *Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk*). Even if these qualities were not enough to make us realize the necessity of special standards when considering medieval translation, excerpts from the extant examples would still show to what extent texts were

He did not know he was translating a heretical work by a woman who had been burnt at the stake

subject to change during the processes of translation. It is thus that King Duarte of Portugal in his *Leal Conselheiro*, when considering the proper way of "bem tornar algũa leytura em nossa lyngoagem," as well as prescribing that one should

conhecer bem a sentença do que á de tornar e poel-la enteiramente, nom mudando, acrescentando, nem mingando algũa coisa do que está scritto,

also warns the translator

que nom ponha pallavras que, segundo o nosso costume de fallar, sejam avydas por desonestas.¹⁰

That is censorship, an ever-present threat which however did not prevent the translation of heretical works such as *Le Mirouer des Simples Ames*, translated into Latin, Italian and English. Marguerite Porete's text receives a treatment not at all uncommon. Apart from many gross mistranslations, "M.N.," the English Carthusian who translated it, inserted comments on especially dubious passages, for the work is written "full mistily," and a previous translation he had done, so he says, had been misunderstood and not very well-received. Anyway, although he shows a certain unease at some unorthodox passages, he did not know he was translating a heretical work by a woman who had been burnt at the stake.¹¹ Besides the assumption that the problem of censorship could be circumvented, the case of Marguerite's text provides a very good illustration of the hazards and considerations an original text was subject to.

Interesting to notice is the fact that the monk's interventions are clearly identified (the "M.N." with which he signs his editorial comments are the only clue to his identity we have), a practice which was far from general. For instance, the widely circulated treatises on obstetrics attributed to Trota (or Trotula), a woman physician who flourished in Salerno in the 11th or 12th century, were not treated in the same way. Although there is only one text which can be safely attributed to the real Trota — by the way, it was never translated from Latin — a number of different versions was read throughout Europe on the assumption of single authorship, all of them bearing traces of translator's interference and not all of them clearly identified as such.

In one of these, *The Knowing of Woman's Kind in Childing*, for instance, the beginning of the text, when the aim of the text is explained

And because whomen of oure tonge kunne bettyre rede and undyrstande thys langage than eny other, and every whoman lettyrde may rede hit to other unlettyred and help hem and conceyle hem in here maledyes, withowtyn scheuyinge here dysese to man, I have thys drauyn and writtyn in Englisch

and injunctions are made to the men who might happen to read it — “that he rede hit not in no dyspyte ne sclaudure of no woman” —, is obviously the work of the translator. Afterwards it is sometimes difficult to tell what voice is the translator’s and what comes from the source-text, or texts.¹²

We need new standards to study medieval translation

For those familiar with biblical scholarship, translation of religious works might be expected to correspond more closely to our modern standards of translation. In fact, Holy Writ and the production of the Holy Fathers were the only texts which were entitled to the status of *auctoritas* in the Middle Ages; they demanded a level of accuracy never bestowed on any other kind of writings and were therefore free from interference, at least in principle. This is true however only in the case of translations from Greek and Hebrew into Latin; an established Latin text was an almost exclusive possession of the Church, but its message, or at least part of it, had to be communicated to the great mass of lay people and it certainly could not be done in Latin. Translation into the vernacular from King Alfred to Wycliffe certainly demand special attention but I have not read enough on the subject to talk about it.

I would venture however that their influence on this point — *communication on a large scale* — could not be greater than that of another kind of translation, performed by priests, orally, in the pulpit. The detailed analysis of medieval sermons would certainly be worth the trouble. Maurice de Sully’s sermons show as a general feature a tripartite treatment of the Gospel texts — the text for the day was read in Latin and then it was interpreted “literally,” “allegorically,” and “morally.”¹³ Is this taking too far the meaning of translation? I do not think so, not if one considers all the possible meanings of the word at that time, specially that of metaphor quoted above.

Summing up: I think we have elements to assume that “translation” had a much wider sense in the Mid-

dle Ages; that among its possible meanings the ideas of change, removal, metaphor are extremely important: that the activity of translators was subject to factors which are not present in modern times, namely, the modes of diffusion of texts before the invention of moveable types and the concepts of *auctoritas* and authorship; that the understanding of the meaning of translation in the Middle Ages cannot fail to consider the role of rethoric and the unique status of the period as a major turning point in the history of Western culture; and finally that we need new standards to study medieval translation.

NOTES

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³*The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (SOED).

⁴GREMIAS, A.-J. *Dictionnaire de l’Ancien Français*. Paris, 1989.

⁵SOED.

⁶Apud BURNLEY, J.D. *Late Medieval Translation: Types and Reflections*. In: *The Medieval Translator*, cit.

⁷Preface to CHAUCER, G. *The Astrolobe*. Apud MACHAN, T.W. *Chaucer as translator*. In: *The Medieval Translator*, cit.

⁸BURNLEY, op. cit., p. 39-40.

⁹Id., *ibid.*, p. 45.

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¹¹BARRAT, Alexandra (ed.). *Women’s Writing in Middle English*. London, 1992, p. 61-70.

¹²Id., *ibid.*, p. 27-39.

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