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Revista da Área de Língua e
Literaturas Inglesa e Norte-Americana
Departamento de Letras Modernas

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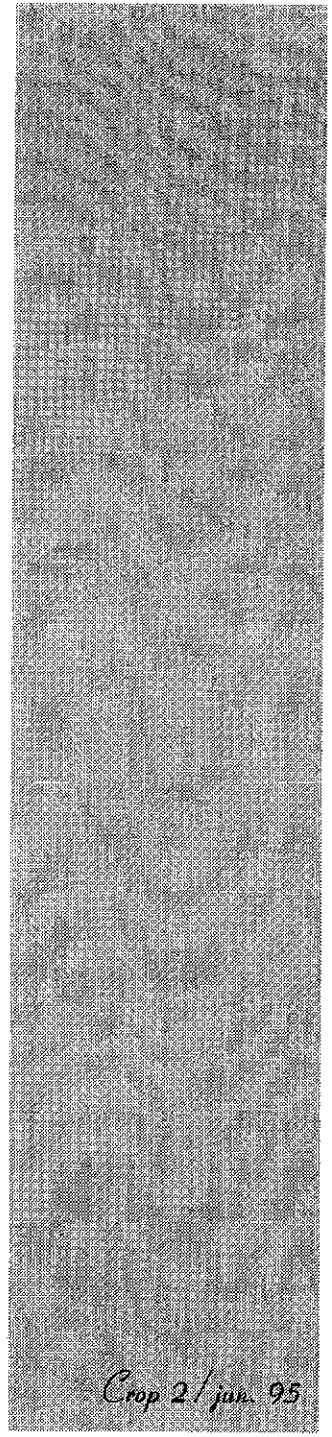

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EXPEDIENTE

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Universidade de São Paulo
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Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas
Diretor: *João Batista Borges Pereira*

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Apresentação

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

Robert Frost

Neste segundo número da revista ***Crop***, que tem por objetivo dar notícia do trabalho que vem sendo desenvolvido por docentes e alunos da área de Língua Inglesa e Literaturas Inglesa e Norte-Americana — LILINA — do Departamento de Letras Modernas da FFLCH-USP, apresentamos ensaios ligados às três grandes subáreas do programa: literaturas em língua inglesa, linguagem e tradução.

O programa, em atividade desde 1971, agrupa suas pesquisas dentro de um projeto comum do estudo da teoria e das expressões da cultura de países de língua inglesa. Para os leitores que tomam conhecimento da ***Crop*** neste número, reproduzimos as subdivisões desse campo, de acordo com as especialidades dos docentes do programa.

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   - Ficção e história da narrativa (séculos XVIII a XX)
   - Teatro contemporâneo
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   - Narrativa americana (séculos XIX e XX)
   - Poesia americana contemporânea
3. *Anglo-Irlandesa*
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5. *Pós-colonial*
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6. *Leitura*

Ao lado do objetivo de divulgar a produção docente e discente do programa de LILINA-USP, a revista pretende ainda veicular trabalhos de docentes e de pesquisadores de outras instituições que venham a adicionar elementos importantes para o debate da produção cultural dos países de língua inglesa no Brasil. Assim, contamos neste número com um ensaio da Prof.ª Dr.ª Susana Bornéo Funck, da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

Agradecemos as várias manifestações de apreço e incentivo de leitores do primeiro número da ***Crop***. E à Capes e ao CNPq, que financiaram a publicação deste número, nosso agradecimento especial.

Maria Elisa Cevasco
pela Comissão Editorial

Novas contribuições devem ser dirigidas à Coordenação da Pós-Graduação em Língua Inglesa e Literaturas Inglesa e Norte-Americana, Departamento de Letras Modernas, Av. Prof. Luciano Gualberto, 403, São Paulo, SP, CEP 05508-900.

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Literatures in English

Literaturas em Inglês

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SHAKESPEARE: *até quando?*

ALMIRO PISETTA

Quando se proclama que a virtude literária não é intrínseca, que depende de fatores externos redutíveis a um jogo de forças *lato sensu* políticas e que, portanto, qualquer cânon literário se sustenta menos em méritos artísticos do que nas forças externas que o promovem, Shakespeare é o nome imediatamente mencionado pelos conservadores como um desafio insuperável. O poeta canadense Irving Layton aceitou esse desafio e, numa atitude nietzschiana típica, respondeu com um poema de 115 versos intitulado "Shakespeare". Proponho uma leitura desse poema.

SHAKESPEARE

Irving Layton, 1971

My young son asks me:
"Who is the greatest poet?"
Without any fuss I say, "Shakespeare."
"Is he greater than you?"
I ho-ho around that one
and finally give a hard "Yes."
"Will you ever be greater
than... (a splatter of lisped S's
and P's)...?"
I look up at my son
from the page I am writing on:
he too wants his answer
about the greatness of Shakespeare
though only six and carefree;
and I see with an amused hurt
how my son has begun to take on
one of those damned eternal fixtures
of the human imagination
like "God" or "Death" or "the start
of the world"; along with these
it'll be with him the rest
of his life like the birthmark
on his right buttock; so as though
I were explaining God or Death
I say firmly without a trace
of ho-ho in my voice: "No, I'll never
be greater than Shakespeare,
the world's greatest poetic genius
that ever will be or ever wuz"
hoping my fair-minded admission
won't immediately blot out
the my-father-can-lick-anyone image
in his happy ignorant mind
and take the shine away
that's presently all around my head.
That unclimbable mountain, I rage;

Tradução: Almiro Pisetta, 1995

Meu filho pequeno me pergunta:
"Quem é o maior poeta?"
Sem nenhum alvoroço digo: "Shakespeare".
"Ele é maior do que você?"
Ha ha ha! Essa é boa!
Mas finalmente emito um duro "Sim".
"Você nunca vai ser maior
do que... (um esparramo espesso de S's
e P's)...?"
Tiro os olhos da folha em que escrevo
e contemplo meu filho:
ele também quer saber
sobre a grandeza de Shakespeare,
apesar de seus seis anos e da despreocupação;
e vejo com dor divertida
como meu filho já vai assumindo
uma daquelas malditas fixações eternas
da imaginação humana
como "Deus" ou "a Morte" ou "o princípio
do mundo"; junto com essas coisas
estará com ele pelo resto
de sua vida como a marca de nascença
em sua bunda à direita; então como se
estivesse explicando Deus ou a Morte
digo com firmeza sem um traço
de "essa é boa" em minha voz: "Não, eu nunca
serei maior do que Shakespeare,
o maior gênio poético do mundo
que já existiu ou jamais existirá"
esperando que minha imparcial admissão
não vá imediatamente apagar
a imagem de meu-pai-sabe-mais-que-todo-mundo
em sua mente feliz e ignorante,
nem vá empanar o brilho
que agora envolve toda a minha cabeça.
Aquela inescalável montanha, esbravejo;

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that forever unapproachable star
pulsing its eternal beams from a far
stillness onto our narrow screens
set up as Palomar libraries and schools
to catch the faintest throb of light.
Damn that unscalable pinnacle
of excellence mocking our innevitable
inferiority and failure
like and obscene finger; a loud curse
on the jeering "beep-beeps"
that come from dark silence
and outer galactic space to unscramble
into the resonant signature of
"Full many a glorious morning" or
"The quality of mercy is not strained"
or "Out, out, brief candle..."
NO poet for all time, NO poet
till this planet crack into black night
and racking whirlwinds EVER
to as great as William Shakespeare?
My God, what a calamitous burden
far worse than any horla or incubus:
a tyrant forever beyond the relief
of bullet or pointed steel...
What a terrible lion in one's path!
What a monumental stone
in the constrictive runnel of anyone
with an itch to write great poems
— and poets so cursed beyond all
by vanity, so loused up in each inch
of their angry, comfortless skin
with the intollerable twitch of envy!
Well, there's nothing to be done
about that bastard's unsurpassable
greatness; one accepts it like cancer
or old age, as something that one
must live with, hoping it will prod us on
to alertest dodges of invention
and circumvention, like the brave spider
who weaves his frail home in the teeth

aquela para sempre inatingível estrela
seus raios eternos pulsando lá de longe
silêncio em nossas telas estreitas
montadas como bibliotecas e escolas em Palomar
para captar a mais tênue pulsação de luz.
Maldito seja aquele inacessível pináculo
de experiência que zomba de nossa inevitável
inferioridade e fracasso
como um dedo obsceno, uma praga sonora
nos zombeteiros "bipe-bipes"
que vêm do negro silêncio
e do espaço extragalático para traduzir-se
na retumbante assinatura de
"Muitas manhãs magníficas eu vi" ou
"A boa compaixão não é forçada"
ou "Apaga-te, apaga-te, curta vela..."
NENHUM poeta em todos os tempos, NENHUM poeta
até que o planeta se parta em negra noite
e em terríveis turbilhões JAMAIS
ser tão grande como William Shakespeare?
Meu Deus, que calamitoso fardo
muito pior do que qualquer horla ou íncubo:
um tirano para sempre além do alívio
de bala ou ponta de punhal...
Que terrível leão no caminho da gente!
Que pedra monumental
no estreito leito das águas de alguém
com essa comichão de compor grandes poemas
— e os poetas mais que ninguém com a maldição
da vaidade, tão cheios em cada centímetro
de sua irritada e desconfortável pele
da sarna intolerável da inveja!
Bem, não há nada a fazer
quanto à insuperável grandeza daquele
bastardo; aceita-se como o câncer
ou a velhice, como uma coisa com que a gente
tem de conviver, esperando que estimule
espertíssimas esquivas de invenção
e contravenção, como a corajosa aranha
que tece sua frágil casa na cara

of the lousiest storm and catches
the morning sun's approving smile;
Anyhow there's one saving grace:
that forever smiling damned bastard,
villain, what-have-you, is dead
and no latest success of his
can embitter our days with envy,
paralyze us into temporary impotency,
despair rotting our guts and liver;
yes, though the greatest that ever wuz
or ever will be he's dead, dead,
and all the numerous flattering busts
keep him safely nailed down
among the worms he so often went raving
on about when his great heart burst
and all the griefs of the world
came flooding out. His ghost may wander
like Caesar's into my tent
by this rented lake, and I'll entertain
him; but he must also stand outside
begging for entry when I keep his volume
shut, and then he's out in the cold
like his own poor Lear. And — well —
there's my six-year-old son
who says of the clothes flapping
on the clotheslines: "Look, they're
scratching themselves," or compares
his mother's nipples to drain-plugs
he says he wishes to pull out, or
tells me the rain is air crying
—and he only four at time;
and though I swear I never told him
of Prospero and his great magic
asked me the other day: "Is the world real?"
So who really can tell, maybe one day
one of my clan will make it
and there'll be another cock-of-the-walk,
another king-of-the castle; anyway
we've got out bid in, Old Bard.

da pior tormenta e capta
do sol matinal o sorriso que aprova;
Seja como for, há uma graça que salva:
aquele sempre sorridente condenado bastardo,
vilão, ou seja lá o que for, está morto
e nenhum sucesso dele mais recente
pode envenenar de inveja nossos dias,
paralisar-nos em temporária impotência,
o desespero roendo-nos o fígado e as vísceras;
sim, embora o maior que já houve
ou jamais haverá, ele está morto, morto
e os inúmeros bustos lisonjeiros
mantêm-no pregado sem perigo
entre os vermes que ele tanto exaltou
quando seu grande coração explodia
e todas as mágoas do mundo
dele jorravam. Pode assomar seu fantasma
como o de César nesta minha tenda
junto a este lago alugado, que eu vou
recebê-lo; mas ele deve aguardar lá fora
implorando entrar quando seu volume
eu não abrir, esperando no frio
como seu pobre Lear. E — bom —
ali está meu filho de seis anos
que diz das roupas esvoaçantes
no varal: "Vejam, estão
se coçando", ou compara
os bicos dos seios de sua mãe a tampões de saída
e diz que queria arrancá-los, ou então
me diz que a chuva é ar que chora
— e só tinha quatro anos quando disse;
e embora, juro, nunca lhe tenha contado
sobre Próspero e sua grande magia
perguntou-me dias atrás: "O mundo é real?"
Então quem de fato sabe dizer, talvez um dia
alguém do meu clã conseguirá
e haverá outro galo-do-terreiro,
outro rei-do-castelo; seja como for,
fizemos nosso lance, Velho Bardo.

Não podemos afirmar que o poema tenha sido motivado por essa atitude crescente entre os estudiosos de literatura de língua inglesa que leva a questionar a formação, fixação e manutenção do cânon literário. Esse questionamento talvez fosse ainda prematuro em 1971, quando o poema foi escrito. Podemos, porém, afirmar que ele foi diretamente engendrado por uma atitude nietzschiana de Irving Layton. E talvez possamos perguntar se essa atitude, conscientemente ou não, não está na base da revolução canônica atualmente em curso.

Não estamos falando de um sistema filosófico, mas sim de uma espécie de filosofia de vida, de um modo de encarar o que nos acontece ao longo da existência. A atitude de Nietzsche era afirmar — afirmar a vida. "Quero ser aquele que sempre afirma." "O único critério de avaliação que se impõe por si mesmo é a vida."[1]

Nietzsche formulou em duas palavras essa atitude afirmativa perante a vida: *amor fati*. "Descobrira a fórmula da grandeza do homem: *amor fati*. Não evitar e muito menos dissimular, mas afirmar. Nem conformismo, nem resignação, nem submissão passiva: *amor*; nem lei, nem causa, nem finalidade: *fatum*. *Amor fati*: aí se acha reunido o que aparentemente não se pode reunir: a atividade em vista de realizar o que ainda não é a aceitação amorosa do que advém. É a afirmação alegre do acaso e da necessidade, ao mesmo tempo; é o sim à vida."[2]

Essa atitude nietzschiana aparece expressa de forma epigramática na última das máximas no *Crepúsculo dos ídolos*: "Fórmula de minha ventura: um Sim, um Não, uma linha reta, um *objetivo*"[3]. Se listarmos em duas colunas alguns aspectos do Sim e seus constrastes do Não, poderemos facilmente deduzir qual é a linha reta, o *objetivo* da ventura da vida de Nietzsche (ver quadro).

Linha reta: Viver sempre afirmando a vida em sua maior plenitude possível.

SIM		NÃO
afirmação	x	negação
independência	x	dependência
orgulho	x	humildade
atividade	x	passividade
sofrimento criativo	x	sofrimento passivo
alegria	x	tristeza
vontade de potência	x	abulia, submissão
sol	x	neblina
saúde	x	doença
juventude	x	velhice
dureza do diamante	x	moleza do carvão
instinto da espécie	x	qualquer espécie de moral
masculino	x	feminino
caminhar	x	ficar sentado
vontade instintiva	x	obediência sistemática
Apolo-Dionísio	x	Socratismo-Cristianismo
Eu	x	o Outro
Etc.	x	Etc.

Irving Layton

Irving Layton, que nasceu em 1912 na Romênia, recebendo o nome de Israel Lazarovitch, emigrou em 1913 com a família para o Canadá, fixando-se em Montreal, onde mora até hoje. Por razões de *marketing*, Israel Lazarovitch mudou o próprio nome para Irving Layton, preservando apenas as iniciais do nome original. Layton trabalhou muito para impor-se como poeta desde meados da década de 40; e só o conseguiu no final dos anos 50. Depois, durante quase vinte anos, graças a seu talento artístico e a uma grande habilidade em se autopromover, ocupou a posição número um entre os poetas canadenses em atividade. Publicou cerca de 50 livros de poesia, promoveu centenas de palestras e sessões de leitura de sua obra poética (57 só em 1982), fez-se nomear para o Prêmio Nobel de Literatura, que ele esperava muito conseguir ao completar setenta anos, pois sem a imortalidade desse prêmio achava que sua vida não seria completa.[4] (Naquele ano, 1982, o premiado foi Gabriel García Márquez.)

Atitude nietzschiana em Irving Layton

A presença de Nietzsche na obra de Irving Layton é explícita e crucial, como o próprio poeta admite. Em 1960, quando lhe perguntaram se ele se considerava existencialista, Layton respondeu:

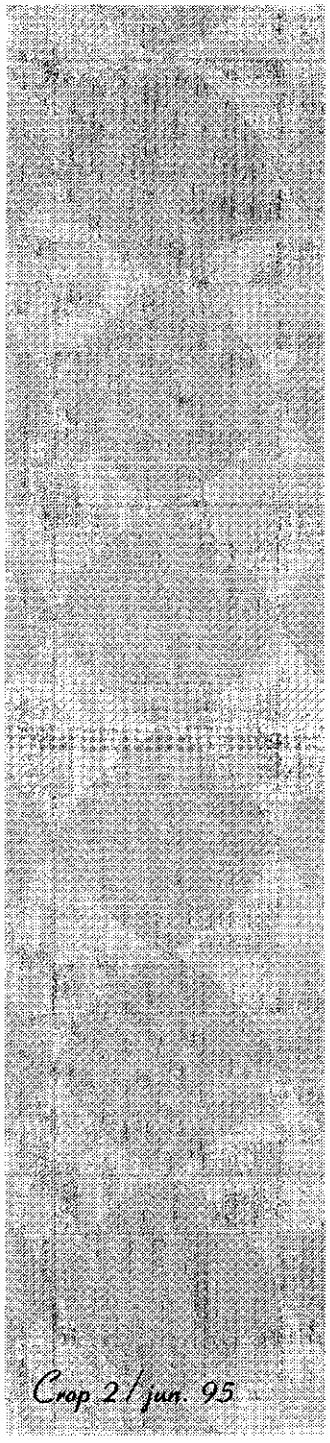
> Se é para me chamar existencialista, deve-se entender que o sou apenas no sentido em que Nietzsche é existencialista. Como acontece com ele, meu pensamento é exploratório e especulativo; como ele, apesar da necessária alienação do poeta e do pensador, amo a risada e celebro o prazer. Da maneira mais enfática, não repudio a Razão, embora esteja com Nietzsche na exaltação do estado dionisíaco do êxtase como o bem supremo que o homem pode conseguir. Em face de terríveis dilemas e dor inevitável, acho que o melhor para os homens é confiarem na coragem, na risada e no prazer, ao invés de saborearem as emoções mais sombrias pelo prazer que proporcionam, como me parece que fazem alguns existencialistas[5].

Wynne Francis, num ensaio intitulado "Layton and Nietzsche"[6], nos informa que "o impacto de Nietzsche [em Layton] aconteceu no início dos anos 50. Clareou a visão do poeta, dando-lhe um enfoque bem definido" e conclui que "muita coisa em Layton se esclarece através do entendimento de seu nietzscheanismo". Mas o que Wynne Francis enfatiza em seu estudo é justamente a presença da atitude tipicamente afirmativa do filósofo no poeta. Um parágrafo central de seu artigo apresenta asserções acerca da filosofia nietzschiana entremeadas de citações de passagens de poemas de Irving Layton: as duas coisas estão em perfeita sintonia.

> O *ubermensch* é alguém que diz Sim. A fórmula da grandeza de Nietzsche é *amor fati* — a exultante afirmação da existência pessoal e da força eterna da vida. [Layton, louvando a chama da vida que vai passando por ele, escreve: " 'Afirma a vida', disse eu, 'Afirma / A grama triunfante que cobre o verme; / E a carne, a carne oscilante / Que sobre seu graveto de osso queima' ". ("A oscilante carne", 1961)] O *ubermensch* é dionisíaco. Sua auto-realização é um processo contínuo de autodescoberta e auto-superação. Seu sucesso não se deve medir em termos morais ou utilitários; antes, como uma obra de arte, o *ubermensch* é avaliado por sua totalidade, sua integridade e graça — numa palavra, seu estilo. ["Tudo está na maneira do que se faz", diz Layton, "A maneira redime tudo: / redime / o homem, colocando-o entre, / acima, dos outros vermes, pondo-lhe / uma coroa na cabeça, sim, do tamanho de um / lago de montanha, / ofuscante, / mais ofuscante! / do que uma fatia de sol" ("Tudo está na maneira", 1954).]

A mesma listagem em colunas contrastantes de aspectos do Sim e do Não, apresentada acima para o filósofo, com a mesma decorrente linha reta para entender a vida, vale também para o poeta. A poesia de Layton é uma afirmação da vida subjetiva, independente, cheia de orgulho, instinto e prazer. O subtítulo de sua última coletânea, em que reúne poesias escritas de 1945 a 1989, é significativamente "A Wild Peculiar Joy" ("Um peculiar prazer desenfreado"). Celebrando a vida como Nietzsche, Irving Layton também se transforma num martelo, distribuindo golpes contra tudo e contra todos os que se opõem à vida por ele sonhada: contra o cristianismo da submissão, contra a hipocrisia da sociedade, contra colegas passivistas. Dá umas boas martelas em T. S. Eliot, por exemplo, a quem acusa de preferir a névoa ao sol, de ser um cristão doentio, de ser um turista americano, de preferir mosteiros a castelos, de gostar de poesia sem estro, sem tutano. Conclui dizendo que T. S. Eliot corresponde, na melhor das hipóteses, a um fio da barba de Dostoiévski[7]. E como Nietzsche atacou o próprio Deus tradicional, cristão, a quem declarou morto, Layton ataca Shakespeare, a quem também declara de certa forma morto.

O poema "Shakespeare" apresenta um caso típico do que os analistas do discurso chamam de estrutura de problema-solução. O problema é apresentado (vv. 1-35), analisado (vv. 36-68) e solucionado (vv. 69-115). A *apresentação* do problema acontece dramaticamente no diálogo entre o filho pequeno e seu pai-poeta, e este se vê obrigado a admitir a grandeza máxima de



Shakespeare. A *análise* acontece na forma de um monólogo dramático em que o poeta-personagem, aparentemente elogiando Shakespeare, vai solapando-lhe a grandeza mediante a apropriação de sua linguagem: toma-lhe a terminologia, o fraseado e sobretudo o ritmo e cadência, que nas tragédias shakespearianas são empregados para caracterizar certos vilões trágicos como os reis usurpadores Cláudio e Macbeth. A *solução* do problema é tríplice: num primeiro momento há uma aceitação inconformada da grandeza de Shakespeare (vv. 69-78). Mas Layton é muito nietzschiano para ficar só nisso. Logo descobre uma vantagem que o favorece (vv. 79-99): ele está vivo e Shakespeare está morto. A palavra morto é repetida várias vezes, e o poeta mostra que não se trata apenas da morte física, corporal de Shakespeare. O próprio autor também só pode viver se contar com a boa vontade do leitor. Depois, na solução final (vv. 100-115), Layton aposta na possibilidade de alguém "de seu clã" vir a suplantar o Bardo. E numa atitude provocadora mostra que seu filho pequeno, o mesmo que levantou o problema, é capaz de verbalizar uma percepção do mundo que rivaliza com a de Shakespeare em sua maturidade.

Não se pode negar: a solução do problema é digna de um poeta que adotou para si uma atitude nietzschiana de auto-afirmação perante a vida; um poeta que sem falsa modéstia um dia escreveu: "Sou um gênio, autor de uma obra que sobreviverá com o melhor de Shakespeare..."[8].

NOTAS

[1]MARION, Scarlett. *Nietzsche.* São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1982, p. 51 e 70.

[2]Id. ibid., p. 41.

[3]NIETZSCHE. *Crepúsculo dos ídolos.* São Paulo, Ediouro, p. 27, máxima n.º 44.

[4]Cf. CAMERON, Elspeth. *Irving Layton: A Portrait.* Toronto, Stoddart, 1985, p. 443.

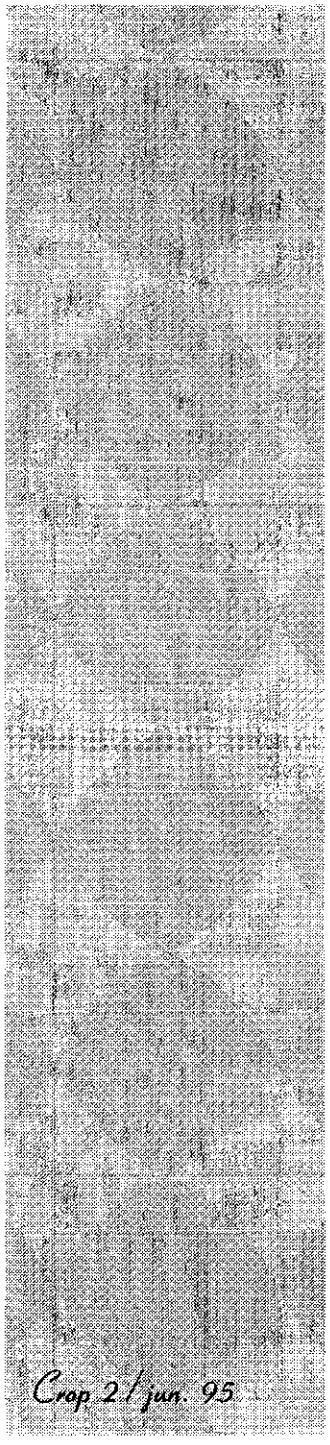
[5]Id. ibid., Prefácio.

[6]MAYNE, Seymour (ed.). *Irving Layton: The Poet and His Critics.* McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978, p. 272-86.

[7]Cf. LAYTON, Irving. T. S. Eliot, poema n.º 82. In: —. *Collected Poems.* Toronto, McClelland and Steward, 1965, p. 73.

[8]Cf. CAMERON, op. cit., p. 327.

Almiro Pisetta é docente na área de LILINA-USP.



Shakespeare. A *análise* acontece na forma de um monólogo dramático em que o poeta-personagem, aparentemente elogiando Shakespeare, vai solapando-lhe a grandeza mediante a apropriação de sua linguagem: toma-lhe a terminologia, o fraseado e sobretudo o ritmo e cadência, que nas tragédias shakespearianas são empregados para caracterizar certos vilões trágicos como os reis usurpadores Cláudio e Macbeth. A *solução* do problema é tríplice: num primeiro momento há uma aceitação inconformada da grandeza de Shakespeare (vv. 69-78). Mas Layton é muito nietzschiano para ficar só nisso. Logo descobre uma vantagem que o favorece (vv. 79-99): ele está vivo e Shakespeare está morto. A palavra morto é repetida várias vezes, e o poeta mostra que não se trata apenas da morte física, corporal de Shakespeare. O próprio autor também só pode viver se contar com a boa vontade do leitor. Depois, na solução final (vv. 100-115), Layton aposta na possibilidade de alguém "de seu clã" vir a suplantar o Bardo. E numa atitude provocadora mostra que seu filho pequeno, o mesmo que levantou o problema, é capaz de verbalizar uma percepção do mundo que rivaliza com a de Shakespeare em sua maturidade.

Não se pode negar: a solução do problema é digna de um poeta que adotou para si uma atitude nietzschiana de auto-afirmação perante a vida; um poeta que sem falsa modéstia um dia escreveu: "Sou um gênio, autor de uma obra que sobreviverá com o melhor de Shakespeare..."[8].

NOTAS

[1]MARION, Scarlett. *Nietzsche.* São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1982, p. 51 e 70.

[2]Id. ibid., p. 41.

[3]NIETZSCHE. *Crepúsculo dos ídolos.* São Paulo, Ediouro, p. 27, máxima n.º 44.

[4]Cf. CAMERON, Elspeth. *Irving Layton: A Portrait.* Toronto, Stoddart, 1985, p. 443.

[5]Id. ibid., Prefácio.

[6]MAYNE, Seymour (ed.). *Irving Layton: The Poet and His Critics.* McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978, p. 272-86.

[7]Cf. LAYTON, Irving. T. S. Eliot, poema n.º 82. In: —. *Collected Poems.* Toronto, McClelland and Steward, 1965, p. 73.

[8]Cf. CAMERON, op. cit., p. 327.

Almiro Pisetta é docente na área de LILINA-USP.

Placing ideas:
tasks of a reader on the periphery of capitalism

Maria Elisa Cevasco

In both our teaching and research practices as professors of literatures in English at Brazilian universities we are constantly facing the need to map our ambiguous location in relation to theory. This is not an easy task in a country, in which ideas tend to be imported and find no resonance in our material conditions of life, thus creating a wide space for irrelevancy and dramatic changes in theoretical fashions. I am afraid what follows is not the magic answer to our doubts and uncertainties but just some considerations on possible ways of dealing with our plight.

Before you stop reading — Oh no, another wailing session! — I shall at once reassure you by saying that I have done my homework and looked at what is really *in* in metropolitan parlance. It is hoped that by examining where the light comes from we can begin to discern what our lot is in the new patterns of "distribution of knowledge" in the intellectual market.

We could do worse than starting with an extract taken from a book aptly published in 1989, the end of the two decades of high theory that dominated the American and, with many qualifications, the British academies, before the return of the repressed of cultural studies: the book, by Douglas Kellner, a scholar who apparently specializes in digesting theories for fellow academics who, like most of us, are too busy to read the real stuff, is an attempt to trace the ways in which one foreign theory — German Critical Theory — has traveled to the States and mingled with another foreign theory — French post-structuralism. See what the state of the art in our field may look like:

> Welmer proposes some reflections on the "death of modernity" proclaimed by the extreme postmodernists and celebrated by them as a positive development (p. 350ff). He proposes some Critical Theory perspectives on aesthetics, theory and politics which would transcend the limitations of the tradition of modernity while preserving its progressive features. He concludes: "What is at stake here is not a 'reconciliation of the language games' in Adorno's sense but the mutual openness of the discourses to each other: the 'sublation' of the one reason in the interplay of several rationalities."
> Welmer thus seems to be one of the few Critical Theorists to tentatively provide an opening to dialogue with postmodernism and New French Theory. Most Critical Theorists, by contrast, have simply dismissed New French Theory while reasserting previous or present positions within Critical Theory. Some of their critiques of the discourses of postmodernity assume a guilt by

association (with Nietzsche, Heidegger, and fascism). Further, their defenses of modernity, the Enlightenment and the universalist heritage of philosophy and reason often fail to answer the strongest critiques of those discourses by Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard and others. In addition, Adornoesque use of ideology critique as negation fails to redeem in a Benjaminian redemptive hermeneutic those positive contributions found in New French Theory which Critical Theory might make use of.[1]

I don't know how this is to be read in the First World but to us, Brazilians, this is blissfully familiar — not only the situation Kellner is describing — what happens to traveling ideas — but, most revealing of all, the way his descriptions give notice of the socio-cultural illness of which such formulations are symptoms.

Our familiarity with misplaced ideas has a long history. In Brazil imported ideas have been the rule ever since our formation as a country. Moreover, the fact that those ideas had no social equivalent in Brazilian reality made for the sense of "futility, artificiality and inauthenticity" in our intellectual life that has been constantly pointed out by Brazilian thinkers since Independence.[2]

They were able to see Brazil as a necessary part of a system in which it has always played a structural, though subordinate role

In our times, it remained for left thought to try and find a dialectical way out of the contradictions of the Brazilian way of either uncritically imitating or nationalistically negating outright foreign modes. In the early sixties a group of professors at the University of São Paulo got together to study *Capital*. Much of the most relevant work that helped to explain the peculiarities of the Brazilians, the work of the theorists of dependence — among them, of course, Fernando Henrique Cardoso — sprang from that group. Adopting a totalizing point of view, they were able to see Brazil not merely as a more backward version of European or, by then, American capitalism — representing an earlier stage whose fate was to trail behind the original — but as a necessary part of a system in which Brazil has always played a structural, though subordinate role:

> When Brazil became an independent state, a permanent collaboration was established between the forms of life characteristic of colonial oppression and the innovations of bourgeois progress. The new stage of capitalism broke up the exclusive relationship with the metropolis, converting local property-owners and administrators into a national ruling class (effectively part of the emergent world bourgeoisie) and yet retained the old forms of labor exploitation which have not been fully modernized up to the present day. In other words, the discrepancy between the "two Brazils" was not due to an imitative tendency, as Sílvio Romero and many others thought; nor did it correspond to a brief period of transition. It was the lasting result of the creation of a nation-state on the basis of slave labour — which, if the reader will forgive the shorthand, arose in turn out of the English industrial revolution and the consequent crisis of the old colonial system. That is to say, it arose out of contemporary history. Thus Brazil's backward deformation belongs to the same order of things as the progress of the advanced countries. Sílvio Romero's "absurdities" — in reality, the Cyclopean discords of world capitalism — are not a historical deviation. They are linked to the finality of a single process which, in the case of Brazil, requires the continuation of forced or semi-forced labor and a corresponding cultural oppression of the poor.[3]

Among literary theorists, Roberto Schwarz, a member of the *Capital* Group, was the first to recognize the importance of dependency theory for Brazilian cultural studies. In his work we can see the relevance of a criticism that through the examination of the ways in which the structures of the socio-historical formation of Brazil is articulated in literary works ends up by illuminating aspects of the Western World of which we are a part and a historical result:

> It is true that the backwardness and the attempts to keep up have internal causes, but is also true the forms and techniques — literary and other — that are adopted at times of modernization were created out of social conditions very different from ours, and that their importation produces a maladjustment that is a constant trait of our civilization. From an internal perspective, this maladjustment is the mark of backwardness. In a world perspective it is the effect of the unequal cumulative effect of capitalism, of which it reveals essential aspects: from this springs its universal significance.[4]

If we are part and parcel of the social ground that produced Kellner's extract, we should learn something about ourselves and the world we live in when we look at it with the powerful lenses provided by Roberto's insights. This perspective enables us to notice that the most interesting question is not simply that we have not reached a stage in theoretical sophistication that would enable us to confidently appropriate to our team — in Kellner's case another version of American pluralism — French and German theories. It is not, either, a question of naively dismissing — as if it were possible in our times of globalization — foreign ideas. Our best choice — perhaps our only historically relevant choice — is simply to be aware of the old teaching: it is on the periphery that the truth of the system can be seen more easily and as post-60s intellectuals it is our task to at least try to name the system.

Let us, then, begin our reading of Kellner's extract by its most obvious trait: the confident assumption that there are great homogeneities which can be appropriated and recombined in a seemingly equalitarian — but actually empty — dialogue.

We have been taught that we now live in postmodernity, a time of undifferentiation and crisis of historicity. Typically for a postmodern thinker Kellner displaces the theories he is studying from their socio-cultural tradition, treating them as so many signifiers that can be combined at will. The price one pays for doing so is that one ends up by leveling all theories, by erasing all their specificities and by presenting each one as an option among others, as if interpreting culture were simply a question of a free — and inconsequential — choice among equally valid interpretive disembodied codes. One of the results of this operation can be seen at work in this extract, and I shall name its effect, using a Brazilian expression, a bag of cats. Let us remind ourselves where those cats come from.

Critical Theory began in the 20s in Germany as a collective project[5] for reconstructing historical materialism and developing a critical comprehension of society. The logic of the immanent criticism they practised — whether it was Adorno on music or on lyric and society, or Walter Benjamin on Charles Baudelaire or on the crisis of narrative — is to be found in the totalizing approach to their objects of study and in their aspiration to present a diagnosis of their times. Theory for them was not only an intellectual exercise in foresight but, in the words of Horkheimer, "the critical theorist's vocation is the struggle to which his thoughts belong. Thought is not something independent, to be separated from this struggle."[6]

Well, the tradition that produced New French Theory has a different conception of the vital relationship between theory and practice. One of their central concerns is to displace the idea of totality and of the possibility of arriving at a comprehension of the mechanisms of society or of the relationship between theory and practice, art and society. In their view, we live now in the realm of the particular, of difference, and it is no longer possible to have an overall view, or to try and reconstruct social totality. We live in fragmentary times and it is no longer feasible to decide which the right side is. History as the ceaseless struggle to wrench a realm of Freedom from the realm of Necessity is over.

Even in this briefest of outlines it is already clear that Kellner cannot put those extremely different cats in one bag and hope to come up with anything more than sheer nonsense. But, again, it is enlightening nonsense, which exemplifies what happens to theory when it is subjected to such a process of abstraction: deprived from the social conditions from which its meaning derives, theory becomes rhetoric, an optional code whose validity rests not on its explanatory power but on its verbal coherence and capacity to outsmart the other codes, if there is no truth, no way of telling how things

really are and no material grounding from which real difference can be apprehended, then truly anything goes and American theorists can emulate what Sílvio Romero calls absurdities and happily, but foolishly, imagine a pluralist conversation among the likes of Adorno, Benjamin, and Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard.

This takes us to the second most striking characteristic of some kinds of contemporary Anglo-American — and, by default, Brazilian — deliveries. Much of the cultural debate in our days has been centered (if you pardon my French) on name dropping. Oddly enough for a cultural scene that sees itself as predicated on the death of the author quickly and predictably followed by the death of the subject himself — ours is a time of brandishing names in any theoretical discussion, in a process that reminds me more than anything else of the world of fashion design. One sports a French look — composed of a Lyotardian critique of master narratives, a Foucaultian concern with micropower and a somewhat *demodé* Derridian deconstruction, all of them, as befits products in late capitalism, designed in Europe, manufactured and distributed in the States and the surplus is sold, say, in Latin America where you can see fantastic applications of theories on local products. If we still had any doubts as to the turning of everything including theory — which should be explaining and criticizing commodified society — into a commodity, this should enlighten us (if you pardon my use of such an old-fashioned word).

Kellner's extract duplicates a process we are very familiar with in Brazil: if you uproot theories from their material grounds you end up with empty labels that do not explain anything in real life, which is, of course, the final object of, and the only reason for, theorizing.

But my problem with name dropping is not only that it testifies to the reification of theory but also that by dropping those big names the theorist makes us so unhappy — oh blast, I haven't read them all and therefore I am excluded, theory is not for me. This technique of exclusion helps those I take to be my cultural enemies, the conservatives, who have been, particularly in the Anglo-American tradition and its highly successful importation to Brazil in the early 60s, all too keen to dismiss theory as something arcane and happily resort to their "commonsensical" way of criticizing literature. As Gerald Graff put it as late as 1989:

> Reading is still thought of as an experience which operates ideally at a direct pre-theoretical level and is therefore a purer more humanistic experience when complicated as little as possible by alien considerations of theory... At best theory is seen as an optional interest, something added to the essentials of literary experience and thus properly reserved for the advanced student, who has already learned how to read. At worst, theory is felt to be an offense to the tradition and to humanism in the Matthew Arnold sense, something that intrudes between the literary texts and their readers.[7]

Before saying anything harsh we could do worse than remembering that, viewed from a certain angle, the anti-theoretical bias of conservative critics is thoroughly coherent. Modern Criticism, as Eagleton reminds us,[8] was born of a struggle against the absolutist state, a state any self-respecting conservative looks regrettably back to as a time of an extremely attractive social organization. Theory focuses on why we do things in certain ways and what those ways entail. Theoretical questions, questions about the grounds and motivations of our practices, demonstrate that there is no natural way of doing things and therefore things need not be the way they are. In this sense, theory opens up a space for transformation. Theory then is the way we can map our position in practice and establish the interrelations between the specific and the general. As Raymond Williams puts it: "It is the special function of theory, in exploring and defining the nature and variation of practice, to develop a general consciousness within what is repeatedly experienced as a special and often relatively isolated consciousness."[9]

Theory is the way we can map our position in practice and establish the interrelations between the specific and the general

I don't need to belabor this point — anyone who has not stopped reading this yet was already convinced that as teachers and/or students of literature we are theorists. Even if we don't use terms like " in-mixing of the Other," decentering of the subject, logocentrism, or, to be fair, reification, commodification and cognitive mapping, behind our professional practice there stands a view of what literature is or can be, of what literary works are worth teaching or studying, and of why or how those works should be read and which of their aspects are most worthy of being noticed and pointed out. In one word, there stands theory.

But I would say that I am particularly worried about the significance of theory not only because I am convinced that whether we want it or not we are always deploying theory. I also think that theory is too important an instrument for the understanding of why things work the way they do to leave it in the hands of those who think of it as rhetoric and use it first and foremost to charm the circle of academia, giving us, on the one hand, a sense of our high specialization — we become masters of this "alien conceptual discourse" and converse in an idiolect which is incomprehensible to outsiders — but, on the other hand, this risks condemning us to social irrelevancy.

I know this is not a new dilemma and I don't think we are likely to fully solve it at the present socio-historical conjuncture, which unsurprisingly is, with its increasing specialization, the determining ground of the alienation of criticism that plagues our attempts to enlarge our audience and include in our exchanges a "general public", which has become more and more elusive in our fragmenting times.

Thus it is not a question of thinking that literary theory will save the world while there is no change in the social order to guarantee that, but for us, Brazilians working with imported ideas, it is fundamental to struggle for relevance, at least by situating theories and discriminating the ones that are most likely to help foster a better understanding of the way literature and the society, whose values and beliefs it articulates, work, thus showing that we have learned from our elder's mistakes and are actively trying to avoid the most glaring pitfalls of misplacing ideas.

This is particularly pertinent to us, since as students and teachers of Anglo-American literatures we are witnessing and mediating for a Brazilian audience an epidemic stage in the production of theories. Our most immediate task as Brazilian readers is then to situate those theories or, to put it more bluntly, as readers in the third world we must be situational and materialist even if it is only in the sense that we cannot afford to forget where and who we are when discussing the foreign culture it is our job to study.

It is at least quaint to pretend that we can study, say, Shakespeare in São Paulo exactly the way he is studied in Oxford or Cambridge, or that we could bring any contribution whatsoever to the field if we disregarded our own local perspective. In the light of what we have learnt from Roberto it should be clear that this is no disparagement of English studies in Brazil but only an acknowledgment of the fact that is only through a comprehension mediated by our social grounding that we can do something more useful than merely copying or, the same process in reverse, claiming a free-floating originality.

Personally I would say that one contribution my being a Brazilian enables me to make to the supermarket of theories we are invited to pick and choose from is to bring into the field an experience that is very clear to anyone who lives in Brazil and has not yet become totally blind to the effects of an unjust social order. To be a Brazilian in the 90s means to be painfully aware that, in social, in economic and therefore in cultural life, there are sides and that we must choose. We cannot afford either to pretend that things should be the way they have always been, or to be dazzled by the apparent sophistication of theories that abstract culture from the general organization of society and localize conflict and contradiction in the realm of undecidability. We experience in our everyday life that emancipation and domination are more than a binary opposition that needs only to be deconstructed for everybody to live happily in a world of particularity and difference.

Obviously I am not under the delusion that literature teachers are to be seen as the avant-guarde of the proletariat and the only bearers of revolution in an

otherwise reified society. Nor do I believe that any theory has built into it a libertarian seed, in the service of a just social order. Unless we hold an idealistic view of theory as a realm totally separate from other social practices — situated above the crass materiality of social life — we know that only a change in the existing order will prevent theory from being appropriated for the most sordid ends.

And lest we should fall into a correlate illusion, the one that appeases some "radical intellectuals" who see the discursive struggle "as the only worthy battlefield", we can come up with another typically Brazilian contribution to the theoretical debate: as university professors in Brazil we learn very quickly that power is not too worried about the challenges intellectuals can pose.

But this salutary awareness of the not so important place culture holds in the existing social order need not lead us to quietism or to cynicism.

If we, at the very least, are able to teach our students how one form of social practice, literature, articulates some of the mechanisms that govern our society, they might just escape the sad fate of the culturally deprived, that is, the incapacity to make distinctions. Making distinctions means to be empowered to discern which side of any issue is most likely to serve our real interests. Thus, in the minefield of contesting positions concerning the uses and abuses of theory in our times, we should be aware of what each theoretical position entails from the perspective of what we want to do in our professional life in Brazil. Within our own historical limits, then, the question that must be answered is which theory or theories have the strongest explanatory power and the least ideological function.

In very plain terms I would say that the position I am advocating is a simple one. When being exposed to an account of culture and literature or, to use the code name, when being exposed to a theory, I want to ask myself some basic questions: What tradition does it spring from? In its point of origin, does it explain the facts of culture and literature — that is that they come out of specific times and conditions — or does it coat them in talks of autonomy, disinterestedness and value-free inquiry? Does it help foster thought or does it hinder thought in a web of rhetorical circumvolutions? Can it help me understand my own practice as a student/teacher of that culture? Does it, in its limited scope, make me understand some of the mechanisms of a world order I can see is unjust and needs urgent change?

Post-structuralism, neo-pragmatism and Cultural Studies

With those questions in mind I would like to engage, very briefly, with the three of those positions that are the ones with the largest audiences among us nowadays, namely, poststructuralism — another name for our old friend, New French Theory — neo-pragmatism, as exemplified in the Against Theory, position upheld among others by Stanley Fish, and Cultural Studies as I think they should be understood, as a cultural offspring of the American and British New Left, in special of Raymond Williams's cultural materialism.

It should be obvious by now that I have no great sympathy for post-structuralism. In the light of the perspective from which I speak it will be no surprise to find out that I fully agree with Aijaz Ahmad, another theorist from the Third World, when he rejects post-structuralism as a position that "dismisses historical materialities as 'progressivist modes-of production narrative', historical agency as a 'myth of origins', nations and states (all nations and states) as irretrievably coercive, classes as simply 'discursive constructs', and political parties as a 'collectivist illusion of a stable subject position.'" These are tenets from which no post-structuralist worthy of his/her name can escape from. Now what is wrong with this world view?

> It suppresses — sums up Ahmad — the very conditions of intelligibility within which the fundamental facts of our time can be theorized; and in privileging the figure of the reader, the critic, the theorist, as the guardian of the texts of the world, where everything becomes a text, it recoups the main cultural tropes of bourgeois humanism — especially in its Romantic variants, since the dismissal of class and nation as so many "essentialisms" leads towards an ethic of non-attachment as

the necessary condition of true understanding, and because breaking away from collective socialities of that kind inevitably leaves only the "individual" — in the most abstract sense, epistemologically, but in the shape of the critic/theorist concretely — as the locus of experience and meaning, while the well-known post-structuralist skepticism about the possibility of rational knowledge impels that same individual to maintain only an ironic relation with the word and its intelligibility.[10]

The same maiming ironic skepticism is to be found in neo-pragmatist interventions. Apparently the neo-pragmatists should be situated at the opposite pole from the post-structuralist high theorists. Stanley Fish, for one, thinks that nothing we ever do in theory has any consequence for practice:

> This is then why theory will never succeed; it cannot help but borrow its terms and content from that which it claims to transcend, the mutable world of practice, belief, point of view and so forth. And by definition, something that cannot succeed cannot have consequences, cannot achieve its goals.[11]

Thus, says Fish, theory should stop, and in literary criticism it would be business as usual, since we would simply go on doing what we have always done, acting according to the conventions of our interpretive community.

Fish of course, together with the new-pragmatists he helps to promote, does not take his poetry from the future. Most of all, he does not seem able to include in his everflowing rhetoric of arguments any consideration as to why it might be that at precisely this moment in history theory is either submitted to the reification the extract by Kellner exemplifies or it is villipendiated as inconsequential or totalitarian.

In his ever-shifting arguments for the defense of academic community and of securing a place in the profession, Fish does not pause to consider a theoretical position that claims not to transcend but to elevate historical practice to a concept. In this respect Fish's kind of pragmatism is a natural ally of that other cultural product of our times, post-structuralist Derridian deconstruction with its endless problematizing of the concepts by which we try to grasp the world we live in.

One of many points of contact with Derrida is to be found in the fact that Fish's fetishist elevation of practice ends up by achieving the same goal of the highly theoretical problematization of philosophical and literary vocabularies that is at the center of French deconstruction. Both tendencies, instead of helping us think through the contradictions of practice and thus find ways of changing it, lock us up in the twin entrapment of the negation of the possibility of getting outside the vocabulary of practice — thus rendering every thought relative to its context — or of the deconstruction of the categories we use to theorize — thus achieving a sophisticated, skeptical, but sadly empty victory over rational modes of thinking.

What both tendencies oppose is the possibility of a totalizing thought. But this is exactly the kind of thought which should, to speak like Fish, have any consequence since it goes against the fragmentary and particularizing tendencies of contemporary life and thought. As Jameson puts it:

> The interesting question today is [...] why so many people are scandalized by [a totalizing position] (or have learned to be scandalized by it.) In the old days, abstraction was surely one of the strategic ways in which phenomena, particularly historical phenomena, could be estranged and defamiliarized. When one is immersed in the immediate — the year by year experience of cultural and informational messages, of successive events, of urgent priorities — the abrupt distance afforded by an abstract concept, a more global characterization of the secret affinities between those apparently autonomous and unrelated domains, and the rhythms and hidden consequences of things we normally only remember in isolation and one by one, is a unique resource particularly since the history of the preceding few years is always what is least accessible to us. Historical reconstruction then, the positing of global characterizations and hypothesis, the abstraction from the "blooming buzzing confusion" of immediacy was always a radical intervention in the here and now and the promise of resistance to its blind fatalities.[12]

Thus the theory I think it is our job to promote is a way of placing, a way of historicizing phenomena so as to try and beat the fragmentary quality of practice. The object of theory is to historicize practice, that is situate what we do in history. And before anyone comes up with the line about history being another text — something more easily said, as we have already discussed, outside the Third World — we should perhaps quote Jameson again, in his memorable definition:

> History is what hurts, it is what refuses desire and sets inexorable limits to individual as well as to collective practice.... History as a ground and untranscendable horizon needs no theoretical justification: we may be sure that its alienating necessities will not forget us, however much we might prefer to ignore them.[13]

And this historicizing project is what should be — but alas, this is not usually the case — at the heart of the project of cultural studies.

Though usually apprehended as an Anglo-American project, it has some national specificities which are worth stressing, even in a hurried sketchy form. Compared to the States, Britain has a much longer tradition of socially conscious literary studies which runs back, with different political leanings, at least to the 18th century.

But, reversing Leavis's famous opening to the Great Tradition, "to stop for the moment at a comparatively safe point in history", we could say that by the 1950s the intellectual milieu of Britain was ripe for the emergence of a Raymond Williams, who, in Cornel West's assessment, was "the last of the great European male revolutionary socialist intellectuals born before the end of the age of Europe (1492-1945)."[14]

Williams's work is certainly the most original and relevant British contribution to the field of cultural studies. Its deep roots are to be found in the culture and society tradition Williams himself traced in his first major book, *Culture and Society —1780-1950.* Deeply immersed in his tradition — another lesson Williams has to teach us, Brazilians — he was able to critically absorb and rework the continental contribution of thinkers like Lukács, Sartre, Gramsci, Adorno, Marcuse, and Benjamin. With the publication of *Marxism and Literature* (1977) Williams's name was definitely added to the tradition of Western Marxism. To my mind, the highest point of his outstanding contribution to the study of culture in our times is to be found in his strategic reformulation of Marxism as "cultural materialism":

> It took me thirty years, in a very complex process, to move from that received Marxist theory [...] to the position I now hold, which I define as "cultural materialism." The emphases of the transition — on the production (rather than only reproduction) of meanings and values by specific social formations, on the centrality of language and communication as formative social forces, and on the complex interaction both of institutions and forms and of the formal conventions may be defined, if anyone wishes, as culturalism, and even the crude old (positivist) idealism/materialism dichotomy may be applied if it helps anyone. What I would now claim to have reached, but necessarily by this route, is a theory of culture as a (social and material) productive process and of specific practices, of arts, as social uses of material means of production (from language as material "practical consciousness" to the specific technologies of writing and forms of writing) through to mechanical and electronic communications systems.[15]

In this theoretical formulation and in Williams's rigorous but at the same time deeply moving practice as a cultural critic is embedded a whole program for cultural studies in Britain and elsewhere. His is a cultural theory that cannot exempt itself from a critical examination of its own social formation and specific historical situation. By specifying the material grounding of its object and of its own formulation, Williams's theories provide a welcome antidote to the pervasive intellectual habit of abstracting artistic practice and misplacing cultural theories.

When traveling to the United States, this met with a tradition that — Partisan Review apart and the 30s Marxist critics either dead or silenced by McCarthyism and the Cold War rhetoric — lacked the always sobering effect of a lively materialist intellectual tradition. One can measure[16] the distance between Britain and

the U.S. in terms of materialist literary criticism by pointing out that arguably the most important book to set the tone of relevant cultural debate in England in the fifties was Williams's *Culture and Society* (1958), while in the States it was Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), where literature is still seen, in the tradition of the New Criticism it merely displaces, as an isolated icon. In Frye's system, literature is an autonomous structure and the significance of one literary work is to be found in the other literary works which it recycles. In this account of literature as the expression of timeless archetypes, history is left out as, in Henry Ford's memorable formulation, simply one "damn fact after the other."

However the social upheavals that shook the States in the sixties released a great deal of political energy that found one of its niches in the academy. After feminism, black radicalism, Students for a Democratic Society and anti-war movements that repeatedly denounced the complicity between the academy and the Pentagon, it was complicated to continue practicing "disinterested" criticism and a much wider space — the term of comparison being not exclusively the McCarthy era — for oppositional criticism was conquered in the academy.

It is within this leftist enclave that the American version of Cultural Studies was to prosper so as to become, albeit its countless varieties in the still individualistic U.S., "the most original and exciting movement in American universities" in Aronowitz reliable assessment.[17]

By the late 80s the cultural studies project had been reshaped to fit the extraordinary vitality — and omnivorous adaptation to its own image — of the American academy, prompting Stuart Hall, a former director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, to pronounce himself "dumfounded":

> the enormous explosion of cultural studies in the U.S., its rapid professionalization and institutionalization, is not a moment which any of us who tried to set up a marginalized Centre in a university like Birmingham could, in any simple way, regret. Yet I have to say, in the strongest sense, that it reminds me of the ways in which, in Britain, we are always aware of institutionalization as a moment of profound danger.[18]

I know one should be very careful with generalizations, specially when talking about the great diversity of the American academy, but I think it would be fair to say that nowadays most American cultural studies projects seem to increasingly focus on the cultural construction of the identities of minorities. The crucial question seems to be the one formulated by Gayatri Spivak: Can the subaltern speak? A large number of academic works published as cultural studies show that most academics are striving exactly to answer this question in the affirmative, presenting their word and work as a contribution to the efforts of the so called minorities (an awful designation, by the way — the truest minority, in the world of late capitalism, is the one composed by the very rich) but, vocabulary allergies notwithstanding, most of the work seems designed to open up a space for women, blacks, gays, lesbian, post-colonial peoples — within the tradition of "culture."

No one who is not a rabid conservative can have anything against the inclusion in our studies of those issues but one should be alert to the fact that the triumphalism one can hear in most cultural studies propositions can be misleading: the objective spirit of the period is still busily at work in our most well-meaning defenses of minorities. One of its many dangers is that intellectuals may end up as what Paulo Arantes calls "cultural brokers", producing identities for minorities so that they can be absorbed by the social system qua minorities. The logic of the system being one of seriality and expansion, this turns minorities into so many market segments in such a way that each difference is seen as another mode of insertion in consumer society. The movement of this process goes in the direction of enlarging the number of the "different" and diminishing the possibility of equality.

But again this need not blind us to the fact that, especially in Williams's rigorous formulations, cultural studies grounded on the material conditions of production also open up a range of interesting projects for us, Brazilians, working with a foreign culture. Providing we can resist the siren call of being incorporated as another minority, as a people from the Third World with all the charms of the exotic, but paying the price of irrelevancy either by being entrapped in the sterile opposi-

tion center x periphery, or by being idealized as a separate realm, the imaginary site of authenticity and alterity.

We know we are not the Other in this abstract sense. Cultural Studies might be a name for the task ahead of us, to teach, study and promote cultures in English from our material position in the world, without losing sight of our specificity as Brazilians, and of our main agenda: to understand our own culture in its inescapable relation with the center of which we are a constitutive part.

In a survey of the "paradigm shift" from literary into Cultural Studies, Antony Easthope comes up with an interesting narrative that I want to appropriate for my own ends, which differ from his. He says :

> It has been remarked that no matter what path Western thought has followed in the past two centuries at the end it reaches a park-bench, with Hegel sitting down reading a book.[19]

If my reading of Hegel can be trusted, I would say that his imperative to always historicize shall have to be the predictable ending of my talk, with the proviso that in Brazilian cultural studies it should be clear that in our specific case it also means "Always compare."

NOTES

[1]KELLNER, Douglas. *Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity.* Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, p. 173.

[2]In this respect, see my article "Translating American Literary Theory" (*Crop*, n. 1, p. 55-9, 1994).

[3]SCHWARZ, Roberto. National by Elimination [1986]. In: *Misplaced Ideas. Essays on Brazilian Culture.* London/New York, 1992, p. 14.

[4]SCHWARZ, Roberto. Beware of Alien Ideologies [1976]. In: *Misplaced Ideas...*, cit., p. 34.

[5]Here and elsewhere in this text, when dealing with German Critical Theories and French post-structuralism, I follow what I learned from Paulo Eduardo Arantes's expositions, mainly in "Ideologia francesa, opinião brasileira" (*Novos Estudos Cebrap*, São Paulo, n. 30) e "Filosofia francesa e tradição literária no Brasil e nos Estados Unidos" (*Novos Estudos Cebrap*, São Paulo, n. 40).

[6]HORKHEIMER, Max. Traditional and Critical Theory. In: *Critical Theory* [1937]. New York, Seabury, 1972, p. 245.

[7]GRAFF, Gerald. The Future of Literary Theory in the Teaching of Literature [1989]. In: COHEN, Ralph (ed.). *The Future of Literary Theory.* New York/London, Routledge, 1989, p. 251.

[8]EAGLETON, Terry. *The Function of Criticism.* London, Verso, 1984.

[9]WILLIAMS, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature.* Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 212.

[10]AHMAD, Aijaz. Literature among the Signs of our Time. In: —. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures.* London/New York, Verso, 1992, p. 35-6.

[11]FISH, Stanley. Consequences. In: MITCHELL, W.J.T. (ed.). *Against Theory.* Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 111.

[12]JAMESON, Fredric. *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* Durham, Duke University Press, 1991, p. 400.

[13]JAMESON, Fredric. On Interpretation. In: —. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act.* London, Methuen, 1981, p. 102.

[14]WEST, Cornel. The Legacy of Raymond Williams. *Social Text*, n. 30, v. 10, 1992, p. 6.

[15]WILLIAMS, Raymond. Notes on Marxism in Britain since 1945. In: *Problems in Materialism and Culture.* London, Verso, 1980, p. 243.

[16]See in this respect AHMAD, op. cit., p. 43-51.

[17]ARONOWITZ, Stanley. On Catherine Gallagher's Critique of Raymond Williams. *Social Text*, n. 30, v. 10, 1992, p. 97.

[18]Apud JAMESON, Fredric. On "Cultural Studies". *Social Text*, n. 34, 1993, p. 46.

[19]EASTHOPE, Antony. *Literary into Cultural Studies.* London / New York, Routledge, 1991, p. 119.

Maria Elisa Cevasco é docente na área de LILINA-USP.

Dissociation of sensibility: different approaches to a concept

José Garcez Ghirardi

When T.S. Eliot wrote a review of Sir Herbert Grierson's edition of Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler *(Oxford/ London, Clarendon Press/Milford,1921) he was certainly unaware of the impact his comments would have on later criticism. Much to Eliot's surprise his essay* The Metaphysical Poets *(1921) became the article to be referred to by those studying the metaphysical poets up to the 50's.*

Still today, it is seldom that we find a critic who does not make reference to Eliot's views. Cleanth Brooks, Joseph Anthony Mazzeo,[1] Rosemond Tuve,[2] Earl Miner, and Joseph Summers[3] are but some among the many scholars who have devoted their attention to Eliot's text. Gerald Hammond, writing a survey on the most important criticism on the metaphysicals, stressed the mighty impact the essay had on twenty-century criticism:

> The "revival" of metaphysical poetry in the years 1890-1923 may be best described as a return to the critical discrimination of Johnson and Coleridge. Impressionistic generalizations were replaced by a willingness to read the poetry closely, and on its own terms. Much of the credit for this went to T.S. Eliot [...]"[4]

Much of the uproar raised by the review centered on an expression almost as quoted, since then, as Samuel Johnson's remarks on the metaphysicals. Eliot spoke of a "dissociation of sensibility" that in the seventeenth century set in, from which poetry never recovered. Such "dissociation of sensibility" was in part responsible, according to Eliot, for the fact that the works of seventeenth-century poets had so far been "more often named than read, and more often read than profitably studied."[5]

Eliot, however, did not care to discuss at length what he meant by the expression. He referred to the concept only twice, using it mainly as a momentary tool to develop a more complex line of thought about poetry as a whole. His brevity on the matter seems to have been the cause of many a controversial interpretation, and so many critics have devoted themselves to "clarify" Eliot's phrase that J.B. Leishman remarked — rather sarcastically — that it had "enabled several later writers to set up in business and drive quite a prosperous trade as literary and historical critics."[6]

This contrast between Eliot's almost careless "dropping" of the expression and the relevance attached to it by later critics has seem to us worth of

closer examination. The present work is an attempt to contribute to such examination.

We will suggest that the difference in the emphasis T.S. Eliot and critics put on the term is due to the different interests with which their "readings" have been made. We will try to show that Eliot's interest in the metaphysicals is secondary, as he is primarily concerned with proving that the theoretical principles he had exposed in *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919) are apt to produce good literary criticism. The metaphysicals appear, for him, not as an end in themselves but, rather, as a means to demonstrate a much broader theoretical position. The value of Donne and Herbert, for instance, becomes relevant to Eliot — as we shall suggest — insofar it can only be perceived by the application of Eliot's critical method.

Later critics, on the other hand, are primarily concerned with the metaphysical poets and seek to extend and fortify a prestige that is rising steadily (thanks, mostly, to Grierson's and Eliot's works). Their concern is not — as Eliot's — to discuss literary theory. They are eager to explore a new land, freshly revealed by someone who seems about to lose interest in his discovery. Due to this different approach, these critics have tended — as we believe — to disconnect Eliot's expression ("dissociation of sensibility") from the context in which it appears. Their "uses" of the expression coined in *The Metaphysical Poets* seem not to have been suspected — or approved — by T.S. Eliot himself.

Dissociation of sensibility

> And years later, Eliot expressed his utter astonishment that his short review of Sir Herbert Grierson's "Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century, which appeared in TLS in 1921, had caused such a critical stir; he had dropped the term "dissociation of sensibility," but he had no idea that literary history of the next twenty years or so would be rewritten to accommodate his suggestion.[7]

Eliot's "astonishment" seems rather understandable. The article we refer to is not a long one; indeed, it is but "a short review," as J.R. Roberts pointed out, of Sir Herbert Grierson's edition of *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*,[8] and no special attention is given to the concept of "dissociation of sensibility." It is presented, and function as, a criterion for the establishment of a certain kind of tradition. It is a series of related questions concerning primarily — as it seems to us — literary criticism theory and practice. These questions are the real subject of the article, and the metaphysical poets occupy such a specific (peripheral) place in literary criticism up to Eliot's time, that they become ideal for demonstrating the positive effects of the new critical attitude. It is this new attitude that absorbs Eliot's attention, not the metaphysical poets in themselves.

This may be said to be revealed by the very structure of the essay. It is meaningful to observe, for instance, that Eliot opens his review proposing that

> The question is to what extent the so-called metaphysicals formed a school (in our own time we should say a "movement"), and how far this so-called school or movement is a digression from the main current.

The basic concern seems to be, here, not to discuss specific questions about the metaphysicals for their own sake, but rather to try to analyse: a) the position of some individual artists within the production of their own time (the idea of "school or movement"); and b) the position of such artists regarding "tradition" (the ideas of "digression and main current").

Considering the problem from this angle, it is meaningful to observe that a clear definition of "metaphysical poet" does not constitute a problem which Eliot seems to worry much about. In fact, he puts the question aside by merely acknowledging that this is an intricate topic:

> Not only is it extremely difficult to define metaphysical poetry, but difficult to decide what poets practice it in which of their verses.

Such attitude could be indeed very problematic to explain, unless we are ready to admit that Eliot is not interested primarily in the metaphysical poets, but in the rich material the critical reception of their poetry represented to one, as Eliot, interested in discussing more general aspects of literary criticism.

That Eliot should have such a concern, ought in no way to surprise us. On the contrary, he was being absolutely faithful to the principles he had so plainly stated in his *Tradition and the Individual Talent*:

> No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead; I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism.

Thus spoke Eliot, the theorist; it should baffle nobody if he applied his own principles when devoting himself to concrete "aesthetic" criticism. *The Metaphysical Poets* should be seen as an essay through which Eliot sets himself to prove, in practice, the validity of his theoretical principles.

He is not very much worried, therefore, when he does not find "any precise use of metaphor, simile, or other conceit, which is common to all the poets and at the same time important enough as an element of style to isolate these poets as a group." The establishment of such a group is of a lesser importance compared to the urge he feels to demonstrate that the production of the seventeenth-century poets descended from a long established tradition that "returns through the Elizabethan period to the early Italians." (One might suggest that, in delineating such a "tradition," Eliot was already on his way to the discovery of Dante, a favourite poet of his some years later.)

Eliot speaks clearly of a tradition that existed and that has been interrupted

Tradition (which is the key to distinguish Eliot from a critic he much admired, Samuel Johnson) will also be the guiding line in the appreciation Eliot makes of Johnson's methods of literary criticism applied to the aesthetic evaluation of the metaphysicals.

Johnson's criticism fails, says Eliot, because he chooses an unsuitable path of analysis. Johnson tries to

> define metaphysical poetry by its faults. [...] it is worthwhile to inquire whether we may not have more success by adopting the opposite method: by assuming that the poets of the seventeenth century (up to the Revolution) were the direct and normal development of the precedent age; and, without prejudicing their case by the adjective "metaphysical," consider whether their virtue was not something permanently valuable, which subsequently disappeared, but ought not to have disappeared.

What Eliot is proposing to develop, from now on, is not as much a study on the metaphysicals, as an attempt to demonstrate that his critical method is more apt to explain any particular poetic phenomenon than that of Samuel Johnson. It is the method — and not poems or poets — that is primarily at stake here. Donne, Carshaw and Herbert will appear because they constitute useful material to Eliot's demonstration of how his principles work in practice.

In the paragraph quoted above, Eliot speaks clearly of a tradition that existed and that has been interrupted (that he regrets such an interruption attests to his genuine concern with "not only the pastness of the past, but of its presence"[9]).

The tradition he talks about is of a very particular nature: it is that of a certain kind of sensibility which may be found up to the dramatic verse of the later Elizabethan and early Jacobean poets, but not later. The rupture is illustrated by means of a comparison between one poem by Herbert and one by Tennyson.

> The difference — argues Eliot — is not a simple difference of degree between poets.[...] it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet.

Eliot, in here, is moving from the discussion of a particular contrast (Herbert x Tennyson) to the establishment of a general, timeless distinction (intellectual x reflective poet). He is not using a concept to explain Herbert or Tennyson; he is using the poets to illustrate a concept. If we fail to understand this, we are bound to believe that Eliot's discussion of "dissociation of sensibility" is restricted to a specific moment in the past, (namely, the seventeenth century) and does not consti-

tute, as we think it should be understood, a discussion on permanent poetic principles.

When Eliot states that "A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his experience,"[10] he is not describing Donne's technique alone. He is trying to describe the way poetic sensibility had developed up to Donne. More than that, he is stating the way poetry "ought to be." He moves once more from the specific (Donne) to the generic (a poet's mind): "When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience."[11] Eliot is not talking about Donne, Herbert or any seventeenth-century poet in particular here: he is talking about a poet, any good poet. It is no surprise, therefore, that the examples he chooses to illustrate "disparate experience" belong to Eliot's — not to Donne's time:

> the ordinary man's is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.

Spinoza and typewriters are alien to Donne and the metaphysicals, but this does not bother Eliot, because he is aiming at demonstrating a generic poetic principle, not at discussing a particular poetic movement.[12]

The "mechanism of sensibility" as a criterion for the rearrangement of the poetic tradition

Having identified this generic poetic principle, this "mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience," Eliot proceeds to using it as the criterion for the rearrangement of the poetic tradition, now to be defined by the presence or absence of such an element. On the "positive" side he proposes a line that goes from the early Italians (Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guinicelli and Cino) to the metaphysicals, through the sixteenth-century dramatists. This group of poets, as heterogeneous as they might be on other aspects, belongs together — according to Eliot's view — because they share the same poetic "sensibility." Milton and Dryden represent the undesirable interruption of this chain. They can produce — as Eliot acknowledges — excellent poetry without displaying such mechanism of sensibility, but just because they "performed certain poetic functions so magnificently well that the magnitude of the effect concealed the absence of others." The poets that follow them are to produce a lesser kind of poetry, lacking, as they do, both the kind of sensibility existing up to the Restoration and the extraordinary poetic talents of Milton and Dryden.

We observe, then, that Eliot develops his "short theory," as he calls it, having in mind two basic parametres: the concept of "mechanism of sensibility" — which is understood in itself as a critic category, seen as abstract and supra-historical — and the moments of literary history where said category is recognizable. It is this reading of the past on the light of some critical principles that enables Eliot to create (and perhaps even more strongly "re-create") tradition.

The metaphysical poets are, thus, relevant to Eliot only insofar they enable him to build up on the concept of tradition and its influence on literary criticism.[13] Concluding his theory, he once again leaves them behind to glance at the future, pointing at two "negative" effects Milton and Dryden had caused: the rise of a "cruder sensibility" (though the language may have improved) and a revolt "against the ratiocinative, the descriptive." He talks now of Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Browning, mentioning Collins, Donne, Marvell or King just as landmarks of a broken tradition. It is this concept, and not really the metaphysicals, that T.S. Eliot is discussing in his review of Grierson's famous edition.

Conclusion

In our effort to understand T.S. Eliot's position concerning the metaphysical poets we proposed as a guideline to our study the analysis of the different value he and most of the critics of the metaphysical poetry attach to his concept of "dissociation of sensibility."

As an attempt to start studying this problem, we proposed that it is possible to suggest that the gap be-

tween T.S. Eliot's perception and later critics' regarding the notion of "dissociation of sensibility" is rooted in the different interests they had in mind, interests which determined different *uses* for the same concept.

Most of the critics quoting Eliot's article are doing so when analysing poetry produced in the seventeenth century. Their major concern is to establish a coherent explanation for the modes of poetic production then; sometimes even more specifically, critics are committed to extricating some inner meaning of the once "obscure" metaphysical poetry. Their efforts have, for the most part, the boundaries of the historical conditions under which the poems were produced.

In this context, they tend to restrict Eliot's notion to the seventeenth century alone (Dante, Guido or Baudelaire, mentioned by Eliot, are excluded here) and to transform in exclusively "metaphysical" (or even "characteristically" metaphysical) a quality that Eliot intends to see applied to poetry at large. Eliot's reputation as a poet and critic seems to have always been very tempting to be used as an authoritative voice to give weight to an argument or hypothesis, even if his views on closely connected topics (as, for instance, that of the relation between "personal emotions" and "poetic experience," as exposed in *Tradition and the Individual Talent*) are seldom taken into account. This *use* — probably unconscious — of Eliot's reputation appears to be very clear when we observe that notions very similar to the ones presented by him in *The Metaphysical Poets* had been expressed previously, both by Grierson himself ("Passion seems to affect both poets [Donne and Browning, a comparison Eliot will repeat] in the same way, not evoking the usual images, voluptuous and tender, but quickening the intellect to intense and rapid trains of thought...")[14] and by Edith Sickel ("All Vaughan's romance, indeed, lay in his intellect. Thought was with him an emotion [...].About [Browning's] feelings there is a fine recklessness which Vaughan's *heart* could never know. But his *brain* knew it well and was tense enough in expressing it.")[15] Critics may have attached more importance than Eliot to the expression because they needed it more badly for their arguments than Eliot for his.

NOTES

[1]As they appear in CLEMENTS, Arthur L. (ed.). *John Donne's Poetry*. New York/London, Norton, 1992.

[2]In: *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, 1952.

[3]As they appear in ELIOT, T.S. *The Metaphysical Poets*. London, MacMillan, 1974. Casebook Series.

[4]HAMMOND, Gerald. Introduction In: ELIOT, *The Metaphysical Poets*, cit.

[5]ELIOT, *The Metaphysical Poets*, cit. Apud *Selected Essays*, new edition, by T.S. Eliot, as it appears in CLEMENTS, op. cit.

[6]LEISHMAN, J.B. The Monarch of Wit [1951], as it appears in CLEMENTS, op. cit.

[7]Cf. ROBERTS, John R., as it appears in CLEMENTS, op. cit., p. 352.

[8]Id., ibid., p. 351.

[9]In: *Tradition and The Individual Talent*, 1919.

[10]Id., ibid.

[11]Id., ibid.

[12]This is not to say, obviously, that Eliot's concept may not be used by one interested in describing Donne's or any of the metaphysical poets' style in particular. What is meant is that Eliot did not intend to create, here, a concept that would be confined to a certain moment in literary history. Such a "confinement" may be very misleading and seems to have led to many a problematic reading of the metaphysicals, as it is likely to entail a potential confusion between poetic and personal experiences, poet and man. Such confusion was heartly fought against by Eliot himself, in his *Tradition and the Individual Talent*.

[13]If we adopt this view, we will not be surprised to observe that Eliot's interest in Donne had almost completely vanished by 1931: "Donne's poetry is a concern of the present and the recent past rather than of the future" (Cf. ROBERTS. In: CLEMENTS, op. cit., p. 351).

[14]HAMMOND, op. cit., p. 26.

[15]Id., ibid.

José Garcez Ghirardi é mestrando na área de LILINA-USP.

The rise of the novel and constructions of femininity

SANDRA VASCONCELOS

The rise of the novel in eighteenth-century England foregrounded woman as protagonist of the new literary genre which, like much of the intellectual production of the period, took an unprecedented interest in women's nature and position. With the emergence of the bourgeoisie, English society had gone through many important changes. Political and economic power was changing hands and the combination of capitalism with Protestantism determined new roles for both man and woman, bringing about a new conception of marriage. Marriage and love, which had always been kept separate by the aristocracy, were now united by the Puritan middle-class. With marriages of convenience being replaced by what Lawrence Stone calls "companionate marriage,"[1] choice of partner became crucial. Faithfulness and chastity on the part of the woman began to be insisted on with vehemence. In fact, women's chastity became a commodity on the marriage market since it was, as Dr. Johnson very clearly put it, "of the utmost importance, as all property depends on it."[2] Not only preservation of family property, we could add, but mainly legitimate descent. In a world of male economic dominance, women were not legally entitled to ownership or wealth of their own. Not much was left to them but their virtue. Christopher Hill gives a very clear picture of women's predicament in the eighteenth century when he states that "Women who did not inherit wealth had been left with no marketable commodity but their sex, which they could trade either in the open marriage market, as Pamela taught them, or on the black market like Roxana and Moll Flanders."[3]

As practically the only career open to them, marriage was an almost inescapable fate and women had to be prepared to occupy the centre of the bourgeois family and take over the upbringing of children. Solid education was thought to be unnecessary and beyond women's grasp and they were generally considered to be better off with the few accomplishments offered them by the boarding schools: drawing, dancing, music, French, and deportment. Intellect in them could be admired but was not unequivocally approved.

The belief in the power of education, an idea disseminated by Enlightenment all over Europe, did not include women, who were not allowed access to serious learning. Of course, they were also excluded from politics and power. Literary, philosophical, political and commercial issues were male domain, discussed in clubs and coffee-houses. Women, on the contrary, had to be instructed in the arts of appropriate dress, conversation, housekeeping. Serious subjects were not meant for them. Rather, they had to concentrate on learning modesty, grace, propriety, bashfulness, delicacy. As a consequence, frivolity, coquettishness, flirtation were generally condemned as very serious flaws in a woman. Patricia Meyer Spacks argues that eighteenth-century society "drew an absolute line between virtuous and non virtuous conduct in women."[4] The class divide was also clear: while middle- and upper-class women were expected to be chaste and not to behave like sexual beings, there was much less restraint in relation to the woman of the lower classes.

These new modes of thought, mainly regarding the institution of marriage, were disseminated in different sorts of publications. While conduct books endeavoured to teach women how to behave and become good housewives, periodicals in general and magazines specially designed for women became powerful weapons to teach them new attitudes and values. Obviously, they were not the only target of these new ideas. One has to recognize that, for most women, these publications were the only source of instruction. However, they were also responsible for disseminating a discourse of femininity and domesticity specially directed to them.

Throughout the century, magazines, journals, pamphlets and tracts paid increasing attention to the changing role of women and reflected the society's concern about it, by dedicating a lot of space to discussions of issues thought of as belonging to the female province. They were, as Terry Eagleton points out, part of a broader enterprise which explored "attitudes to servants and the rules of gallantry, the status of women and familial affections, the purity of the English language, the character of conjugal love, the psychology of the sentiments and the laws of the toilet."[5] They also contributed to forging the new image of the virtuous woman, on whose chastity depended her whole life and future.

These ideas, which started to be propagated at the beginning of the century, were no doubt a reaction against the "libertinism" and "licentiousness" criticized as typical of the Restoration. A new rising society demanded new habits and the reformation of institutions, like marriage, and gave women a new role within it. Much of what society expected of her, her subordinate condition and limited horizons are expressed in Steele's dictum: "All she has to do in this world, is contained within the duties of a daughter, a sister, a wife, and a mother" (*The Spectator*, III, p. 70-1). These notions were insistently hammered in articles, essays and reviews which helped shape a new ideal of gentility and of womanhood.

The novel played a central role in the construction of gender, articulating and propagating the ideology of domesticity, which confined women to the private sphere

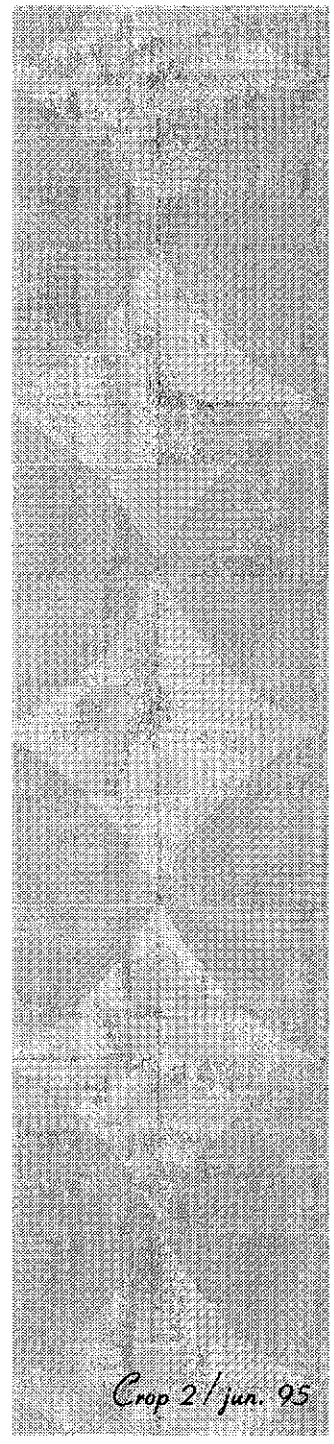
Novels were, of course, also part of this cultural movement. Most of them, in eighteenth-century England, were written to instruct through example, promote virtue and punish vice by means of an entertaining story. The novelists' sense of moral purpose and didactic zeal voiced a middle-class morality which clamoured for expression. For them, the novel functioned as a didactic instrument aiming at the reformation of men, customs and manners. What I would like to argue is that the novel played a central role in the construction of gender, articulating and propagating the ideology of domesticity, which confined women to the private sphere while it ratified the notion of man as a public being. More importantly, the new genre contributed to naturalizing this new concept of femininity, making it appear as if there were such a thing as a female essence.

The novelist's role in the construction of a new ideal of womanhood is perhaps best exemplified by Samuel Richardson, who is defined by Terry Eagleton as "not only one such organic intellectual of the English bourgeoisie" but "among the most vitally significant of all."[6] It is also his the argument that Richardson's novels are not simply images of conflicts between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie but Richardson's contribution to the construction of the "bourgeois public sphere of eighteenth-century England."[7]

Samuel Richardson's share in the construction and propagation of the ideology of femininity can never be overstressed. Apart from making his novel *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* into the talk of the town when it was published, in 1740, he also influenced a great number of novelists, many of them women.

The impact of *Pamela* was enormous. Not only were scenes from the novel reproduced on fans sold in London shops at the time but also Pamela spawned the heroines of hundreds of popular novels which flooded the circulating libraries of the country. Unfortunately, it was not Pamela's pertness, wit, intelligence and self-assertiveness which were endlessly imitated in the sentimental novels but her more "feminine" qualities, that is, her sense of social hierarchy, obedience and humbleness.

Heroines of novels, therefore, functioned as paradigms of femininity. Virtue, moderation, innocence, decorum, judgment were some of the fundamental qualities which made up the new image of woman. These were also the essential qualities of heroines like Cecilia, Camilla, Belinda, etc., whose education was based on the uncompromising defence of virtue, understood less as a question of principle than a set of rules which aimed exclusively at the preservation of chastity. They must be patient, modest, humble and delicate; they were not supposed to crave for knowledge, or love before they were loved and, once married, they owed their husbands obedience and submission.



The sentimental novel, highly fashionable after the 1750's, established a kind of role model which was made into a formula through constant repetition by most of its popular writers. The heroines of most popular novels were very beautiful, extremely delicate, acutely sensitive, prone to frequent swooning and abundant tears. Models of virtue and perfection, they were innocent victims permanently threatened by terrible and relentless villains or uncontrollable passions. If unlucky to the point of not resisting, they were doomed to lifelong imprisonment in a convent or inevitable death.

The success of the new genre produced a widespread discussion about the pernicious effects the reading of novels had on the minds and behaviour of the youth of both sexes, but more particularly on young women. The vogue of the sentimental and Gothic novel later in the century only contributed to the general distrust in relation to the novels' allegedly edifying purposes. For the very conservative, this type of novel excited the imagination and stirred up fancy, which they thought would be better kept under control. Reading and writing were considered to be dangerous pursuits because, being solitary activities, they invited daydreaming and stimulated all sorts of fantasies. Fear lay, as Patricia Meyer Spacks notes, in the fact that "the written word can both record and stimulate sexual fantasy: and fantasy [...] may ultimately produce action."[8]

Seen as easy prey to their fantasies and as irresponsible beings, young women must be closely controlled by their family and raised according to strict principles which value innocence and virtue. Subject to passion and lack of control, the heart, feelings and the imagination must be placed under surveillance. Under the eye and care of father and later on of husband, the woman is confined to the home, to the domestic world. The wish to restrict them to their private role is ultimately the wish to domesticate them. While "domestic" means "of the home, household or family affairs," domesticate also means "to tame." It is not casual therefore that the defence of the domestic woman, pervasive and recurrent in the period, veils the ideology of domestication. The confinement of woman to the private sphere is a guarantee of faithfulness and control. This certainly explains the appeals to moderation in dress and speech, the demand for decorum, the countless articles about women's conduct in periodicals, the defence of reason and judgment. Any suspicion that novels could incite the "fair sex" to excesses of the imagination or inadequate behaviour led necessarily to attacking them. There were some very heavy accusations like the one published in *The Monthly Mirror* of November 1797, which lay responsibility on novels for female depravity:

> those who first made novel-reading an indispensible branch in forming the minds of young women, have a great deal to answer for. Without this poison instilled, as it were, into the blood, females in ordinary life would never have been so much the slaves of vice. The plain food, wholesome air, and exercise they enjoy would have exempted them from the tyranny of lawless passions, and, like their virtuous grandmothers, they would have pointed the finger of shame at the impure and licentious. [...] It is in that school the poor deluded female imbibes erroneous principles, and from thence pursues a flagrantly vicious line of conduct; it is there she is told that love is involuntary, and that attachments of the heart are decreed by fate ("Novel Reading a Cause of Female Depravity").

While we can only conjecture about the sort of effect that these models had on the female readership, it is not very difficult to presume that novels may have functioned as a powerful instrument of control and domination of women, helping to shape and mould patterns of behaviour which were considered proper. After all, women were their target public, their protagonists and also their producers. Very telling testimonials were left to us in diaries and letters about their response to novels but it is almost impossible to weigh how their behaviour was modeled by their reading.

The cult of femininity, forged from a masculine point of view, was assumed by novelists of both sexes, with some important exceptions. The same culture that produced the cult of femininity also produced its critique. Yet, feminist consciousness was slow to grow. Even so, when it did, it was very often inhibited by the prevalent views concerning women's nature and position. There were a few women novelists, however, who succeeded in construct-

ing an alternative image of woman. Without actually challenging social hierarchy or the political structure, many of them created heroines who were not innocent victims trying to fend for themselves in a world infested with male predators, but were resourceful, intelligent and strong women. In their books, they opposed the idea that education could endanger women's virtue and defended women's education as important to society. Despite social strictures, some of these novelists assumed the authority of vindicating women and their right to solid books, broader interests and intellectual pursuits as also belonging to women's province. Defying prevailing conventions, their voices were raised to protest against women's subordination, narrow horizons and lack of opportunities.

The same culture that produced the cult of femininity also produced its critique. Yet, feminist consciousness was slow to grow

Feminist consciousness was neither univocal nor unambiguous. Christopher Hill points out that "in practice, women before Mary Wollstonecraft were *conscious* of the need for emancipation. Some may have resisted the pressures that degraded and humiliated them, but resistance was as yet hardly more than passive in face of an irreversible trend."[9] Discussing the progressive work of novelists like Fanny Burney, Charlotte Lennox, Elizabeth Inchbald, Charlotte Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft, who "constantly created situations in their novels that criticized society's attitude toward and treatment of women,"[10] Katherine Rogers shows that even the most conservative among these women objected to many patriarchal traditions while even the most radical were inhibited by the prevailing opinions regarding the nature and role of women.

Having led very unconventional lives themselves, some of these novelists created female characters who often flouted convention and resisted usual restraints and restrictions. Through these characters, they showed how much a deficient educational system was responsible for women's weaknesses and failings. It is interesting, though, that none of their work is exempt from the contradictions within the bourgeois ideology of femininity, since they reinforced it at the same time as denouncing oppression and social strictures on women.

This combination of conformity and protest in their work was only to be expected for, no matter how unconventional they may have been, the dominant discourse of femininity also worked for them. A short extract taken from a contemporary review of Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*, published in *The Critical Review*,[11] will give us a very clear picture of what they were up against:

> we now pause to ask Mrs. Smith, or any novel writer or reader, what possible benefit can accrue to society, and to youth in particular, from a perusal of scenes so repugnant to decorum and virtue?

NOTES

[1]STONE, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977.

[2]In: BOSWELL, *Life of Johnson*, I, 347-8; quoted by HILL, Christopher. Clarissa Harlowe and her Times. In: CARROLL, John (ed.). *Samuel Richardson: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs, 1969, p. 102-23.

[3]HILL, op. cit., p. 118.

[4]SPACKS, Patricia Meyer. Ev'ry Woman is at Heart a Rake. *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, n. 1, v. 8, p. 27, Fall 1974.

[5]EAGLETON, Terry. *The Function of Criticism*. London, Verso, 1985, p. 18.

[6]EAGLETON, Terry. *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson*. Blackwell, 1985, p. 3.

[7]EAGLETON, *The Rape of Clarissa...*, cit., p. 7.

[8]SPACKS, op. cit., p. 38-9.

[9]HILL, op. cit., p. 121.

[10]ROGERS, Katherine M. *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England*. Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1982, p. 4.

[11]*The Critical Review*, v. 8, series 2, May 1793.

Sandra Vasconcelos é docente na área de LILINA-USP.

THE ITALIAN

GOTHIC, SUSPENSE AND IDEOLOGY IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH NOVEL

MARCOS C. P. SOARES

The Italian and the syntax of suspense

Halfway through Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian,* a Gothic "best-seller" in the eighteenth century, Schedoni, the villain/hero of the novel, listens to a story — one of the book's many inset narratives. He gets increasingly anxious as the "story-teller" "waffles" his way through the narrative, gets carried away by an endless number of unimportant details, never seems to get to the end and ignores Schedoni when he pleads with him to hurry. Both Schedoni and the reader, the former duplicating the latter as the recipient of a narrative, are kept in suspense about the outcome of the story. This "suspense technique," which stretches the narrative and gives it maximum impact, keeping the listener/reader entranced by delaying the answer to the "questions" raised by the plot, repeats itself in *The Italian* and turns it into what in the "best-seller world" is known as a "page-turner." Therefore, it seems that an analysis of Radcliffe's narrative techniques in this book would necessarily entail an analysis of the "suspense syntax" employed there.

Like in Freud's "Uncanny," in *The Italian* we constantly find ourselves walking past the same places, the same ruins and streets, the same endless corridors which multiply themselves, and repeated situations which mirror one another. In a novel where story telling plays an important role, the stories told recount in distorted form some of the themes in the main body of the narrative in "obsessive repetition of scenes,"[1] weaving an "uncanny re-presentation of the novel's plot."[2]

The first scene in the book, a sort of prologue to the main narrative, sets the mood of the novel and introduces some of its main themes: a party of English tourists visit an Italian church. One of them, the "Englishman," is curious about the fugitive figure of a dark, veiled man who hides behind the confessional. He learns that the man is a criminal who is hiding from justice and, even worse, that he cannot be seized upon while he remains in the domains of the church. Horrified, but at the same time trying to make sense of the situation, the "Englishman" receives a manuscript — a written account of the criminal's confession to a priest — which explains the mystery: this manuscript is the novel we are about to start. The "Englishman" is here an identification point for the reader: as a type of inquiring consciousness the "Englishman" wanders about in this space which, although dependant on the outside world, has its own laws, and tries to make sense of what he sees. The criminal, banished from society just like a forbidden desire is repressed and sent to the unconscious, is here a "promise" of a narrative that will unfold. Here, however, he is still not more than a "promise:" the criminal sneaks into darkness and hides from view.

The second scene, which introduces two of the main characters, is, structurally speaking, a repetition of the first one.[3] We are again inside an Italian church and a man, Vivaldi, is attracted to the veiled figure of a woman whose face he cannot see. The woman here, whom the narrative structure links to the assassin of the first passage, represents the promise of a tale which "hides from the observer's/reader's view" and the challenge of a tale to

be interpreted and made sense of. The woman wears a veil which "bars" the male gaze but which, at the same time, draws his attention to her: the veil that hides also reveals so that veil and unveil become synonyms. This situation repeats itself throughout *The Italian:* someone observes a veiled or cloaked figure which tries to hide from view. This figure represents a mystery which is difficult to be unraveled because in many moments in the novel *things that cannot be seen are connected to a story that cannot be told.* When Vivaldi, for instance, is taken to the Inquisition he is carried along winding corridors, another of those "self-multiplying labyrinths," but before that he is blindfolded so that he cannot say what is happening. When he is finally questioned by the inquisitors they are all hidden in the shadows so that his impressions (and therefore the reader's, as it is from his point of view that we learn what is happening) are faltering and tentative.

The narratives inserted into the main plot reflect themes in the novel and gradually lead us into its secrets

When secrets are finally revealed, and not all of them are at the end of the story,[4] it is only through a tunnel of frames. As mentioned before, the narratives inserted into the main plot reflect themes in the novel and gradually lead us into its secrets. Let us go back, for instance, to the story told to Schedoni, which we mentioned at the beginning. He had tried to murder the novel's heroine, Ellena, but when about to do so, he finds out (or thinks he does) that the girl is in fact his daughter.[5] He dismisses Spalatro, whom he had hired to help him carry out his murderous job, and takes a guide with him towards Naples. Ellena follows them. The guide tells them two stories: the first when they stop to rest near the ruins of an ancient castle. It is the story of the old owner of the place, an evil "Barone" who was a tyrant to his family but dies in an earthquake, promoting the freedom of his daughter.

> "This place appears to have suffered from an earthquake, rather than from time," said Schedoni, "for the walls, though shattered, do not seem to have decayed, and much that has been strong lies in ruin, while what is comparatively slight remains uninjured; these are certainly symptoms of partial shocks of the earth. Do you know any thing of the history of this place, friend ?"
> "Yes, Signor," replied the guide
>
> .....
>
> "The falling of the old tower was enough for them," replied the guide; "the crash waked them directly, and they had time to get out of the new buildings, before the second and third shocks laid them also in ruins. They ran out into the woods for safety, and found it too, for they happened to take a different road from the earthquake. Not a soul suffered, except the Barone, and he deserved it well enough. O! I could tell things that I have heard of him! — "
> "What became of the rest of the family?" interrupted Schedoni.
> "Why, Signor, they were scattered here and there, and every where; and they none of them ever returned to the old spot. No! no! they had suffered enough there already, and might have suffered to this day, if the earthquake had not happened."
> "If it had not happened?" repeated Ellena.
> "Aye, Signora, for that put an end to the Barone. If those walls could but speak, they could tell strange things, for they have looked upon sad doings... "
> "Come on," said Schedoni, interrupting him; "keep pace with me. What idle dream are you relating now?" (p. 261-2).

This story indirectly alludes to the plot of the novel: Schedoni himself is a notorious Count, the Count di Bruno, a family tyrant who had murdered his brother and married his wife. We only learn this, however, near the end of the novel so that we only realize the full significance of the story told by the guide retrospectively. But nor is this a story that is easily told: before the guide finishes it they are interrupted a number of times so that we get the whole story in instalments. Halfway through the story the party arrives at a small town and is interrupted by the presentation of a play:

> The crowd, which was assembled round a stage on which some persons grotesquely dressed, were performing, now interrupting all farther progress, the travellers were compelled to stop at the foot of the platform. The people above were acting what seemed to have been intended for a tragedy, but what their strange gestures, uncouth recitation, and incongruous countenances, had transformed into a comedy. Schedoni, thus obliged to pause, withdrew his attention from the scene; Ellena consented to endure it, and the peasant, with gaping mouth and staring eyes, stood like a statue, yet not knowing whether he ought to laugh or cry, till suddenly

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turning round to the Confessor, whose horse was of necessity close to his, he seized his arm, and pointing to the stage, called out, "Look! Signor, see! Signor, what a scoundrel! what a villain! See! he has murdered his own daughter!"
At these terrible words, the indignation of Schedoni was done away by other emotions; he turned his eyes upon the stage, and perceived that the actors were performing the story of Virginia. It was at the moment when she was dying in the arms of her father, who was holding up the poniard, with which he had stabbed her. The feelings of Schedoni, at this instant, inflicted a punishment almost worthy of the crime he had meditated.
Ellena, struck with the action, and with the contrast which it seemed to offer to what she had believed to have been the late conduct of Schedoni towards herself, looked at him with most expressive tenderness, and as his glance met hers, she perceived, with surprize, the changing emotions of his soul, and the inexplicable character of his countenance (p. 274-5).

Again this play, as well as the other stories, re-present the basic plot in distorted ways: Schedoni had tried to murder Ellena, whom he thinks is his daughter.

The next narrative is the one the guide tells about Spalatro. Schedoni fears this story will unveil his connections with the ruffian so he both longs to hear it to confirm his suspicions, but at the same time is afraid of the outcome so that he keeps on alternatively interrupting the guide and pleading with him to go on. Schedoni, in listening to the end of this narrative claims, just like he had done before at the end of the first one, that the guide's story "resembles a delirious dream more than a reality" (p. 284). In that he is right. Not only do those narratives resemble a dream in the popular concept of the word but also in the Freudian sense: they are oblique, condensed and dislocated representations of the novel's plot. They are condensed representations in that they are short, incomplete, fragmented versions of a much richer original plot. The "story-teller" is often interrupted, so that the story is cut by gaps, and goes forth and back in time, inverting the story's chronology. At the same time, important elements of the original plot are "displaced," hidden, at least temporarily, by the focus given to the narrative. The story of the Barone, for instance, is really the narration of an earthquake, how it took place and its effects on the now derelict place. The real interest of the episode is "disguised" and finally revealed at the end, in passing, as a detail in the midst of a number of others: the earthquake gave the tyrant's daughter her freedom from their oppressive home. In the play the grotesque/tragic nature of Schedoni and Ellena's story gains a grotesque/ludicrous representation in a comic farce acted by ridiculous looking actors.

These stories half-hide and half-reveal the secrets of the plot by dropping hints in a very gradual way. To make the interpretation of the stories even more difficult Radcliffe casts a spell of doubt over them by having them told by servants very much modeled on the Shakespearean type of Fool so that one never knows whether to take them seriously or not. We never totally dismiss them as silly, however. After all, as is common in Shakespeare, is it not the Fool in, for instance, *King Lear,* who utters the greatest truths?

What is really important, however, is not just what the stories are trying to say, but the repetition itself which creates meaning because of their obsessive insistence. Freud's comments in "The Uncanny" about Hoffman's stories could be applied here as well: "In consequence one's grasp of the story as a whole suffers, though not the impression it makes."[6]

"Gothic suspense" is connected to the uncovering of the story and the repression which resists this uncovering

In the same text by Freud, repetitions are seen as signposts of repression and the "uncanny" is often associated with "something repressed which recurs" (p. 363). What secret does *The Italian* "repress?" Unraveling the secrets of the story means finding out about Schedoni's life and how events connected to him came about. He is said to have "thrown an impenetrable veil over his origin" (p. 34) and no one knows about his past life. This is his first symbolic crime against his family and the main secret of the novel, which ends up affecting every other character. Finding out about him, therefore, entails unraveling a story of violence against his family and above all against women: the wife he believes he has murdered/raped and the daughter to whom he tries to do the same. He remains mute throughout the story while the network created by other characters telling their stories — possibly unreliable, oblique, repetitive and obscure — let the

reader into the secret. Just like the criminal and the woman of the first two sequences, he embodies a story to be told and what the narrative "represses" is, in the last analysis, his story, a story that resists being told.

"Gothic suspense" then is connected to the uncovering of the story and the repression which resists this uncovering. This effect is achieved through a number of narrative techniques which provide answers to the questions raised by the plot — if at all — only in an oblique way, through repetitions, gaps and distortions of the events in the narrative, that is, through a tunnel of frames which reveal the story by opposing to its development. The very definition of the word "unheimlich" brings in itself this same contradiction: "on the one hand what is familiar and agreeable and, on the other, what is *concealed and kept out of sight* [...] everything is unheimlich that *ought to have remained hidden and secret but has come to light.*[7] It is curious to notice that two of the institutions which serve to introduce and reveal parts of the story, namely, the confessional at the beginning of the novel and the Inquisition towards the end, where a lot of secrets come to light during the questionings, are institutions whose purpose is to "force" stories out of their subjects: in the first case the difficulty lies in the fact that the story is accompanied by guilt, since it is a guilty secret, a "sin," which is revealed; in the second the institution has to resort to torture to "wrench" their stories out of their victims.

Another curious fact is that the main body of narrative in *The Italian* is not, funnily enough, an answer to the story in the prologue. The criminal we see there is not in the plot of the novel: like a dream, this text answers the Englishman's questions only by suggestion, analogy and substitution. *The Italian* tells the story of a criminal monk but the persons in the two narratives are not the same one, albeit similarities.

Faced with the "repression" posed by the narrative and the difficulty involved in unfolding the story the reader is seduced by the promise of revelation. To understand, however, how this suspense technique came to be, it would be important to think about what was revealed to the eighteenth-century reader by *The Italian*: in other words, how could this story, told the way it is, entice a group of woman readers (for they constituted the great majority of the Gothic audience) in the eighteenth century?

Women, Gothic and repression

The words "Gothic" and "repression" appear together elsewhere in a different context: Ellis, in her ideological reading of the Gothic, defines the Gothic novel as being made up by "a set of conventions to represent what is not supposed to exist" and "to speak of what in the polite world of middle-class culture cannot be spoken."[8] Her analysis of the bourgeois ideology at the end of the eighteenth century focuses on the fact that a lot of the rules created in the bourgeois home aimed at keeping women innocent of the "world outside," ignorant of the corruption, immorality and violence of the space outside the home, creating different spheres of action for men and women. Due to the specialization of labour taking place in the bourgeois home, the life of women tended to be an idle one. To justify itself as a class of higher moral values in the face of the decaying nobility and the working classes, the bourgeoisie, a social class whose claim to superiority lies on its abhorrence of idleness, had to ward off the feminine image created in the Restoration, that of women who are easy preys to sexual temptation and idleness. Therefore, a redefinition of womanhood is called forth, creating a pure female ideal, a virtuous being who is responsible for the moral righteousness and purification of the home. In this the novel of sensibility, especially the Richardsonian, plays an important role: In *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* as the name itself says the character is rewarded at the end for her moral qualities and in *Clarissa*, as Raymond Williams puts it, the integrity of the person is fanatically preserved.[9]

To justify itself as a class of higher moral values the bourgeoisie had to ward off the feminine image created in the Restoration

That accounts for the attempt to hide women from the violence of the outside world, making them "give up knowledge in return for safety."[10] The violence inside the home, however, never ceased to exist: the restrictions posed by this new ideal left for the woman a sphere of virtuous action which was very narrow, imprisoning them while

pretending to create a sphere of safety for them. What the Gothic female writer does is to propose a rupture in the patriarchal ideology by creating a female character who disobeys her parents, goes out into the world, is exposed to violence, and chooses knowledge over innocence, gaining the former without losing the latter. They pick Milton's model of Satan in the *Paradise Lost,* a figure who questions the laws of an enraged God, to talk about characters who somehow defy the concept of eternal peace and harmony in the home. The story of Schedoni, the horrid/pitiful character in *The Italian,* is the story of someone expelled from home because of some of the greatest "sins" that can be committed against bourgeois ideology: extravagance, dissipation and lack of hard work. Ellena, if we are to follow Ellis' thesis, defies the prevailing ideology by insisting that she has the right to choose whom she wants to marry.

In short, the Gothic novel can be seen as a way of resolving, in fiction terms, tensions in the world of the reader arising from the creation of different spheres for men and women, a way of bringing to the surface the repressed violence practised against women in that society, allowing them — in fiction — to acquire a "Blakean" vision of "experience" as a pre-condition for being allowed into the earthly paradise at the end of the novel, the newly established home where hero and heroine live "happily ever after." *The Italian* deals with some of those issues: a story of violence against women is "repressed" by the narrative and the suspense structure symbolically expresses the difficulty in bringing it out into the open. However, the story has to be unfolded if the heroine is to achieve happiness at the end.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that *The Italian* presents a rather problematic view of this process. First, we have a right to ask to what extent Gothic fiction really challenges patriarchal ideology. Ellis' remark that Gothic fiction is subversive because it gives expression to the freedom of the heroine to choose her husband in defiance of her father strikes me as curious: after all, if the heroine is given choice, it is the choice to decide with whom she is going to form a new home, but the ultimate basis of bourgeois ideology, that is, the very existence of this home, is never ultimately challenged. Furthermore, if we look at the novel from Ellena's point of view, we will notice that a lot of the "knowledge" that the narrative reveals are never imparted to Ellena: in fact she remains ignorant of many of the facts concerning the story and is told only what Vivaldi thinks best to tell. Are we to believe then that *The Italian* expresses a conservative view of the eighteenth-century womanhood issue?

Trauma and social suppression

Masse points out that in her study of the Gothic[11] that in Freudian psychoanalytical theory one of the functions of dreams is to develop "the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis."[12] Trauma, therefore, is associated with the omission of anxiety. This fits in with our interpretation of some passages in *The Italian:* they are "uncannily" structured like a dream and for that reason develop an anxious feeling linked to suspense, therefore actualizing a traumatic experience. According to Ellis, the subversive quality of this narrative is that what it represses for the eighteenth-century woman reader is a story of violence against her, a violence which the bourgeois tries to counter for ideological reasons. As Masse puts it:

> Freud's early *Studies on Hysteria* [...] offers intriguing comments on links between hysteria and trauma, the construction of trauma over time, and its link to social suppression. [...] Michael Balint's discussion in *The Basic Fault* clarifies the importance of this idea: "The trauma itself, of course, is not necessarily a single event; on the contrary, usually it amounts to a situation of some duration caused by a painful misunderstanding — lack of "fit" — between the individual and the environment (p. 15).

Consequently, the psychoanalytical and ideological readings of the Gothic novel can be seen as meeting at a certain point. Ellis and Messe, however, would probably disagree on at least one important point: whereas the first sees the end of the novel as an entrance into an earthly paradise, as an ultimate goal to which the heroine aspires, Messe takes a rather different view of the same phenomenon. As the heroine re-enters the world of patriarchal ideology, the cause of the trauma remains unchanged: "suppression of identity exists not only in the past but also in the present and in the implied future of the narrative" (p. 15). For that reason, "the heroine [...]

will always reawaken to the still-present actuality of her trauma, because the gender expectations that deny her identity are woven into the very fabric of her culture, which perpetuates her trauma while denying its existence" (p. 15). Therefore, the assurance implied at the end of the traditional Gothic novel that danger no longer exists is false: the heroine is again invited to repeat the suppression of identity which triggered the trauma in the first place. This reading of the Gothic sees it not as a subversion of domestic ideology, but rather as a reinforcement of repressive laws. The Gothic heroine believes in the promise of an ever happy life in her new home but from the beginning of the novel is surrounded by examples of existing bourgeois families which repress the feminine identity. If we think about *The Italian,* we see that the inset narratives we have discussed (the Count and the play in which the father murders the daughter) are examples of broken bourgeois homes. The heroine's problems stem from the fact that she is haunted by the discrepancy she sees between her ideals and reality. The prisons in which she is often taken to and secluded in are symbolic representations of the endless repression she falls victim to. So are the labyrinthine, never ending corridors and vaults in *The Italian*. Danger seems to be lurking everywhere because, as Messe puts it, it is "woven in the fabric of her culture." In fact, almost everything in *The Italian* can be read under this light, including the very object of this paper, the suspense technique which can be seen as fruit of the struggle between the willingness to be free and the constant, repeated reminders of the impossibility of doing so.

In *The Italian*, however, the feminine character seems to be unaware of what is happening most of the time. It seems to me though that if Ellena does not acquire as much knowledge as expected, another feminine representative does: the female reader.

The role of the female reader

The Italian begins by introducing the implicit figure of a reader: an Englishman reads a manuscript. Wolstenholme claims, however, that the novel's frequent allusions to the Elizabethan theatre, especially Shakespeare's, also gives its readers the role of spectators.[13] There clear allusions to Shakespeare throughout the novel, not only in the epigraphs, but in the constructions of scenes and characters (the play with a murderous plot inside the narrative, like *Hamlet;* the servants who remind one of the Shakespearean Fools, etc). In fact, as Wolstenholme points out many of the "scenes" in it are "staged" like theatre scenes so that there is always someone "performing" while someone else is watching. From the very first scenes, gazes are "gendered" (p. 18-25). The gaze that observes and interprets is usually male, be it the Englishman's or Vivaldi's. The female gaze, on the other hand, is generally assigned a passive role: the woman is the object of the gaze and, therefore, object of desire. Ellena's veiled figure in the second scene does not offer itself freely to the interpreting gaze and, therefore (the promise of a story to be uncovered that it is), engages the male gaze in a more powerful way at the same time that it opposes the smooth development of the narrative. The female body, therefore, finds itself at a crossroads, promoting and opposing to the narrative at the same time.

The female gaze is assigned a passive role: the woman is the objetct of the gaze and, therefore, object of desire

One of the most obviously Shakespeare-inspired scenes in the novel, a "Romeo-and-Juliet balcony scene" involving Vivaldi and Ellena is a good example of how the gendering of the gaze takes place. Vivaldi sneaks into the grounds of the house where his beloved lives. On approaching the window of her bedroom he hears Ellena sighing and whispering his name while playing the lute. He watches her "performance" while she goes on thinking herself unobserved. Vivaldi finally cannot hold himself back any longer and steps forward. The division, however, between "stage" and "audience" is strict and Ellena retreats, closing the window. In the following chapter roles are reversed: Vivaldi approaches the window and serenades to Ellena, who refuses to watch him and walks into the house, therefore refusing the role of "gazer." Hers is to remain the passive role.

There are moments, however, in which she is the observer. In those moments she is usually unable to make sense of what she sees. When the play inside the novel is

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being staged it is through Schedoni's reaction that we realize the horror caused by the performance. Ellena remains unaware of what is happening. Hers is a gaze that cannot "read:" she notices a change in Schedoni's facial expression but cannot account for it.

What is the position of the female reader in the face of all this? If the reader wants to enter the novel with an enquiring mind so as to interpret what she sees she may have to use the male gaze to "read" the novel. The eighteenth-century woman, however, could choose to identify with the feminine gaze, Ellena's: after all, they share similar positions in the society they live. In traditional Gothic novels time is dislocated to the Middle Ages, keeping the author at a certain distance and giving her some scope to make social comments without referring directly to present conditions. In *The Italian*, however, Radcliffe does not allow herself this distance: the story takes place in 1764 and although the scenery is Italian Ellena and Vivaldi are very English in outlook. However, if the reader decides to view events from Ellena's point of view, her situation is even more complicated. There is a gap between the enquiring gaze of the reader and the passive role played by Ellena. Because the latter cannot formulate hypothesis about what is happening to her and how the patriarchal ideology around her is working against her interests, the interpretative effort falls totally on the reader. The female reader, therefore, has to "fill in the gaps" left by Ellena by considering what is happening from a feminine point of view, by searching for explanations which she cannot offer.

Radcliffe uses a number of stratagems to engage the reader in this interpretative effort. At the most basic level, the reader is asked to step in and construct unformulated parts of the text, that is, fill in gaps created in the novel where, just like in the many of its descriptions, things are "more terrific than the pencil could describe, or language express." Or when small gestures, facial expressions, or smile are described as "ineffable."[14]

There are, however, other larger "gaps" the reader has to complete. As mentioned before the situation in the prologue raises certain expectations in the reader, expectations which the novel then proceeds to address only obliquely. Therefore, the reader is impelled to "re-adjust" her analytical focus, by matching the oblique representations offered by the novel with questions raised by the plot. This "difficulty" presented by the prologue prepares the reader for the rest of the novel: every new inset narrative has to be "decoded" and matched with its correspondent event in the plot. Moreover, some explanations offered by the story, like the account of the relationship between Ellena and Schedoni, have to be re-corrected as the story unfolds so that every new clue makes the reader go back to what has come before and reassess it. In other words, the reader has to move to and fro all the time, re-correcting impressions and changing judgements as she goes along. She has to "sift evidence," "sieve" information, decide what pieces should be neglected, which ought to go together and in what order as if she was putting a puzzle together. It is by making this effort, by engaging herself in the fullest possible way so as to unravel the maze proposed by the novel, that the female reader can reflect about what she reads and, therefore, it is she that attains knowledge. The anxiety that accompanies the process is in a way a result of the struggle to solve the mystery proposed and, in doing this, face signs of repressive forces.

Radcliffe calls her novel a "romance," a genre for carefree and careless amusement, pernicious in that it deviates women from their duties

Whether the eighteenth-century reader was conscious of that is, of course, debatable and it is to be expected that the happy ending comes as a relief after so much suffering. One thing, though, is certain: the reader is aware of the main secrets of the plot whereas Ellena is not. She does not learn that Schedoni had planned to kill her, nor does she find out that her own father had been murdered by him. The reader, however, does and is, therefore, fully aware of the consequences of what she has read. More than Ellena, it is the female reader that is exposed to the violence of the novel. Or rather, more than being exposed passively, by engaging herself in the unfolding of the story, she is actively involved in unveiling the truth, in bringing this repressed violence into the open. And just as the whole of the narrative is not an answer to the questions of the Englishman in the prologue, so the last part of the novel

with its artificially contrived happy ending is not an answer to the feminine plight in the eighteenth century.

In fact, what Radcliffe is doing here is to establish a dialogue with the tradition of the eighteenth-century English novel by both invoking and refuting some of its achievements. If the didactic function of the novels by Richardson and Fielding is made explicit in their prefaces, Radcliffe takes a different direction: she abolishes the use of the preface and calls her novel a "romance," a genre even in more disrepute than the novel, a genre for carefree and careless amusement, pernicious in that it deviates women from their duties. Unlike Fielding and Sterne, just to mention two of the so-called fathers of the English novel, who address their readers to ask for their participation, Radcliffe never breaks the illusion of the fantasy of her fictional world. No obvious didactic function is summoned. It seems to me, however, that Radcliffe, by engaging her reader the way she does, is fulfilling a "didactic" role: she is taking advantage of the "shapelessness," the "lack of formal frontiers" of the new genre, and by tackling formal elements is "teaching" her reader to read in a different way. It is in this way that she "engages" her readers. This is her choice, conscious or not, of how to express her views on women and ideology. We are not in the realm of obviously "pro-feminist" writing along the lines of Mary Wolstonecraft. Within the boundaries posed by the conventions of both romance and the realistic novel, Radcliffe both gives expression to and refutes patriarchal ideology. Hers is a world in which the formation of a new home towards the end of the novel is still, however contrived, possible. In the nineteenth century other feminine writers will walk a step forward: in novels such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, one of the themes taken up is the very impossibility of returning to the illusory peace of the household domain. Somehow, by studying Radcliffe's novels we are attempting to recover the links that enable works of the canon of English literature, by writers possibly greater than she was, to exist.

NOTES

[1]WOLSTENHOLME, Susan. Woman as Gothic Vision. In: *Gothic (Re)Visions*. New York, State University of New York Press, 1993, p. 18.

[2]Id., ibid., p. 20.

[3]Id., ibid., p. 18-25.

[4]The death of Ellena's aunt, Signora Bianchi, is one example. Vivaldi suspects she has been poisoned so as to allow Ellena to be kidnapped. The question is taken up again at the end of the novel but never given a conclusive answer. Those "unrevealed" bits of information, as this paper aims to show, "reveals" a lot about the narrative techniques employed in *The Italian*.

[5]In fact, she is not. The explanations given to account for the filial relationship between the two "clarify" hazy bits of the story. Later, when we find out that the explanations were misleading, we have to go back and re-view the story under a different light.

[6]FREUD, Sigmund. The Uncanny. In: *The Pelican Freud Library*, v. 14: *Art and Literature*, p. 356.

[7]FREUD, op. cit., p. 345 (italics added).

[8]ELLIS, Kate Ferguson. *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology*. Chicago, The University of Illinois Press, 1989, p. 7.

[9]WILLIAMS, Raymond. A ética do melhoramento. In: ---. *O campo e a cidade*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1990, p. 94 (my translation).

[10]ELLIS, *The Contested Castle...*, cit., p. 11.

[11]MASSE, Michelle A. *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism and the Gothic*. London, Cornell University Press, 1992.

[12]Quoted by Masse from Freud's *Beyond the Principle of Pleasure*.

[13]WOLSTENHOLME, Woman as Gothic Vision, cit.

[14]Ellena's smiles are often described as "ineffable" (p. 39 and p. 131).

Marcos C. P. Soares é mestrando na área de LILINA-USP.

THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF WOMAN

and their contribution to the deconstruction of the eighteenth-century ideal of femininity

NEIDE SILVA

Considering that quite a lot has been said about its philosophical and autobiographical sources and references, this essay aims at inquiring into the techniques which tuned form to content in *The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria. A Fragment,* thus ascertaining this unfinished novel as a further step towards the deconstruction of the eighteenth-century paradigm of femininity.

If on the one hand Mrs. B.G. MacCarthy in her *Female Pen* blames Mary Wollstonecraft for merely taking advantage of the didactic power of fiction as well as resorting to it so as to "rid herself of the memories which preyed upon her,"[1] conversely Virginia Woolf posits that circumstances do have influence upon opinion as a matter of course and refers to William Godwin and Jane Austen as cases in point.

Viewing the Revolution as "an active agent in the novelist's blood"[2] as Virginia Woolf did, we come to the conclusion that the core of the problem consists of investigating how Mary Wollstonecraft transposed this revolutionary energy into style, thus creating more than a "thinly veiled autobiography," rather than accusing the novelist of having relied on her own life and age as the subject matter of her novel. After all, the very same Mrs. MacCarthy acknowledges the ambivalence inherent in Mary Wollstonecraft's works, "crude and confused outpourings" occasionally contrasting to

> a passage which shows the style which she might have achieved, had she lived long enough to find a mental outlook which would have permitted her to remember without agony, and to fight against social injustice without sacrificing artistic principles.[3]

Unfortunately, Mary Wollstonecraft's private life has frequently overshadowed her literary career

> and once again the connection between her life and her writing was used against a woman writer . Wollstonecraft was condemned because "she lived and acted, as she wrote and taught." Not surprisingly, then, her novel was not well received.[4]

Having said so, this paper intends to prove that the autobiographical data is but a basis for the creative process since, rather than a "fictional supplement" to the *Vindication, The Wrongs of Woman* seems to be a literary attempt, even if doctrinal, which takes into account that

> The generality of people cannot see or feel poetically, they want fancy, and therefore fly from solitude in search of sensible objects; but when an author lends them his eyes they can see as he saw and be amused by images they could not select, though lying before them.[5]

Paradoxical as it may apparently sound, in the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* the writer confesses her dislike for novels:

> Yes, when I exclaim against novels, I mean when contrasted with those works which exercise the understanding and regulate the imagination. [...] In fact, the female mind has been so totally neglected, that knowledge was only to be acquired from this muddy source, till from reading novels some women of superior talents learned to despise them.
> The best method, I believe, that can be adopted to correct a fondness for novels is to ridicule them: not indiscriminately, for then it would have little effect; but, if a judicious person, with some turn for humour, would read several to a young girl, and point out both by tones, and apt comparisons with pathetic incidents and heroic characters in history, how foolishly and ridiculously they caricatured human nature, just opinions might be substituted instead of romantic sentiments. (p. 202-3)

If Mary Wollstonecraft is "the judicious person, with some turn for humour", concerned with educating her readers to "see and feel poetically", it still remains to be proved how she manages (or not) to write a novel which

"exercises the understanding and regulates the imagination." In other words, by trying to strike a balance between romantic sentiments and just opinions, what are the means which enable her to do so?

Concerning the issue Mrs. MacCarthy raised about the reason why Mary Wollstonecraft might have attempted to become a novelist, we should perhaps pay heed to Maria, the central character in *The Wrongs of Woman*:

> Writing was then the only alternative, and she [Maria] wrote some *rhapsodies* descriptive of the *state of her mind*; but the events of her past life pressing on her, she resolved circumstantially to relate them, with the sentiments that *experience*, and *more matured reason*, would naturally suggest. They might perhaps *instruct her daughter*, and shield her from the misery, the tyranny, her mother knew not how to avoid.[6]

Interestingly enough, if we consult the dictionary to look up the meaning of rhapsodies, the "genre" so to say chosen by Maria, we are going to find that

> i. A rhapsody is a piece of music which is *irregular in form*, but very passionate and flowing.[7]

> ii. A dreamy piece of music written as if *made up as one plays it, not in any regular form*.[8]

The comparison of those definitions to that of the novel as a genre compels us to consider whether *The Wrongs of Woman*, similarly to a rhapsody, is also made up as it is written, or rather it is *per se* deprived of any regular form. Bearing in mind that the novel, the newly-born eighteenth-century genre, has remained "the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted"[9] it seems plausible to draw the conclusion that Mary Wollstonecraft was, as regards this aspect, in tune with both her age and subject matter. The writer admits that the genre in which she is trying to convey her ideas is still amorphous. However, she points out that there are creative forces underlying her novel which are experience and reason. Moreover, although her work also intends to instruct women, it focusses on a different kind of instruction. Rather than instructing to social conformity, it intends to shed light on the oppression women have to endure in the eighteenth century owing to the confining education they are entitled to. Therefore, when the writer "exclaims against novels", she is, in fact, criticizing the tradition which takes advantage of sentimental novels as a means of alienating women from society.

Mary Wollstonecraft openly admitted in the author's preface to *The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria. A Fragment* that her main object was

> the desire of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society. (p. 73)

No matter how crystal clear the relation between the novel and her treatise —*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* — may be, labelling the novel as a mere "fictional supplement to the *Vindication*" is rather debasing, to say the least. Granted that *The Wrongs of Woman* did not turn out to be a success amongst readers, it certainly enlarged the scope of the matter in question as the comparison of the excerpts below show:

> [...] but, addressing my sex in a firmer tone, I pay particular attention to *those in the middle class*, because they appear to be in the most natural state.
> *The education of the rich* tends to render them vain and helpless, and the unfolding mind is not strengthened by the practice of those duties which dignify the human character.[10]

> [...] to show the wrongs of *different classes of women*, equally oppressive, though, from the difference of education, necessarily various.[11]

Moreover, whereas in *The Wrongs of Woman* Mary Wollstonecraft sided with a heroine aware of her own sexual desires, which ultimately enabled her to summon up enough courage to contest her marriage vows, in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* reason supplanted sensibility to the detriment of sexual liberation as stated in *The Rise of the Woman Novelist.*[12] Though an apology for women's liberation, the *Vindication* condemned any idea of sexual fulfillment:

> In the choice of a husband, they should not be led astray by the qualities of a lover — for a lover the husband, even supposing him to be wise and virtuous, cannot long remain.
> Were women more rationally educated, could they take a more comprehensive view of things, they would be contented to love but once in their lives; and after marriage calmly let passion subside into friendship — into that tender intimacy,

which is the best refuge from care; yet is built on such pure, still affections, that idle jealousies would not be allowed to disturb the discharge of the sober duties of life, or to engross the thoughts that ought to be otherwise employed. This is a state in which many men live; but few, very few, women. And the difference may easily be accounted for, without recurring to a sexual character. Men, or whom we are told women were made, have too much occupied the thoughts of women; and this association has so entangled love with all their motives of action; and, to harp a little on an old string, having been solely employed either to prepare themselves to excite love, or actually putting their lessons in practice, they cannot live without love. But, when a sense of duty, or fear of shame, obliges them to restrain this pampered desire of pleasing beyond certain lengths, too far for delicacy, it is true, though far from criminality, they obstinately determine to love [...] and then acting the part which they foolishly exacted from their lovers, they become abject wooers and fond slaves. (p. 128-9)

Disregarded in *The Rights of Woman*, her former consideration of the importance of feeling and sexuality bloomed again in the last novel. Even though challenging artificial sensibility, Mary Wollstonecraft revealed a revolutionary view of sexuality in *The Wrongs of Woman*. Having denied that her adulteress, Maria, had committed any crime as well as criticizing not only the seducer and the social ostracism inflicted on the victim, but also the very definition of seduction, Mary Wollstonecraft confronted more acutely than most of her contemporaries the sexual mores of her generation, thus surpassing earlier novelists in the tradition of protest.

> She visited some ladies with whom she had formerly been intimate, but was refused admittance; and at the opera, or Ranelagh, they could not recollect her. Among these ladies there were some, not her most intimate acquaintance, who were generally supposed to avail themselves of the cloke of marriage, to conceal a mode of conduct, that would for ever have damned their fame, had they been innocent, seduced girls. These particularly stood aloof. *Had she remained with her husband, practising insincerity, and neglecting her child to manage an intrigue, she would still have been visited and respected. If, instead of openly living with her lover, she could have condescended to call into play a thousand arts, which, degrading her own mind, might have allowed the people who were not deceived, to pretend to be so, she would have been caressed and treated like an honourable woman.* "And Brutus is an honourable man!" said Mark-Antony with equal sincerity.[13]

The heroine's right to come to terms with her own sexuality is defended throughout the novel:

> When novelists or moralists praise as a virtue, a woman's coldness of constitution, and want of passion; *and make her yield to the ardour of her lover out of sheer compassion,* or to promote a frigid plan of future comfort, I am disgusted. They may be good women, in the ordinary acceptation of the phrase, and do no harm; but they appear to me not to have those "finely fashioned nerves," which render the senses exquisite. They may possess; but they want that fire of the imagination, which produces *active sensibility*, and *positive virtue. How does the woman deserve to be characterized, who marries one man, with a heart and imagination devoted to another? Is she not an object of pity or contempt, when thus sacrilegiously violating the purity of her own feelings? Nay, it is as indelicate, when she is indifferent, unless she be constitutionally insensible; then indeed it is a mere affair of barter; and I have nothing to do with the secrets of trade.* Yes; eagerly as I wish you to possess true rectitude of mind, and purity of affection, I must insist that a heartless conduct is the contrary of virtuous. (p. 153; my italics)

The Wrongs of Woman acknowledges female sexuality, called by Maria her "delicacy," as a supreme possession to be shared with the object of a woman's "lively preference," that is, the beloved man. Yielding to a man not worth it would mean self-denial and such was Maria's ordeal:

> He [George Venables] now seldom dined at home, and continually returned at a late hour, drunk, to bed. I retired to another apartment; I was glad, I own, to escape from his; *for personal intimacy without affection, seemed, to me the most degrading as well as the most painful state in which a woman of any taste, not to speak of the peculiar delicacy of fostered sensibility, could be placed.* (p. 146; my italics)

> My husband's renewed caresses then became hateful to me; his brutality was tolerable, compared to his distasteful fondness. Still, *compassion, and the fear of insulting his supposed feelings, by a want of sympathy, made me dissemble, and do violence to my delicacy. What a task!* (p. 152; my italics)

> After these remarks, I was ashamed to own, that I was pregnant. (p. 153)

Virtue — from Richardson onwards — had been literary embodied in the "corporal form" of a woman who, according to Maria,

> weak in reason, impotent in will, is required to moralize, sentimentalize herself to stone, and pine her life away, labouring to reform her embruted mate. (p. 154)

The Contested Castle[14] suggests the reading of Wollstonecraft's unfinished novel as "a gloss on the Gothic novels of her day, as well as a comment on the sentimental fiction" since the purity of feelings on which the novel insists encompasses a sexuality which arises from a "lively preference." Besides the defense of female sexuality, there is also the motif of imprisonment in the negative space of the asylum as well as the theme of female victimization, or rather, violence against women which was a taboo subject in the polite world of middle-class culture.

Although *The Wrongs of Woman* is not Gothic-like as it does not, for instance, present the child who rebels against a parent because of marriage choice and whose rebellion is vindicated, it definitely is about a daughter who rebels against the education she was subjected to which rendered her as well as any of her contemporaries, defenseless in the face of the power of imagination. In fact, Maria herself chose George Venables for husband, that is, she "imagined" he matched her ideal Pygmalion. However,

> Had my home been more comfortable, or my previous acquaintance more numerous, I should not probably have been so eager to open my heart to new affections.[15]

As Maria was supported by her uncle in her choice, the theory that women are fond of rakes because they are intrinsically and morally weaker is at stake. Her uncle, who had "received a liberal education" as he was "intended for the church" (p. 126), also made the same mistake. Therefore, it seems more adequate to consider that women, rather than being born inferior to men, were educated in a way so as to guarantee they would remain prisoners of the patriarchal society.

Before we proceed, let us have a look at an account of the plot as such provided by B.G. MacCarthy in her *Female Pen.* At the opening of the story we find Maria, though sane, confined in a private asylum by the cunning maneuvering of a rapacious husband whose target at marrying her was but money. As Jemima, one of the attendants, impressed Maria as a person who might help her to escape, the latter strives to convince the former of her sanity. Meanwhile Maria becomes interested in a fellow prisoner called Henry Darnford, and soon draws the conclusion that he, like herself, is the victim of an intrigue. He lends her books in which political theories are expounded. Through Jemima's help, he visits her, and tells her the story of his life.

Jemima's story is an accumulation of misery designed to show the injustices which an eighteenth-century woman might have endured. Jemima's parents were both servants in a rich house. After having seduced her mother and apart from a slight rebuke, the man was allowed to keep his position whereas the erring woman was dismissed in disgrace. Jemima is born at the expense of her mother's life. Her father marries, and Jemima is apprenticed to one of her step-mother's friends, who keeps a slop-shop in Wapping. There she endures the harshest treatment. At the age of sixteen, the unwilling victim of her master's brutality, she becomes pregnant and is thrown into the street by her jealous mistress. Nothing remains but the life of the streets, which she describes with a grim ferocity. She finally becomes the mistress of a literary man, who introduces her to the realm of reasoning. When he dies, she is friendless again. Want of a character prevents her from getting domestic employment, and she cannot sew well enough to support herself by needlework. While washing for a few families she hurts her leg, suffers from the wretchedness of the hospital system, and is dismissed scarcely able to stand and with nowhere to go. She is refused a piece of bread by a householder who bids her go to the workhouse. After some time there, she is offered the position of attendant in an asylum, which she accepts, despite the cruelties she will have to take part in.

Then follows Maria's narrative, written for the future information of her infant daughter. Maria, who stands for Mary Wollstonecraft, provides the reader with a fully elaborated presentation of her youth, in which she had to put up with her father's and her elder brother's tyranny. She tells of the long months of watching by her mother's bed as well as of her brother's neglect of this mother who adored him. Maria marries George Venables to escape from a home made unbearable by the authority of her father's servant mistress. Venables turns out a drunken profligate. A benevolent uncle supplies Maria with money which her husband avidly seizes. Venables finally con-

vinces one of his friends to seduce his wife so that he may blackmail him later on. Maria makes up her mind at once and leaves her husband forever. At this juncture Maria's rich uncle dies, bequeathing all his money to Maria's little daughter and appointing Maria as guardian. Deprived of any hopes, her husband has her kidnapped and imprisoned in an asylum. He keeps the child, this being within his legal rights. While in the asylum Darnford becomes Maria's lover. They escape. Her husband sues Darnford for seduction. Darnford is obliged to depart from England on urgent business and Maria is left to fight the case alone, which she daring, though unsuccessfully, does. In court she vindicates women and states their grievances. The judge condemns her attitude, and the story breaks off at this point. A few notes indicate a possible end. Darnford deserts her. She hears that her child is dead and determines on suicide. Jemima enters with her child who has merely been hidden by the vengeful Venables, and Maria decides to live for her daughter's sake.

Mary Wollstonecraft in the tradition of Elizabeth Griffith and Charlotte Smith also resorted to a pure sentimental heroine (Maria) placing the seduced woman (Jemima) apparently in a marginal position. However, in *The Wrongs of Woman* the "hyena in petticoats" or "the philosophic serpent," as Walpole ironically labelled Mary Wollstonecraft, outwardly submitted to the paradigm so as to subvert it as the novel expanded.

There are, in fact, two heroines in *The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria. A Fragment*: Maria, confined in a madhouse by the husband who married her for money, and Jemima, who ended up as a wardress after a life of poverty, servitude and prostitution. The true feeling capable of promoting understanding and freedom for both Maria and Jemima is the friendship which grows between the two heroines. Instead of contrasting Maria, the unfallen heroine, to Jemima, the seduced woman, Wollstonecraft used one as the counterpoint of the other, thus fusing two women socially regarded as irreconcilably alien to one another — the former a pure woman, the latter a prostitute. Therefore, besides providing the heroine with the power of making decisions concerning her own sexual life, *The Wrongs of Woman* regards true feeling as a positive womanly quality and the hope for the future since it is the necessary instrument of female liberation.

In fact, *The Wrongs of Woman* presents the reader with a different hierarchy of characters. In its preface the writer criticizes the traditional dichotomy which allows heroes to be fallible beings whereas heroines are synonymous with infallibility:

> In many works of this species, the hero is allowed to be mortal, and to become wise and virtuous as well as happy, by a train of events and circumstances. The heroines, on the contrary, are to be born immaculate; and to act like goddesses of wisdom, just come forth highly finished Minervas from the head of Jove. (p. 73)

Undoubtedly, Pamela and Mr. B, the protagonists in *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, illustrate this argument exquisitely. Mary Wollstonecraft, on the other hand, created Jemima, a fallen heroine, who underwent a process of purification and changed her social role: from "an outcast of society" she strove to conquer the status of a respectable virtuous woman and helped Maria as well as herself to grow mature by pursuing "freedom."

As far as the theme of seduction is concerned, both Maria's and Jemima's stories, though indirectly in the former's case, are equally important. Jemima was stigmatized as an outcast from birth as her mother had been seduced by her father. To make matters worse, she was raped and eventually resorted to prostitution, but worst of all she persuaded her lover to turn his pregnant mistress out of the house driving the girl to suicide. However,

> Jemima's humanity had rather been benumbed than killed, by the keen frost she had to brave at her entrance into life; and appeal then to her feelings, on this tender point, surely would not be fruitless. (p. 120)

Jemima succeeded in rising like a phoenix from the ashes as she had had the chance of exercising her understanding, different from most women in the eighteenth-century, who were denied such a power as *The Rights of Woman* reveals. Having lived with the literary man for five years, Jemima "had acquired a taste for literature occasionally conversing with men of the first abilities of the age" (p. 113). No wonder Maria, at the very beginning, "felt convinced that she [Jemima] had an understanding above the common standard" (p. 78) as well as "sentiments and language superior to her station" (p. 111). It is now

clear why Maria's sufferings "touched her heart" (p. 79) and compelled her to help:

> but, when told that her child, only four months old, had been torn from her, even while she was discharging the tenderest maternal office, the woman awoke in a bosom long estranged from feminine emotions, and Jemima determined to alleviate all in her power, without hazarding the loss of her place, the sufferings of a wretched mother, apparently injured, and certainly unhappy. (p. 80)

Therefore, the assumptions of the seduction tale are reversed in *The Wrongs of Woman*. Feeling leads inexorably to ruin in the novel of seduction whereas in the unfinished novel true feeling impels the two women to struggle for emancipation of the patriarchal imprisonment. Having interwoven two stories — the heroic narrative of women's emancipation and the potentially tragic narrative of the socially sanctioned restraint of women — into one, Mary Wollstonecraft produces the narrative of emancipation which constitutes the frame and main story of the text:

> In it, women bond together to combat men's tyranny, transforming mutual sympathy into a redemptive sisterhood so committed that it occasionally leads to civil disobedience, and changing the declamation of sentimental self absorption into the rhetoric of radical social protest. In the process they undergo a metamorphosis from victims to victors.[16]

On the formal level, *The Wrongs of Woman* exposes the reader to the language of sensibility and romance elements. The terms Wollstonecraft uses to characterize Maria after she had gone through the ordeal of having lost her daughter present her as a woman of extraordinary feeling and understanding, a true character of sensibility:

> time had only given to her *countenance the character of her mind*. Revolving thought, and exercised *affections* had banished some of the playful graces of innocence, producing insensibly that *irregularity of features* which the struggles of the understanding to trace or govern the *strong emotions of the heart*, are wont to *imprint on the yielding mass*. Grief and care had mellowed, without obscuring, the bright tints of youth, and the thoughtfulness which resided on her brow did not take from the *feminine softness of her features*: nay, such was the *sensibility* which often mantled over it, that she frequently appeared, like a large proportion of her sex, only *born to feel*, and the activity of her well-proportioned, and even almost *voluptuous figure* inspired the idea of *strength of mind*, rather than of body. There was a *simplicity* sometimes indeed in her manner, which bordered on *infantine ingenuousness*, that led people of common discernment to underrate her talents, and smile at the flights of her *imagination*. But those who could not comprehend the *delicacy of her sentiments*, were attached by her *unfailing sympathy*, so that she was very *generally beloved* by characters of very different descriptions; still, she was *too much under the influence of an ardent imagination to adhere to common rules*. (p. 98-9; my italics)

On the content level, however, those aspects are cherished conditionally. While eighteenth-century constructs, feminine sensibility and romantic feelings as well as imagination exercised without understanding are negative aspects inasmuch as they perpetuate the female position of inferiority. *The Wrongs of Woman* criticizes the false sensibility women learn through their reading and which renders them unfit for life. This novel is a protest against a system which makes women self-centered, shatterbrained and ridiculously sentimental about odd things such as lap dogs. Though fragmentary as regards formal aspects, *The Wrongs of Woman* advises women of true sensibility to save that sensibility for its capacity to emancipate them rather than abandoning it. Such sensibility should, in fact, be made both a primary reason for and one of the tools of social change. Women should sympathize with each other, unite and protest in a sisterhood, otherwise they would remain oppressed beings.

If on the one hand the novelist attacks romance as the ideology of romantic love, on the other, she makes use of its paraphernalia as a device for enlarging the possibilities of the novel of purpose. The formerly neglected wild scenes and adventures are components of her last novel as Maria, the runaway, tries to escape from George Venables. After all, moderation and rational prospects are too ineffective weapons for women to struggle with in a patriarchy. Instead of having Gothic horrors acting implicitly as imaginative parallels for women's conditions, Mary Wollstonecraft conceives reality as different from the wild scenes of the Gothic imagination only in the sense that they are too pale a reflection of women's oppression in real life. Thus the novelist alludes to Gothic romance so as to give force to her feminist analysis of the realities of women's condition.

Having proclaimed openly that the horrors she describes are but a reflection of reality, Mary Wollstonecraft is also taking the women novelists' use of romance a step further:

"And as for the affections," added Maria, with a sigh [...] But pray go on, addressing Jemima, "though *your narrative gives rise to the most painful reflections on the present state of society.*" (p. 115; my italics)

Although imagination is not *per se* an enemy to women's happiness, the novel discusses its status in the lives of women since without the regulating power of understanding it can be very dangerous and blur the frontier between reality and fantasy. That is what happened to Maria, who was an easy prey to both imagination and romantic love when she got involved with George Venables and Henry Darnford as well.

Without any fixed design [...] he [George Venables] continued to single me out at the dance, press my hand at parting, and utter expressions of unmeaning passion, *to which I gave a meaning naturally suggested by the romantic turn of my thoughts.* His stay in the country was short; his manners did not entirely please me ; but, when he left us, the colouring of my picture became more vivid — *Whither did not my imagination lead me?* In short, I fancied myself in love — *in love with the disinterestedness, fortitude, generosity, dignity, and humanity, with which I had invested the hero I dubbed.* (p. 130; my italics)

It is true, that George was by no means so great a favourite of mine as during the first year of our acquaintance; still, as he often coincided in opinion with me, and echoed my sentiments; and having myself no other attachment, I heard with pleasure my uncle's proposals but thought more of obtaining my freedom, than of my lover. But, when George, seemingly anxious for my happiness, pressed me to quit my present painful situation, my heart swelled with gratitude — I knew not that my uncle had promised him five thousand pounds. Had this truly generous man mentioned his intention to me, [...] *The tenderness of my heart would not have heated my imagination with visions of the ineffable delight of happy love;* nor would the sweet duty of a mother have been so cruelly interrupted. (p. 138-9; my italics)

Given the few notes which indicate as a possible end Darnford deserting her, it is but natural to draw the conclusion that Maria exposed herself to the same mistake twice. Maria fell in love with Darnford by means of the written word as he lent her some books with marginal notes on them in the inner space of the asylum where

fancy, treacherous fancy, began to sketch a character, congenial with her own, from these shadowy outlines. — "Was he mad?" She re-perused the marginal notes, and they seemed the production of an animated, but not a disturbed imagination. (p. 86; my italics)

Having had to struggle incessantly with the vices of mankind, *Maria's imagination found repose in portraying the possible virtues the world might contain.*
Pygmalion formed an ivory maid, and longed for an informing soul. *She, on the contrary, combined all the qualities of a hero's mind, and fate presented a statue in which she might enshrine them.* (p. 99; my italics)

Maria now, *imagining* that she had found a being of celestial mould — was happy — nor was she deceived . — He was then plastic in her impassioned hand — and *reflected all the sentiments which animated and warmed her.* (p. 189; my italics)

However, their happiness lasted as long as they were enclosed in the asylum . When they were allowed in the outer space of society she was able to focus her lenses a bit better and realized that life was not exactly all roses:

With Darnford she did not taste uninterrupted felicity; *there was a volatility in his manner which often distressed her;* but love gladdened the scene; besides, he was the most tender, sympathizing creature in the world. *A fondness for the sex often gives an appearance of humanity to the behaviour of men, who have small pretensions to the reality; and they seem to love others, when they are only pursuing their own gratification.* (p. 192; my italics)

Mary Wollstonecraft proposes a reconstructed form of femininity which contrasts with the traditional eighteenth-century oppressive one since she is aware that the characteristics attributed to women are not natural but ideologically constructed through limited education and expectations. Vivien Jones in the introduction to *Women in the Eighteenth Century* points out that

According to her argument, to restrict women's social role to marriage is to restrict their minds, to force them into "over-exercised sensibility" rather than allowing them to exercise their reason. Her position is the opposite of the standard view according to which women's "softer" mental qualities were of a piece with their function as wives and mothers, evidence of their natural suitability for a domestic role. Wollstonecraft challenges two of the most basic elements in what I have identified as the dominant eighteenth-century ideology of femininity: the natural association between women and the private sphere, domesticity and leisure (labelled by Edmund Burke as "softer hours" in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, 1757) and the identification of women with feeling and sensibility rather than reason (Burke's "softer virtues").[17]

Granted that rather than defending a unified ego Mary Wollstonecraft accepted the existence of the "sujet en procès," in *The Wrongs of Woman: or, MARIA. A FRAGMENT* (emphasis mine) both Maria and Jemima are fractured selves who launch themselves into an enterprise towards learning and maturing in the public sphere of the world.

Not only did the novelist take as her theme "the collision between the female hero's evolving self and society's imposed identity," but she also "analysed and deconstructed restrictive aspects of the feminine role"[18].

Besides resorting to the seduction tale to subvert its assumptions, thus producing the narrative of emancipation, the novelist lets in a fractured self as a central character, a woman of both extraordinary feeling and understanding, the true character of sensibility who handles Darnford, "a being of celestial mould" as well as the narrative itself as "plastic in her impassioned hand." (p. 189) Feminine sensibility, romantic feelings as well as imagination are values which underlie the whole narrative although it is claimed at the same time that women should be utterly in charge of such aspects.

Altogether, Mary Wollstonecraft's work is innovative within the eighteenth-century context inasmuch as it made a point as early as 1798 of depicting, both on the content and formal levels, how femininity as a cultural construct guaranteed the maintenance of the patriarchal system, thus paving the way for twentieth-century women novelists, who approach the very same topic in a more varied and complex way via elaborated narrative designs.

As a matter of fact, the fragmentary style which at once resorts to and abjures romance elements reflects on the amorphous formal level — after all, is *The Wrongs of Woman* a philosophical treatise or the forerunner of the "novel of ideas"? — the proposed deconstruction of the eighteenth-century ideal of femininity, so central an aspect as regards the content level.

NOTES

[1]MacCarthy, B.G. *The Female Pen: Women Writers and Novelists 1621-1818*. Ireland, Cork University Press, 1994, p. 425.

[2]Woolf, Virginia. Mary Wollstonecraft. In: —. *Women and Writing*. USA, HBJ, 1980, p. 97-8.

[3]MacCarthy, *The Female Pen...*, cit., p. 425, 426, 429.

[4]Spencer, J. *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1993, p. 136.

[5]Wollstonecraft, M. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. London, David Campbell Publishers, 1992, p. 125.

[6]Wollstonecraft, M. *The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria. A Fragment* [1798]. In: Kelly, Gary (ed.). *Mary and The Wrongs of Woman*. Oxford, OUP, 1980, p. 82 (my italics).

[7]*Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*. England, Harper Collins Publishers, 1993, p. 1245 (my italics).

[8]*Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*. England, Longman, 1992, p. 1126 (my italics).

[9]Bakhtin, M.M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1986, p. 3.

[10]Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, cit., p. 3 (my italics).

[11]Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman...*, cit., p. 3 (my italics).

[12]Spencer, op. cit., p. 107-139.

[13]Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman...*, cit., p. 192 (my italics).

[14]Ellis, Kate Ferguson. *The Contested Castle: Gothic novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology*. Chicago, University of Illinois Press Urbana & Chicago, 1989, p. 94.

[15]Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman...*, cit., p. 129.

[16]Conger, Syndy McMillen. *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Language of Sensibility*. Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1994, p. 161.

[17]Jones, Vivien (ed.). *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*. London, Routledge, 1994, p. 5-6.

[18]Palmer, Paulina. *Contemporary Women's Fiction: Narrative Practice and Feminist Theory*. Great Britain, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989, p. 15.

Neide Silva é mestranda na área de LILINA-USP.

Children of the feminist revolution[1]

Susana Bornéo Funck

Motherhood and fatherhood, like other seemingly monolithic social roles, have fared differently in literature at different times. Though the relationship between parents and children has not been dramatically altered since the emergence of the nuclear family of industrialized societies, its use as a literary trope has had another fate.

While few of the male protagonists of modernist literature were fathers, or had their fatherhood foregrounded, in the fiction of the late 1950s and of the 1960s becoming a parent, assuming the responsibility for a child's well-being, was a sure narrative sign that the alienated hero had become humanized. Such is the case, for instance, of Bellow's Henderson (1959), Updike's Caldwell in *The Centaur* (1963), and Malamud's Yakov Bok in *The Fixer* (1966), who reenter society by exchanging existential angst for the father-child bond. We all know these plots well.

Conversely, in the traditional fiction of female development motherhood is usually a given. Taking Jane Eyre as a possibly paradigmatic figure, we have an orphaned child struggling for selfhood in a hostile world without the material support of a mother, but herself a wife and mother at the end. The alternative, or "unhappy," endings for the traditional female story are also well known: when no social identity can be achieved, death or madness ensue.

With the emergence in mid-twentieth century of a renewed feminist consciousness, the narrative paradigm begins to incorporate some changes. Like her "romantic" predecessor, the "liberated" protagonist is also motherless. But, unlike her feminine sister, the feminist heroine has had to kill her mother, figuratively of course, in a rejection of the traditional values motherhood stands for. Such is the case, for instance, of Plath's Esther Greenwood (1963), Atwood's Joan in *Lady Oracle* (1978), or still Marge Piercy's Jill in *Braided Lives* (1982). Orphaned by her own hands, the feminist protagonist sets out to forge new roles for herself. She becomes a writer, a painter, a political activist. She learns how to have abortions and, later, take the pill. That such protagonist remains childless comes as no surprise, given the emphasis placed by

early contemporary feminism on the refusal to reproduce the oppressive social conditions it seeks to expose.

Following Adrienne Rich's well-known distinction between motherhood as experience and as institution (*Of Woman Born*, 1976), we could say that the proto-feminist and feminist writers of the 50s, 60s and 70s ended up, more often than not, throwing out the baby with the bath water. It could be argued of course that, as Marge Piercy's Luciente explains in *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), giving up biological motherhood meant perhaps that we all, men and women alike, could become "mothers" (at that time most of us feminists thought that equality meant being the same).

As the recovery of a female cultural tradition begins to attract the attention of critics and writers alike, we witness another shift in the fictional paradigm

As the feminist project moves its focus from equality to difference in the mid-1970s, and as the recovery of a female cultural tradition begins to attract the attention of critics and writers alike, we witness another shift in the fictional paradigm. The spotlight falls no longer on the motherless and childless daughter of patriarchy, as propounded by Shulamith Firestone's "cybernetic socialism" (*The Dialectic of Sex*, 1970), but on the children of feminist mothers as inheritors of a new tradition, of a recovered or re-membered past.

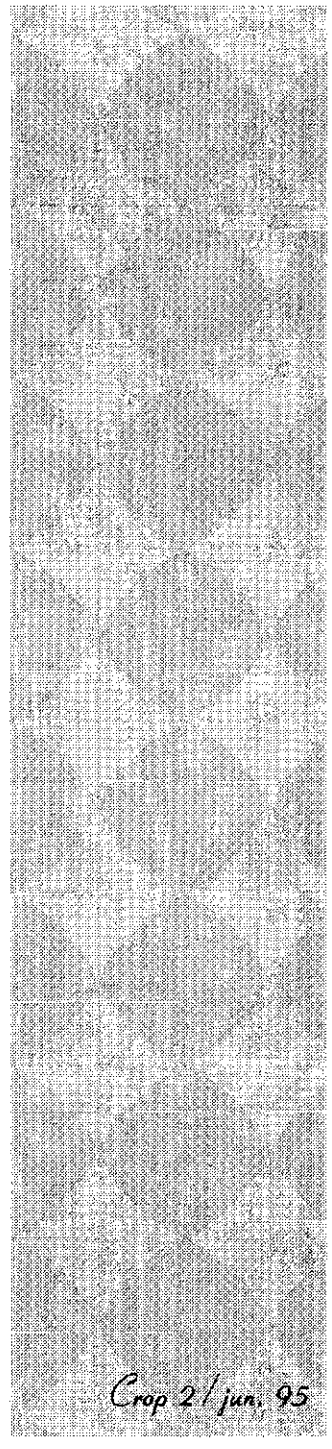
These are not gratuitous shifts. As Donna Haraway remarks in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991),[2] no story is innocent, not even scientific stories. "Meanings," she writes, "are produced in particular historical settings," and stories cannot be seen as "free of determination by historically specific social relations and daily practice" (p. 108). If we take feminism to be, as Haraway puts it, "a project for the reconstruction of public life and public meanings," as "a contest for public knowledge," we can agree that it can be also seen as "a search for new stories, and so for a language which names a new vision of possibilities and limits" (p. 82).

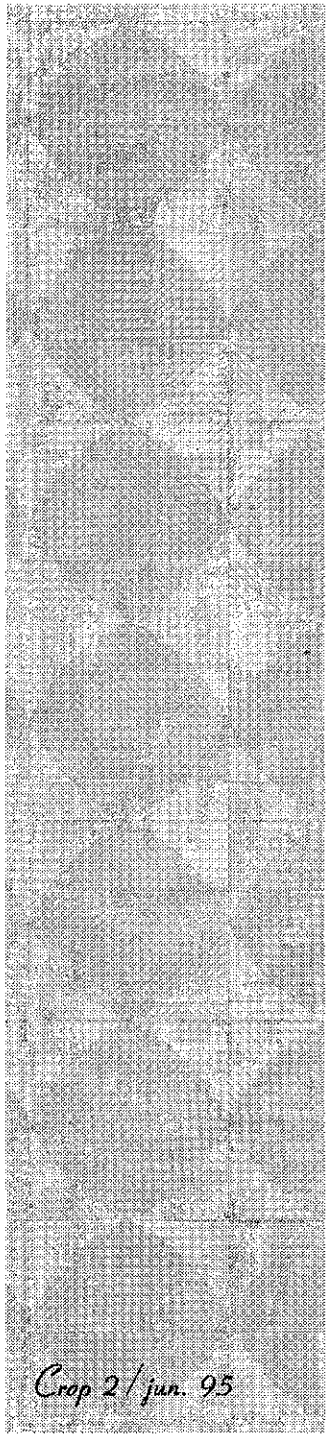
What I propose to investigate is what this new story, namely the focus on the child in contemporary feminist narrative, signals for feminism. My hypothesis is that this literary trope inaugurates a stronger connection between the remaking of the past and the imagining of the future, but that it marks a departure from the purely essentialist view of woman presented by much of the fiction of the 1960s and 1970s. In many ways it opens the way for what Haraway has termed "feminist cyborg stories" or "the hope for a monstrous world without gender" (p. 181). Or, if we prefer, for Judith Butler's idea that it is the exacerbation of the natural through performativity that reveals the "phantasmatic status" of the sex/gender system.[3]

As transitional works in the movement from the my-mother-myself syndrome towards cyborg politics, I would like to examine very briefly Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974) and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). Though more than a decade apart, both novels deal with the plight of special women — one a writer in the Canadian prairie, the other a slave in nineteenth-century United States — in the face of an oppressive society where issues of race, class and gender are foregrounded. Their daughters, respectively Pique and Denver, can only achieve identity and go their ways unencumbered by their mothers' problems after Morag and Sethe delve deep into their past and through the painful operation of memory come to terms with their demons and "piece it all back together."[4]

The daughters represent a synthesis of the contradictions experienced by their mothers, a sort of accommodation of opposites. Conceived in slavery, on "the bloody side of the Ohio River" (p. 31), born on the very banks of that dividing line, Denver is named after the white woman who helps her and her mother on their journey from death to life. Pique, the illegitimate child of mixed Scottish and Métis blood, could be seen to stand for the Canadian identity her mother struggles to establish and affirm. But, in spite of eliding some important cultural dualisms, these children are nevertheless female. Their newly acquired wholeness, obtained through the healing process their mothers undergo, only provisionally fulfills the regenerated self envisioned by Haraway:

> We have all been injured, profoundly. We require regeneration, not rebirth, and the possibilities for our reconstitution include the utopian dream for a monstrous world without gender.[5]





Pique and Denver are reborn, or only partially regenerated, for both are still, and essentially, women.

Perhaps one of the best early examples of the move from rebirth to regeneration that I am trying to grapple with can be found in the unnamed protagonist of Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972). Doubly colonized (politically as a Canadian and psychologically as a woman), her journey towards autonomy passes through a deconstruction of both masculine and feminine roles.

After a confrontation with the ghosts of both her father and her mother, and an understanding of their mythical legacy, Atwood's protagonist embarks on a shamanistic journey towards non-human being during which the border between culture and nature is crossed, and other dualities (past/future, death/life, silence/speech) are problematized as well. Realizing that she might be pregnant and that further withdrawal from society would be fatal, she returns from her pre-symbolic state, seeing her unborn child as a promise of change: "It might be the first one, the first true human; it must be born, allowed."[6]

As critic Maggie Humm remarks in *Border Traffic*,

> Atwood seems to be constructing alternative and oppositional stories about women beyond the androcentric formulae of time, the family romance and specularity.[7]

More than this, I believe, she has constructed a cyborg body, one which, though still of woman born, "is not innocent" and "does not seek unitary identity" so as to "generate antagonistic dualisms without end."[8]

A much more radical departure from the traditional logocentric story of parenthood can be found in Angela Carter's novel *The Passion of New Eve* (1977). In a fantastic, nightmarish westward journey from England to New York and, through an epic continental crossing, to a deserted cave "facing west from California's shore," a young man named Evelyn is metamorphosed into the new Eve. Historical and scientific myths of masculinity and femininity are manipulated by Carter to dramatize issues of racial, sexual and cultural power. In love with Tristessa, the beautiful ghost of Hollywoodian dreams; seduced by black and dissolute Leilah (Lilith); physically changed into a woman by Mother, a many-breasted fertility goddess, in the barrenness of the American desert, Evelyn/Eve remarks:

> I have not yet become a woman, though I possess a woman's shape. Not a woman, no; both more and less than a real woman. Now I am a being as mythic and monstrous as Mother herself.[9]

Such a monstrous self, demolishing as it does the traditional concepts of gender identity and boundaries, precludes any totalizing or essentializing view. It changes the rules of the game. As least of the literary game. Though absurd, or because absurd, this conception of self is potentially dangerous. As Haraway remarks, "Releasing the play of writing is deadly serious."[10]

A much more radical departure from the traditional logocentric story of parenthood can be found in *The Passion of New Eve*

Having learned to be a woman, first as a slave to Zero, then as a lover to Tristessa — the Hollywoodian emblem of femininity who turns out to be a transvestite — Eve finds herself pregnant. At the end of the narrative we encounter her in a cave by the Pacific shore of a California torn by civil war, where she undergoes a process of transformation very much similar to that of *Surfacing*. Atwood's protagonist rejects mirrors, clothes and cooked food in her return to pre-symbolic animality. Likewise, Eve feels that she must crawl and go naked as part of her ordeal. The mirror she finds propped against the wall of the cave in broken,

> cracked right across many times so it reflected nothing, was a bewilderment of splinters and I could not see myself nor any portion of myself in it (p. 181).

Without any sensation of the passing of time, Eve is swallowed by the cave into a primeval past, where she encounters intermediate beings, birds whose feathers turn into scales. Like Laurence's river which seems to run both ways, Eve feels that she is "inching [her] way towards the beginning and the end of time" (p. 185). After a brief encounter with Lilith, who offers her her former genitals back, Eve meets Mother — drunk and smelling of decay,

"an old woman with hair like a nest of petrified snakes, old enough to have been either man or woman," who advises her, "We are on the beach of elsewhere, Eva; commit yourself and your little passenger to the sea" (p. 190). And this she does, in the little boat which was to have been Mother's coffin. Past and future, life and death are again confused and interconnected.

This novel can, I believe, be read as a cyborg narrative, defined by Haraway as being "about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other." These tools, states Haraway,

> are often stories, retold stories, versions that reverse and displace the hierarchical dualisms of naturalized identities. In retelling origin stories, cyborg authors subvert the central myths of origin of Western culture.[11]

By enhancing and exploding gender polarities through the grotesque and the uncanny, Carter's narrative has a great destabilizing force. Eve's child, if indeed fathered by Tristessa as we are led to believe, will have two mothers and two fathers. Or either two mothers or two fathers. No doubt a new origin story.

Carter's and Atwood's protagonists are no longer the innocent victims of patriarchal power. They are survivors, multifaceted hybrid beings, revolutionary subjects, parents of a new "bastard race" which, "stripped of identity, [...] teaches about the power of the margins."[12] The possibility of change they embody — literally, for each carries a child — is not one simply of rebirth or remembering. Unlike the daughters in *The Diviners* and *Beloved*, who are freed from oppression through their mothers' coming to terms with the past, the unborn children in *Surfacing* and *The Passion of New Eve* are (re)generated outside the categories of what we understand as identity (social, sexual, and others) and relations of kinship. Moreover, especially in the case of Carter, the narrative enacts what Butler terms "a subversive repetition within signifying practices of gender" which confounds binarism and exposes "the performative status of the natural itself."[13] Such feminist stories have not only recovered the child, they have managed to engender it outside the oppressive constraints of a patriarchal social order.

NOTES

[1]Paper presented at the XVII SENAPULLI, Águas de Lindoia, SP, January 30-February 3, 1995.

[2]HARAWAY, Donna J. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York, Routledge, 1991, p. 108.

[3]BUTLER, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, Routledge, 1990, p. 147.

[4]MORRISON, Toni. *Beloved*. New York, Penguin, 1987, p. 22.

[5]HARAWAY, op. cit., p. 181.

[6]ATWOOD, Margaret. *Surfacing*. New York, Popular Library, 1972, p. 223.

[7]HUMM, Maggie. *Border Traffic: Strategies of Contemporary Women Writers*. Manchester, Manchester UP, 1991, p. 159.

[8]HARAWAY, op. cit., p. 180.

[9]CARTER, Angela. *The Passion of New Eve*. London, Virago, 1977, p. 83.

[10]HARAWAY, op. cit., p. 175.

[11]Id., ibid., p. 175.

[12]Id., ibid., p. 176.

[13]BUTLER, op. cit., p. 146.

Susana Bornéo Funck é docente da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

THE ANGLO-IRISH POST-COLONIAL IDENTITY

LAURA P. ZUNTINI DE IZARRA

Socio-historical, political and cultural facts are mainly responsible for fashioning a country's identity. In the present time, the static notion of identity is challenged due to the redrawing of geopolitical frontiers, the formation of new nations, the exaltation of new values or renewed old ones, the empowering of new authorities and ideologies... Consequently, the idea of identity is constantly making and remaking itself re-creating the illusion of self-defining as Escher's *Drawing Hands* deludes the observer as if it were a self-drawn picture (the painter's existence is forgotten). A man's or a nation's identity is, in my opinion, a continuous construction of the self under the pressure of a tangled hierarchy of ideologies. It is a process based on the re-reading of the past and on the collective political unconscious of the present, and it is manifested through the tension provoked by the interaction between the sacredness of tradition and its dynamic demystification.

In the past twenty-five years, Ireland has been the centre of the world's attention every time there has been an increase of violence in the guerrilla warfare commanded by the Irish Republican Army (IRA)against British sovereignty in Northern Ireland. As a matter of fact, Irishness has been misrepresented by the world-media as religious strife (Protestants *versus* Catholics) with violent political implications (Unionists *versus* Nationalists). However, there is a new Irish cultural force that, through its music, film industry, literature and criticism, has been gaining prominence in recent years and has started a cultural revolution which has helped to raise a new awareness of being Irish, whether in the North or South of the island. So, after the IRA's announcement of the end of their terrorist campaign on 31st August 1994 to negotiate an everlasting peace with the British government and the mediation of the Republic of Ireland, I believe that a re-evaluation of "Irishness" should be a cultural priority in the contemporary debate.

Irish writers have been rewriting Irish identity in many different ways trying to delete Irish stereotypes created by colonial discourse. Cairns and Richards, in their book *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*, say that we must be aware that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

> writing by Englishmen about Ireland and the Irish may not only have served to broaden English knowledge of the neighbouring island and its inhabitants, but also to define the qualities of "Englishness," by simultaneously defining "not-Englishness" or "otherness."[1]

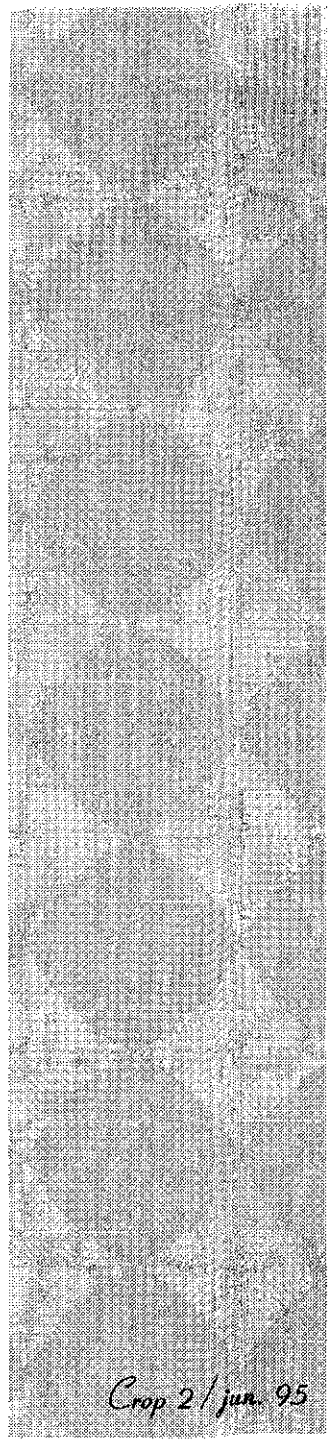
Colonial narratives represent "not-Englishness" through a distorted mirror as a way of "justifying" the imposition of the colonizer's superiority over the colonized. Thus, since that time, being Irish in the South and nationalist North has been a self-defining struggle against Britishness while for the Unionists it has been a self-defining struggle "within" Britishness.

This defensive discourse, manifested essentially in the seventeenth century when the Native Irish and Old English were pushed to the area of exclusion by the New English, also permeates the struggles for identity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many twentieth-century Irish writers, endowed with a post-colonial awareness, show in their revisionist re-readings of the past the problematic "process of subjectification."[2] John Banville's metafiction is a good example of it. In his first two novels, *Nightspawn* (1971) and *Birchwood* (1973),[3] he deconstructs fossilized Irish stereotypes of colonial discourse to portray the process of an illusionary self-fashioning new Anglo-Irish identity from an inclusive perspective. This paper focuses, then, on the disclosure of the different stages of the process: the ambivalence of the acceptance and refusal of the Other and the Self, the danger of hybridity, the notion of the constant formation of alternative identities.

Banville describes not only the writer's struggle with the historical past but also his struggle with language. In "A Talk" delivered at the University of Iowa City in 1980, he asks dramatically: "Could we have resisted the colonialism of the English language, even if we had successfully resisted the colonizers themselves?"[4] He struggles with himself when he rejoices being not an English writer but "a writer in English", and though he considers the colonization of Ireland a "Bad Thing," the phenomenon of Anglo-Irish literature is definitely a "Good Thing":

> The imposition of English, a pragmatic and rational tool, upon the grid of Irish speech rhythms, and, more important perhaps, upon the peculiarly oblique Irish sensibility, resulted in a language at once wonderfully expressive, and, so to speak, poetically imprecise. (p.14)

So, Irishness is also based upon this struggle between the colonizer's language and the Irish mind since the Irish language was destroyed by the Penal Laws of the eighteenth century. Banville declares that the Irish do not trust the words, they play with them in a subversive way. Thus, the fictional autobiographical form becomes his medium for subversion because it allows him to transit along the Derridian borderline "between the 'work' and the 'life,'"[5] — in this case, the work of the writer and the work and life of the fictional narrator, who is re-writing Banville's philosophemes though keeping them in occlusion. The political implications of the *autobiography* in a postcolonial context are evident if we associate it with those post-colonial cultures that still use the colonizers' language to



communicate. The aim is to be heard by the Other through a pseudo-private text, to self-define themselves against the other, to get the recognition of being different though still part of the system. In a way, they want to be identified by the colonizer from an inclusive and not an exclusive perspective. This argument has its origin in my reading of Derrida's concept of *otobiography*. According to him, the *autos*, the self as the subject of biography, acquires its meaning when the reader countersigns it. In this way the *autos* becomes *otos* because it is heard and interpreted by the other. So, an autobiography is not only a private writing but a public one, written to be read (or "heard") by the other without whom it would not have any meaning. However, there is another double function present in Banville's first two novels. Contrarily to the colonial discourse that emphasizes reality, the fictional autobiography plays the double role of masking reality with fiction and subverting it with metafiction. The latter turns reality into an extra-textual fact which is silenced by the narrator's memory in his arbitrary selection of past facts. This manipulation of the past questions "truth" and denounces its uncertainty. Said in *Culture and Imperialism*[6] says

Contrarily to the colonial discourse that emphasizes reality, the fictional autobiography plays the double role of masking reality with fiction and subverting it with metafiction

that to recall the past is one of the most common strategies to interpret the present but what provokes it is the uncertainty whether the past is already finished or it continues under different forms. Consequently, Banville rereads the social and cultural elements upon which the formation of a stereotyped identity was based and he turnsthem into extra-textual facts leaving "absences" in the text to be re-interpreted by the reader and associated with the new forms of the present.

He says that writing is a fight "with the insidious whisper of silence" and that silence is not a synonym of failure but of honesty. This concept could be related to what Bhabha calls the "articulated silences" of the narrative.[7] They show specific "lacks" that twist the various meanings of the text and displace the contradictions. In Banville's narrative the "articulated silences" are important inputs that articulate with the extra-textual facts in the continuous shaping of "Irishness."

Thus, self-fashioning is a problematic illusionary process trying to reach an image of totality (against "Englishness") if we consider it from a static perspective, or an image of change and plurality (a continuous interaction between past and present), when seen from a dynamic perspective. The first thing Banville questions in *Nightspawn* is the ambivalence of "Irishness:" the Other is always present in the Self. The narrator Ben White wants to assert his own nationality despite "Englishness" is stillpart of it. He is an Irishman, who was mistaken as English, fighting for a foreign cause in a Greek island:

> "Ah, English, are you?"
> "Yes, no, Irish"
> "Irish? Ah." (p. 64)

At first instance, the subconscious betrays him revealing his hidden desire to belong to a world-recognized dominant system. He carries the presence of the Other in his own self, essentially their language. Nevertheless, he denies "Englishness" because "Irishness" is the reassertion of alterity.

This passage echoes the paradox lived by people from Northern Ireland. The Unionists want to be called "English" though, when they are in England, they become aware of their Irishness. They suffer this "discrimination" of terminology and, what is worse, they live under suspicion within their own system, due to the IRA's terrorist attacks to British institutions. Meanwhile, they are treated as British in the political and economic discourses of the government.

Ben White embodies also the colonial stereotypes of treason and betrayal. He was untrustworthy and a traitor to the eyes of the foreign cause. But Banville subverts the theme in various dimensions: not only at the level of the story (in the form of a thriller), but also at the level of the relationship between the writer and the reader and at a metafictional level.

> *Nightspawn* is a kind of betrayal, of the reader's faith in the writer's good faith, and it is also a betrayal of, if you like, the novelist's guild and its secret signs and stratagems. It is an inside-out novel, it wears its skeleton and its nerves on the outside.[8]

Banville is a writer from the South and though he believes that an artist should not have any ties to a patron or political attachments, he deals with Irish stereotypes as a subversive element to disclose the influence of the political context in the illusionary process of self-fashioning. In *Birchwood*, Banville deconstructs stock characters of the "Big House" novel of the nineteenth century ("the overbearing father, long-suffering mother, sensitive son, and then also other strands, the quest, the lost child, the *doppelgänger*"[9]), and he deals with a political theme "without (his) knowing" (the Troubles in Northern Ireland).[10]

As the political unconscious is latent in Banville's creative writing I dare to relate his strategy to Bhabha's political discursive argument on colonial stereotypes. Bhabha argues for the reading of the colonial stereotype in terms of fetishism. For him fetishism as the disavowal of difference is the "fixation on an object that masks that difference and restores an original presence."[11] He gives the example of Fanon's title *Black Skin White Masks*

> where the disavowal of difference turns the colonial subject into a misfit — a grotesque mimicry or "doubling" that threatens to split the soul and whole, undifferentiated skin of the ego."[12]

For Bhabha, the stereotype as fetish gives access to an "identity" that struggles between the recognition of difference and the disavowal of it, the desire for originality and the threat of its annihilation provoked by the differences of race and culture.

Banville also uses the stereotype as fetish as a counter-discourse. The stereotypes mirror the other's discourse but, as the misfits acquire exaggerated and grotesque dimensions in the voice of the Self, they subvert to the referent disavowing difference and the Other's discourse and its distorted reflection. His stereotyped characters interact, therefore, in the reverse; they are tragic in their comicallity and acquire a political dimension in the process of defamiliarization.

In *Birchwood* the search for the Self is represented by the charicaturized search for the Other: the twin sister who never existed and turned to be a twin brother, fruit of an incest of the narrator's father with his sister, aunt Martha. Joseph Godkin, married to an Old English descendant (Beatrice Lawless), wanted his successor of Birchwood (the name of the "big house") to be "a *real* Godkin," of pure blood ascendancy. The decay and rise of the big house is re-read by Banville as a metaphor of the formation of a new "Anglo-Irish" identity. The names of the families are references to the stereotyped images of the colonial discourse. The Native Irish were seen by the dominant New English ideology as anarchic because they used to redefine their property by election every generation. This system of "tanistry" was condemned by the English because it was against the centralized European idea of inheritance and the name *Lawless* recalls this idea. The *Godkins*, "God's descendants," acquire a divine connotation, "the elected," against the Native Irish who refused to convert to Anglicanism and lost the right to keep their properties. Thus Anglo-centrism and the aggressive spirit of Protestantism provoked an identity crisis in the Old English who were also pushed towards the zone of exclusion because, according to the New English, they were contaminated by the natives. This tension of identities in the culture of plantations generated the birth of the Anglo-Irish identity, portrayed by Banville in its ambivalence and amalgam.

At first, Gabriel Godkin, the narrator, rejects the natives with "a mingled excitement and dread, and a sensation of controlled and unpleasant panic"(p. 54). But then, after experiencing the fantasy of the colonizer and the suffering of the natives when he wandered with Prospero's circus along the island, Gabriel refuses to be both, the usurped and the usurper (echo of Shakespeare's characterization of Prospero). He realizes that self-defining is an illusion that denies the search for external models and he looks for his own model within himself trying to understand his present through the *incommunicable* past. The writer's rejection of hybridity, the fusion of both cultures dominated by their respective stereotypes, is represented by the horror that the two blonde children of the circus, Justin and Juliette-Justinette, provokes on the narrator. They are "androgynous, identical, exquisite, [...] with their arms linked and their heads together" (p. 104). But he looked at the children with new eyes:

> They were an uncanny, disturbing couple. In spite of their difference in gender, which was minimal anyway, they were doubles in body and spirit, a beautiful two-headed monster, wicked, destructive, unfailingly gay. [...] I was afraid of them. (p. 119)

In the third part of the book ("Mercury"), Banville presents metaphorically an alternative to hybridity. As Mercury, the Greek god, Gabriel counterbalances the conflicting forces, the Other in his own Self, to reach the necessary equilibrium of an ambivalent Anglo-Irish nature in constant regeneration. Thus, Gabriel becomes the prophet who reveals the internal conflicts that provoke the changes to alternative identities influenced by the present context. Though he has no one answer and keeps silent echoing Wittgenstein's "whereof I cannot speak, thereof I must be silent," he points out the constant internal regeneration of one's identity. Drawing an analogy with mercury, the alchemist universal symbol which represents the regression to the undifferentiated state, the process of self-defining a new Anglo-Irish identity has tended to hybridism, but the continuous regeneration of the Self through the struggles with language dismisses a subjective fixity in the past and presents new alternatives of being Irish within a changing context. There is no escape from the past, but having nowhere else to be, Gabriel says in the end:

> Outside is destruction and decay. I do not speak the language of this wild country. I shall stay here, alone, and live a life different from any the house has ever known. Yes. (p. 174)

For Banville the only way of understanding the changing elements responsible for the formation of alternative identities is through writing. Though words fail to order facts or transfix them, the constant rewriting of the socio-political and cultural elements helps to understand new ideologies that resist the boundaries imposed by the dependency on the idea of defining what is Irish by what is British or non-British. As in Escher's picture, being Irish is a constant *re-drawing* and *re-writing* of an *incommunicable* past against an eternal present that struggles for the imposition of a true Irish mind over the *appropriation* of the foreign language.

NOTES

[1]CAIRNS, David & RICHARDS, Shaun. *Writing Ireland: olonialism, Nationalism and Culture*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988.

[2]Terminology used by BHABHA, Homi K. 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.

[3]Quotations of Banville's books are taken from the following editions: *Nightspawn*. Ireland, The Gallery Press, 1993; *Birchwood*. London, Paladin, Grafton Books, 1987.

[4]*Irish University Review*, v. 11, n. 1, p. 14, Spring 1981.

[5]DERRIDA, Jacques. *The Ear of the Other*. USA, Bison Book, 1988.

[6]SAID, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. London, Vintage, 1993.

[7]I owe this concept to my reading of Menezes de Souza's doctoral thesis "O rato que ruge: o discurso pós-colonial como suplemento" (São Paulo, PUC, 1992).

[8]IMHOF, Rüdiger. An Interview with John Banville. *Irish University Review*, v. 11, n. 1, p. 5-12, Spring 1981.

[9]Id., ibid.

[10]*Hot Press*, v. 18, n. 19, Oct.1994.

[11]BHABHA, op. cit., p. 161-2.

[12]Id., ibid.

Laura P. Zuntini de Izarra é doutoranda na área de LILINA-USP.

The Meaning of Darkness: A Reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

EDU TERUKI OTSUKA

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902)[1] is basically a tale told by a seaman, Marlow, which is inside another narrative made by an unnamed seaman, listener to Marlow's tale. The situation is quite clear: five men are aboard a ship anchored on the Thames. The circumstances impose upon them a moment of idleness ("we felt meditative, and fit for nothing but placid staring"), which makes the situation propitious for Marlow to tell one of his experiences. The narrative that soon starts constitutes the fundamental substance of the novel; however, the narrative of the unnamed seaman has also a great importance for the meaning of the novel, as I will try to argue.

The oral aspect of Marlow's narration is evident: signs of orality — colloquiality, hesitations, reticences — pervade it from beginning to end. The situation presented resembles that of the ancient narratives described by Walter Benjamin. According to the German thinker, one of the two basic groups of narrators was represented exactly by the seaman. And the main feature of the ancient narrative is that it comes from oral tradition, which links it to epic poetry. Epic narrative is born of experience (the narrator's own or that reported by others), and its function is the transmission of that experience to the listeners, that is to say, the transmission of knowledge.[2]

Although Marlow's story is a seaman's tale based on his own experience, and although it is told to actual listeners, having an oral aspect, his tale cannot be considered a genuine narrative in the Benjaminian sense. In fact, Marlow is a seaman, but, as the second narrator says, "Marlow was not typical," besides, his experiences are "inconclusive." This is so because Marlow lacks the fundamental quality of the epic narrator: the possession of knowledge. This explains what is meant when Marlow is considered to be an unreliable narrator[3]: it is not the case that Marlow wants to deceive the listeners or does not want to tell the truth; the fact is that he does not know the truth, which, paradoxically, he is trying to tell. And this brings Marlow closer to the condition of the novelist. As Benjamin says, the novelist is not in contact with the collective as the epic poet is — the novelist is the isolated individual, who cannot talk exemplarily about his preoccupations. Differently from epic literature, the novel is not linked to the oral tradition, nor carries it a knowledge that defines the destiny of a community — it is the announcement of a perplexity.[4] This perplexity is that of a man who lives in an age in which the totality of life is not given immediately, and yet he aspires to that unattainable totality. The condition of the hero of the novel, then, is that he is always involved in a quest.[5] And Marlow's situation is not much different from this. He tells his story in order to try to understand; he narrates, not to transmit knowledge, but to try to achieve it. This narrator, who is destitute of the authority provided by knowledge, and who is assaulted by perplexity in view of a disenchanted, fragmented world, tries to organize his memories in the narrative, which will be thus marked by uncertainty and contradiction.

There is, throughout the narrative, a large amount of sentences that express Marlow's uncertainty, imposing a certain degree of imprecision to the text: "I fancy I see it now, but I am not sure — not at all," "I remember it, but I can't explain," "Sometimes I ask myself whether I had ever really seen him," "I had no clear perception of what it was I really wanted [...] I don't know. I can't tell". And, in spite of this, Marlow tells, or tries to tell, that which he is not capable of telling clearly.

And this idea defines the paradox that characterizes the modern narrator, as Theodor Adorno has pointed out: it is impossible to narrate, yet the form of the novel requires narration.[6]

Heart of Darkness makes this paradox explicit in the confluence of tradition and modernity, which joins apparently antagonistic elements: the epic narrative and the novel. And this incorporates contradiction to the structure itself, not only of Marlow's tale, but also — and principally — of the novel as a whole. For the presence of the unnamed narrator functions as a counterpoint to what is told by Marlow, opposing and uniting the recalled past to the actual present, what is told by Marlow to what is seen (or not) by the listeners (and by the readers). In *Heart of Darkness*, the atmosphere of the ancient narrative and that of the novel are ambiguously linked. This is shown by the fact that although Marlow is speaking to actual listeners, they cannot see each other, so that, in a way, Marlow and his companions are separated and isolated as the novelist and the reader:

> He [Marlow] paused again as if reflecting, then added: "Of course in this you fellows see more than I could then. You see me, whom you know..." It had become so pitch dark that we listeners could hardly see one another. For a long time already he, sitting apart, had been no more than a voice.

Thus, the readers identify with the unidentified narrator, who, as James Clifford says, juxtaposes different truths.[7]

In fact, *Heart of Darkness* is a novel founded basically on dualities and oppositions. But, in general, the apparently opposed elements are linked, becoming one; and sometimes one element reveals to have an opposite characteristic within itself, just like a ship, which has its deck, and also its dark hull hidden under the water. Many elements in the novel are presented in pairs, establishing oppositions or not: the two narrators (Marlow and the unnamed seaman); the two women knitting black wool; the two characters referred to as "the nephew and the uncle;" the two continents (Europe and Africa) — which function as representations of civilization and barbarism —; the repetition in Kurtz's last words ("The horror! The horror!"); and, of course, the contrasts of light and darkness. I will concentrate only on those which are more meaningful for this tentative interpretation.

Heart of Darkness is a novel founded basically on dualities and oppositions

What is outstanding and pervades the novel as a whole are the contrasts of light and darkness, which, in Marlow's narration, is made clear in his descriptions of the forest:

> Beyond the fence the forest stood up spectrally in the moonlight, and through the dim stir, through the faint sounds of that lamentable courtyard, the silence of the land went home to one's very heart — its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life.

The contrasts surround the forest in an atmosphere of mystery, so that it becomes impenetrable:

> I assure you that never, never before, did this land, this river, this jungle, the very arch of this blazing sky, appear to me so hopeless and so dark, so impenetrable to human thought.

Actually, this idea of impenetrability is not restricted to the setting; it also includes all the events Marlow has passed through ("I don't know why we behaved like lunatics"). And this, together with Marlow's uncertainties, makes the narrative misty, full of vagueness and blurred images. Paradoxically, this is so exactly because he is trying to be precise. The description of confusion is not the same as a confused description: in fact, *Heart of Darkness* is extremely precise in representing the imprecision of life, for the lack of logicity of some passages of the novel (and the consequent feeling the reader has that no situation is perfectly clear) reinforces the modern idea that not everything can be known and

explained by traditional reason (as Cartesian rationalism intended), for reason cannot comprise the incoherence of life — and this gives another meaning to the sentence made famous by a Portuguese poet: "navegar é preciso, viver não é preciso," that is to say, while navigation is the art of technical precision, living is imprecise, indeterminate.[8] But in *Heart of Darkness* not even navigation is precise, because here it is related to the meeting of man with himself.

Heart of Darkness *is extremely precise in representing the imprecision of life*

The voyage towards the forest of Africa becomes Marlow's quest for Kurtz. Kurtz is moved by obscure impulses; just like the forest's, "his was an impenetrable darkness." And the entering the forest by Marlow is marked by the beating of drums, whose meaning cannot be understood:

> We penetrated deeper and deeper into the *Heart of Darkness*. It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day. Whether it meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell.

And the drums in the forest resembles the beating of a heart: "the beat of the drum, regular and muffled like the beating of a heart — the heart of a conquering darkness." Thus, Marlow's voyage towards the *Heart of Darkness* is also a voyage towards the darkness of the heart of men. Not only of Kurtz's (or other men's), but also of Marlow's own heart; he says: "and I remember I confounded the beat of the drum with the beating of my heart."

In fact, Marlow is identified with Kurtz in several aspects. In the beginning of the story, Marlow says, "what I wanted was a certain quantity of rivets — and rivets were what really Mr. Kurtz wanted;" Marlow resembled an idol, and Kurtz was adored as a god; just like Marlow, Kurtz was a voice only: Marlow says about Kurtz, "the man presented himself as a voice," and the second narrator says about Marlow, "he, sitting apart, had been no more to us than a voice;" besides, Marlow is Kurtz's successor: "all that had been Kurtz's had passed out to my hands." Thus, Marlow is equated to Kurtz in several ways, and if Kurtz has a dark side, Marlow, in facing Kurtz (and Kurtz's darkness), also recognizes his own hidden self, his own darkness, unknown to him until then.

Actually, Kurtz's image carries in it some contradictions. First, his name: *kurtz* means "short" in German, but "he looked at least seven feet long." Kurtz is praised for his capacity to discourse, which made the Russian "see things:" Marlow says that "of all his gifts the one that stood out preeminently [...] was his ability to talk," but when Marlow listens to Kurtz's words, he finds that "they were common everyday words — the familiar, vague sounds exchanged on every waking day of life," and yet Kurtz's words enchant. If Kurtz is a "universal genius," a highly civilized man (he is a painter, a poet, a musician), he is also at the same time a tyrannic leader, an absolute barbarian: "there was nothing on earth to prevent him killing whom he jolly well pleased." And, in spite of this, Kurtz is adored, considered to be "one of the immortals:" "there was nothing either above or below him," "you can't judge Mr. Kurtz as you would an ordinary man" — thus Kurtz possesses power and the ability of incantation through the use of words ("you don't talk with that man — you listen to him"), that is to say, he possesses the power of manipulating, according to his ideal.

As opposed to Europe, the land of civilization, Africa is seen as the land of barbarism

This ideal is that of the European civilizing project. In fact, Kurtz embodies the conquests and contradic-

tions of Western civilization: "All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz," "everything belonged to him." But *conquest* here refers to the positive achievements shown in Kurtz's abilities, as well as to the conquests of the imperialistic project in the exploitation of the colonies, which is summed up in Kurtz's exclamation: "Exterminate all the brutes!" This reveal the brutality of the project which is supposed to be a civilizing one. Marlow says, "the thing was to know what he [Kurtz] belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own." These "powers of darkness" are related to the idea of evil, which has a concrete manifestation in the cruelty of the inhuman methods used for the exploitation of the land by the Europeans in the name of civilized ideals. These methods impose a condition of degradation to the natives, who are seen as "ants," as "prehistoric men:"

> they were dying slowly - - - it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthily now — nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom.

As opposed to Europe, the land of civilization, Africa is seen as the land of barbarism; yet the barbaric actions are more clearly recognized in the civilized men than in the natives:

> The earth seemed unearthly [...] It was unearthly, and the men were — No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it — this suspicion of their not being inhuman.

Thus, the civilized is also brutal, and the savage is also human, so that civilization and barbarism are linked. More than this, the primitive, dark places of the earth are linked to the imperial city through the confluence of the two rivers which seem to be so distant one from the other. This confluence is suggested by the starting sentence of Marlow's narrative: "And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth." The ambiguity of the sentence occurs because Marlow's mind is in the Congo of his reminiscence, but, as we know from the second narrator, Marlow is in fact in Europe, more specifically, on the river of "the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth," that is, London — the capital of an Empire. Besides, in the end, after Marlow has finished telling his experience, the unnamed seaman looks at the Thames, which "seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness," so that darkness is there in the Congo as well as it is in London.

Actually, the contrasts in *Heart of Darkness* also reflect the problems and contradictions of the London of the turn of the century, which, according to Malcolm Bradbury, was "portrayed as a solid, even stolid, middle-class entity, marked by imperial confidence, expanding trade, and social stability;" but, in reality, it was

> a city of radical contrasts and complex mixtures of people, contrasts visual, social, and ideological [...] Beneath stability was fluidity, strangeness [...] It was a jungle and abyss as well as a civilization.[9]

And this fluidity and strangeness are presented in *Heart of Darkness* not only thematically, but also structurally.

More than simply showing a strange, monstrous world to represent the contrasts of London, *Heart of Darkness* announces the failure of the Western civilizing project. It denounces the injustice of imperialistic

The contrasts in Heart of Darkness *also reflect the problems and contradictions of the London of the turn of the century*

exploitation on which the European civilization's development was founded, showing that civilized ideals as well as cultural and economic development are not independent of barbarism and cruelty. Civilized society, with the butcher and the policeman, is not much different from the savage land in the jungle. Thus the novel exposes the failure of the project, represented in Kurtz's evil side, and in his illness and death.

Kurtz's last words reveal the despair of an agonizing man who faces the horror of death — the unknown, that which cannot be controlled; but, as Geoffrey Harpham says, "Conrad tends to repeat his keywords, cracking them open so their duplicity, or multiplicity, can shine forth;"[10] if this is so, the horror can be interpreted as his death, and at the same time as its opposite: his life. In the moments before death, Kurtz recognizes the horrors he has done in life, and becomes aware of his own evil side, summing up the reversal of idealism into savagery: "The horror! The horror!" But it seems that it is not the case that in his essence Kurtz — and Marlow, and society, and European civilization — is evil; Bruce Harkness has pointed out that "if Kurtz is entirely evil, he cannot judge himself as The Horror. Yet he does [...] Kurtz, being all evil, could not condemn himself,"[11] which means that Kurtz, and all men in general, have an evil side, not being completely evil.

Marlow says about Kurtz's final cry: "it was a victory! That's why I have remained loyal to Kurtz's to the last." Afterwards, Marlow, who has seen his own evil side (and Kurtz's and society's), returns to the "sepulchral city," and meets Kurtz's Intended. Harpham points out an interesting ambiguity:

> the form the conversation takes is that she says something ("He died as he lived"), then he makes a response that appears to be synonymous but is actually antonymous ("His end was in every way worthy of his life").[12]

But more interesting, and problematic, than this is the fact that Marlow refuses to tell Kurtz's last words to her. This is even more surprising if one recalls that Marlow says, in the beginning of the tale: "I hate, detest, and can't bear a lie [...] There is a taint of death, a flavour of mortality in lies." Yet Marlow lies to Kurtz's Intended, becoming a hypocrite: "The last word he pronounced was — your name." But if hypocrisy seems not to be the message of this novel, its meaning must be elsewhere. Here the presence of the listener — the second narrator — who juxtaposes lie with truth becomes highly significant. For there is a truth which is told, although Marlow has said, in the beginning, that it is impossible:

> It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream — making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensation [...] No, it is impossible; it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence — that which makes its truth, its meaning — its subtle and penetrating essence. It is impossible. We live, as we dream — alone...

And, in spite of this supposed impossibility, Marlow insists in telling his story. Of course, the fragmentation of the world in which he lives contaminates his narration with uncertainties and contradictions; and between the extremes — barbarism and civilization, death and life, darkness and light, lie and truth, past and present — the sentiment of solitariness emerges. But there is a desire of interlocution, for he has not ceased to aspire to the totality of life experience, which cannot be achieved immediately in the modern age. And the organization of his experiences through memory opens the possibility of understanding the meaning, which "is not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale," that is to say, the meaning (although circumstantial) is born dialogically in the relationship (although problematic) between the teller and the listener.[13] And the relationship of Marlow and the unnamed seaman opposes the lie to the Intended in the past to the truth to the listeners in the present — this truth is being communicated, and somehow integrates (although precariously) the fragmentation of life. And this truth is summed up in the last lines of the novel:

> The offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed sombre under an overcast sky — seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.

Thus, *Heart of Darkness*, with its confluence of tradition and modernity, and the dialectical interplay of contrasts, is successful and effective in the communication of its truth.

NOTES

[1]CONRAD, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. New York, Bantam, 1981.

[2]BENJAMIN, Walter. O narrador. In: —. *Obras escolhidas*. Trans. Sérgio Paulo Rouanet. São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1985. v. I: *Magia e técnica, arte e política*. [The Storyteller. In: —. *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York, Schoken Books, 1969.]

[3]Wayne C. Booth includes *Heart of Darkness* in his list of novels which have unreliable narrators. It seems that he refers to Marlow, and not to the second unnamed narrator, although Booth has not specified.

[4]BENJAMIN, O narrador, cit.

[5]LUKÁCS, Georg. *A teoria do romance*. Lisboa, Presença, s.d.

[6]ADORNO, Theodor W. La posición del narrador en la novela contemporánea. In: —. *Notas de literatura*. Barcelona, Ariel, 1962, p. 45.

[7]CLIFFORD, James. On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning, Conrad and Malinowski. In: HALLER, Thomas (ed.). *Reconstructing Individualism*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1986, p. 147.

[8]Olgária Matos has interpreted the sentence in this way in her essay "Desejo de evidência, desejo de vidência: Walter Benjamin" (In: NOVAES, Adauto (org.). *O desejo*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1990, p. 301).

[9]BRADBURY, Malcolm. London 1890-1920. In: BRADBURY, M. & MCFARLANE, J. (ed.). *Modernism*. London, Penguin Books, 1976, p. 179-80.

[10]HARPHAM, Geoffrey Galt. To Make You Sea: Conrad's Primal Words. In: —. *On the Grotesque*. Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 166.

[11]HARKNESS, Bruce. Conrad, Graham Greene, and Film. In: —. *Joseph Conrad, Theory and World Fiction*. Lubbock, Texas Tech University, 1974, p. 81. Actually, Harkness states that Kurtz *is* entirely evil; yet he raises this problem of the impossibility of self condemnation without solving it, he prefers to "allow this mistery," for his interpretation to make sense.

[12]HARPHAM, op. cit., p. 173.

[13]This idea is suggested by J. Clifford, although in a different context and for a different purpose (On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning..., cit., p. 146-7).

Edu Teruki Otsuka é aluno de graduação na área de LILINA-USP.

THE TEMPEST

AS A METAPHOR FOR CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN

JOHN MILTON

Lamming, Retamar, Césaire and Boal[1] have examined and adapted *The Tempest* to give it a specific Latin American content and context, with Caliban as a trope for Latin American independence from North American and European dominance in Lamming, Retamar, and Boal, and as a direct symbol of the victim of colonialism in Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête*. In this paper I switch continent and look at *The Tempest* as a metaphor for modern Britain, concentrating again on the Caliban metaphor.

My starting point is Terry Hawkes' now well-known essay "Playhouse-Workhouse,"[2] which was presented in Brazil at the 1987 SENAPULLI.[3] Indeed, Hawkes' visit helped change the course of Shakespearian studies in Brazil. Hawkes follows the line of Calibans in England, more specifically in Stratford-upon-Avon, from Shakespeare's time up to the early years of this century. The tithe-owner Shakespeare offered no resistance to land enclosure near Stratford, which would result in large numbers of peasants being thrown off the land and on to the city streets or to roam the countryside. Francis Barker's recent work has tried to describe in greater detail the lives of these depossessed, landless, masterless peasants.[4]

Hawkes moves to the early years of this century and finds the pattern repeated. The Prospero figure is now Salt Brassington, an official of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and its librarian, also author of *Picturesque Warwickshire*.[5] Like Prospero, he also has a magic touch as he writes:

> The little town of Stratford-upon-Avon, built on the river banks, and surrounded on all sides by meadows and green fields, like a coral island, set in an emerald sea, is one of the pleasantest places of the earth.

This idealised pastoral Stratford, still present in today's tourist brochures, is undermined by the presence of the Calibans of Stratford of the early years of the century, possibly the descendants of those who suffered from the enclosures 300 years before.

For these citizens of Stratford, one of whom is Cal Cook, life is far from pastoral, and is centred around the difficulty of getting adequate food, shelter and money, and managing to stay out of the workhouse, not the playhouse.

The Prospero-Caliban relationship reappears when Salt Brassington, as landlord, is responsible for sending his tenants who can't afford to pay the rent to the workhouse. The dichotomy of high culture, belonging to just a few, and the unredeemed nature of the many is just as much part of Stratford then as it had been in Shakespeare's time.

What I shall do now is to look at the Prospero-Caliban metaphor in terms of modern Britain, drawing my conclusions from social, geographical and economic data rather than literary sources or literary criticism.[6]

Such an essay in the period from 1939 to 1979 would have been more difficult. During the Second World War, particularly after Russia joined the war, the British people were united to a great extent in a common war effort, with women coming into the labour force and many social divisions being forced to fall.

The 1945-1950 Labour government introduced the Welfare State, which would provide universal provision of medical care "from the cradle to the grave" and "National Assistance," to ensure that no one need fall below a certain safety net level, and made a commitment to full employment. Successive Conservative and Labour governments maintained the tenets of the Welfare State. From 1939 to 1979 one could hardly call Britain an egalitarian society. The traditional class-based society was still there. But there was a considerable narrowing in pay differentials and, at least in the Labour Party, a lasting commitment to full employment. This period has been called the "one nation" period.

1979 and the election of Mrs. Thatcher's Conservative Party is the turning point. The policies of the Conservative Party differed greatly from previous years. In the 1970s Britain's economic performance had been rapidly declining, the Labour government was forced to borrow from the IMF and as a result of government cut-backs unemployment increased to one million in 1975, thus mocking Labour's commitment to full employment. The strike-ridden "Winter of Discontent," 1978-79, was the fatal blow for the Labour government.

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The monetary policies of the first years of Mrs. Thatcher's government brought about a very heavy recession, unemployment of over three million from 1983 to 1988, over 10% of the working population, and the forced closure of many manufacturing companies, particularly in the industrial heartlands of the Midlands and the North.

The success in the Falklands War, a weak and divided Labour Party and economic recovery from 1982 onwards were responsible for Mrs. Thatcher's success in the 1983 election, and the years from 1983 to 1988 saw sustained economic growth, the so-called "yuppie" years. One could clearly see a new Britain emerging. A large number of people, particularly in the south-east of England, made fortunes from the financial markets and service industries. The traditional industries of steelmaking, shipbuilding and coal mining all but disappeared in the name of efficiency. The symbolical struggle was that of the miners, over pit closure, which lasted from 1984 to 1985. The miners ended up by achieving very little. British industry had been streamlined and was more competitive. But at a cost. Unemployment seemed to be lodge permanently around three million. Many people had few prospects of ever getting a job again, particularly in the North of England and Scotland, as regional differences became exacerbated.

Above all, the concept of "one nation" was gone. Mrs. Thatcher dubbed the Welfare State the "nanny state." It was against all she stood for — individualism, thrift, self-help

In successive government cutbacks, health and education suffered. Queues for non-urgent operations lengthened; private health schemes prospered. The National Health Service moved towards being a rump organisation to provide assistance to the poor. On the other hand, the upper tax limit was lowered from 83% to 40%.

Above all, the concept of "one nation" was gone. Mrs. Thatcher dubbed the Welfare State the "nanny state." It was against all she stood for — individualism, thrift, self-help. One of her most famous quotations is: "There is no such thing as society, only individuals and people's families." And the dominating factor of her later years, and those of John Major, has been the belief in the market place and the importance of the privatisation of the railways, water and electricity.

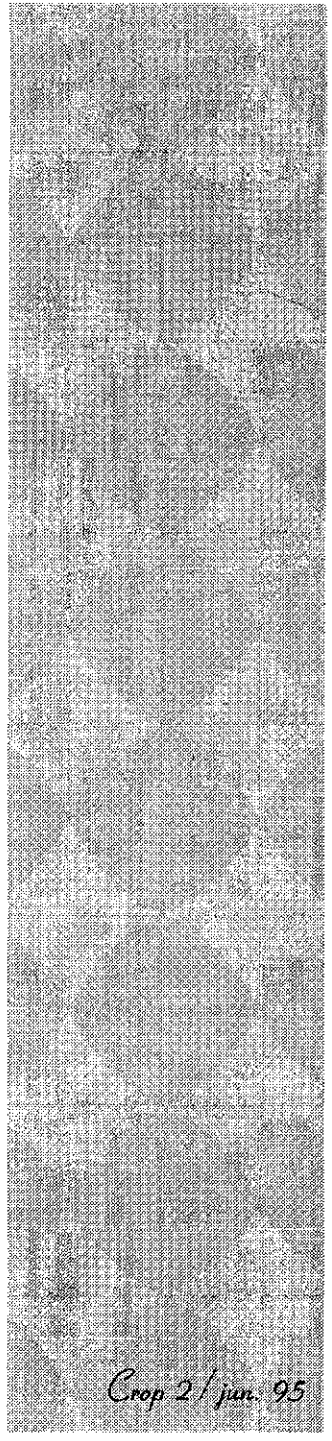
Competition is the key word — league tables of performance are now the norm amongst schools, universities, hospitals and police forces. One of the most rapid ever changes in society from a social democratic mixed economy with good welfare facilities to a strongly competitive market-oriented economy, which has the fifth lowest levels of welfare payments in the European Community, has taken place in Britain in recent years.

So what one sees is a growing class division in Britain, a growing proletarianisation of a certain part of the working class, a calibanisation, a return to a divided society. The next part of this paper will try to define more precisely who the members of this "underclass," perhaps representing some 10% to 15% of the population, really are.

Firstly, we should not confuse the underclass with the working class. One of the great successes of the Conservative Party in the 1980s was that it attracted a large amount of support from the working class. Through greater productivity, wages for those in work were higher, and the Tory Party was able to attract a lot of working class votes through its policy of making local councils sell off their housing stock, "council houses," often at prices below market levels, to occupiers. This, allied to the fact that a large number of working class people bought up shares of privatised nationalised companies often offered at cheap rates, e.g., British Gas and British Telecom, superficially made many working class people feel that they were part of a "property owning democracy," as Mrs. Thatcher put it, and made them natural prey for the Tory Party. In the three general Elections in the 1980s, over 30% of trades union members voted for the Tories.

The underclass is the remainder of the working class. Our Calibans will be unskilled, in and out of employment, or permanently unemployed, or, if they are lucky enough to have a job, which ever increasingly will be part-time, it will be in the lowly-paid sectors of the non-unionised catering, and textile industries or as shop assistants or cleaners. Indeed, the poverty gap is now very wide: since 1971 the percentage of the population living on less than a half of the average national income has risen from 11% to 21%.

As the local councils sold off their better quality council housing, our Calibans will live in the remaining poorer quality council housing, the so-called "sink" estates, of-



ten in the unpopular tower blocks, or in the poor quality inner city terraced houses rented from private landlords. And, of course, many Calibans end up sleeping in hostels for the homeless or in cardboard boxes in the streets of the larger cities. Between 1979 and 1988 the number of homeless in the UK doubled to 370,000. Of those 128,000 are in London, 28,000 on the streets.

The second area I shall look at is that of race. A large number of Britain's underclass are of non-British ethnic origin. But we must make distinctions between different ethnic groups. The Indian ethnic group has made considerable progress in improving its lot, with a higher proportion of second generation Indians going on to higher education than whites (24%-17%) and a higher home ownership than that of whites (72%-59%) although these homes are often in the more run-down areas of the cities. By contrast, a large number of those of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Caribbean origin do have a much lower rate of educational achievement, lower salaries and poorer housing conditions.

Why have we not seen greater protest from the deprived underclass? Don't we here have another manifestation of the dependence complex considered by Mannoni?

Thirdly, a large number of the underclass are women, especially single mothers, unemployed, who are living off Income Support. While wages have increased since 1982, auxiliary benefits have just kept up with inflation. Moreover, a certain section of the Tory right has recently (January 1995) made concerted attacks on single mothers as "scroungers" off the state, the undeserving poor.

Britain has never had good child care facilities. After women played a huge role in the Second World War effort, it was assumed that they would return home to be mothers and nurturers. The Welfare State made negligible provision for nursery schools and creches, and a system of private child minders, increased in recent years by a number of private nursery schools, has grown. Indeed, the high cost of child minding may well be as much as many mothers would earn from part-time work.

Successive Tory governments have made appeals to family values, unity of the family, etc., culminating in Mr. Major's farcical "Back to Basics" campaign in early 1994, which soon became a laughing stock as a number of Tory politicians were revealed to be involved in sex and financial scandals.

Here we find a contradiction in Tory philosophy. Thatcherism stresses the value of individualism, yet women should still be mothers and nurturers before developing their individual potential.

Another group that many members of the underclass belong to is that of the aged. Again, we must make distinctions. Many older people, particularly those with private pensions, enjoy a high standard of living. However, those existing on the state pension of 65 pounds (US$100) a week, which means that they will need to receive Income Support in order not to fall below the safety net level, may suffer. With growing numbers of old people, an aging population, a desire to cut back state residential provision for the aged, state residential care is no longer the rule. The Welfare State had reduced the role of the family in welfare provision; the opposite is now happening. Families are now encouraged to look after their elderly relations, which throws a considerable burden on older carers. The proposal to introduce Value Added tax on domestic fuel in 1994 would have been another burden on poorer older people.

Where will we find the underclass? With the decline in manufacturing and the growth of service industries in the 1980s, voting patterns became polarised in the 1987 election with virtually all of the more prosperous and wealthier South of England returning Tory candidates, and Wales, the North of England and Scotland, where the declining industries were situated, returning Labour candidates. There seemed to be a distinct division between poor North and wealthy South, with its high concentration of financial and service industries, better housing, higher wages and lower unemployment.

Since the end of the eighties the situation has changed. The boom in the financial and property sectors has burst, some areas of the rich South are ailing, and certain areas of the poorer North, such as Edinburgh,

are doing very well. We have a more complex picture, then. Our Calibans will probably be found in the inner areas or council estates of Liverpool, Manchester, London, Birmingham, Glasgow, etc., or in the rundown mining, steel and shipbuilding areas of Wales, Scotland and the North, but this not necessarily the case. Pockets of poverty are found in the most affluent areas.

And it is in these inner rundown areas that one finds the poorer hospitals and schools. The Comprehensive School in the middle-class suburbs will be very different to the Comprehensive School in the inner city as the middle-class is able to influence the allocation of resources.

Of course, multiple deprivation is common. Many of the 2.6 million facing intense poverty in Britain today suffer from a combination of the factors: e.g., the black single mother working part-time or living off Income Support; the unemployed homeless living on the streets of London.

Why have we not seen greater protest from the deprived underclass? The riots of 1981 and 1985 were more anti-police than against the economic situation. Don't we here have another manifestation of the dependence complex considered by Mannoni[7] to be a characteristic of Caliban? The Welfare State seems to be self-perpetuating. Once dependent on welfare handouts, it is not easy to get away. Indeed, breaking this dependence syndrome was part of President Clinton's presidential programme.

The phenomenon of the underclass is not, of course, purely British. Its presence is much starker in North American inner cities. And although the radical reversal of the Welfare State has not been repeated to such a great extent in other Western European countries, high unemployment, a dwindling labour market for the unskilled, greater pressure on social services all result in a growing army of the underclass, young and old, black and white, men and women, ghettoed in the least desirable areas of the cities, maybe an endemic part of today's Europe. And now they are joined by the new poor of Eastern Europe as the market place takes over in the East.

It has been suggested, even inside the Tory Party, that unemployment and the alienation of a large number of citizens is the price we must pay for an economically efficient and competitive society. Full employment is off the agenda for all but the most idealistic of political parties.

There is now no need even for "hewers of wood."

NOTES

[1]LAMMING, George. *The Pleasures of Exile*. London, Michael Joseph, 1960; FERNÁNDEZ RETAMAR, Roberto. Caliban: Notes Toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America. La Habana, Casa de las Américas, 1971; CÉSAIRE, Aimé. *Une tempête*. Paris, 1969; BOAL, Augusto. *A tempestade & As mulheres de Atenas*. Lisboa, Plátano, 1979.

[2]HAWKES, Terry. Playhouse-Workhouse. In: —. *That Shakespeherian Rag*. London, Methuen, 1986.

[3]Seminário Nacional de Professores Universitários de Literaturas de Língua Inglesa.

[4]See particularly BARKER, Francis. *The Culture of Violence*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993.

[5]SALT BRASSINGTON, W. *Picturesque Warwickshire*. London, Edinburgh and Dublinm Valentine & Sons, 1906. Apud HAWKES, *That Shakespeherian Rag*, cit.

[6]The following works were consulted: HUDSON, Ray and WILLIAMS, Allan M. *Divided Britain*. 2nd ed. Chichester, Wiley, 1995; GRAHAM, Cosmo and PROSSER, Tony (ed.). *Waving the Rules. The Constitution under Thatcher*. Milton Keynes, Open University; GAMBLE, Andrew and WELLS, Celia (eds.). *Thatcher's Law*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989; SCHWARZ, Walter. *The New Dissenters: The Nonconformist Conscience in the Age of Thatcher*. London, Bedford Square Press, 1989.

[7]MANNONI, O. *The Psychology of Colonisation*. New York, Praeger, 1964.

John Milton é docente na área de LILINA-USP.

ON THE WAY TO FORRES

MARCIO ANTONIO COIMBRA AMED

The passage below, from *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene III, begins just after Macbeth has received the news brought by Ross and Angus, that he has been awarded by the King the title of Thane of Cawdor. On their way to Forres, when coming victoriously from the battleground, Macbeth and Banquo met three witches and listened to their predictions. Ross and Angus arrive with their message soon after the witches have vanished. This is the passage:

> MACB. [*aside*] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor!
> The greatest is behind. — [*To* ROSS *and* ANGUS] Thanks for your pains.
> [*Aside to* BANQUO] Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
> When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
> Promis'd no less to them?
> BAN. [*aside to* MACBETH] That, trusted home,
> Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
> Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange!
> And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
> The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
> Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
> In deepest consequence. — Cousins, a word, I pray you.
> MACB. [*aside*] Two truths are told,
> As happy prologues to the swelling act
> Of the imperial theme. — I thank you, gentlemen.—
> [*Aside*] This supernatural soliciting
> Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
> Why hath it given me earnest of success,
> Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
> If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of nature? Present fears
> Are less than horrible imaginings.
> My thought, whose murther yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man that function
> Is smother'd in surmise and nothing is
> But what is not.
> BAN. Look how our partner's rapt.
> MACB. [*aside*] If chance will have me King, why, chance may crown me,
> Without my steer.

The message brought by Ross and Angus, that Macbeth has been proclaimed Thane of Cawdor, confirms one of the witches' predictions. Speaking aside, Macbeth reveals his wonder at what has happened ("Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor!") and also his fascination with the possibility of becoming King, if another prediction proves to be true ("The greatest is behind."). He thanks Ross and Angus for their message and then asks Banquo aside, if he believes his — Banquo's — children will be kings. Banquo replies that, if this is to be thoroughly trusted, then Macbeth will be a King himself; but he alerts Macbeth to the dangers of dealing with the supernatural. After that, Banquo quickly turns to Ross and Angus to have a word with them; they do not talk, however, and Macbeth is shown musing instead, speaking aside, interrupting this movement only to thank Ross and Angus once again. He wonders about the validity of the prophecies and whether their character is good or evil. It may be evil, as they bring with them a suggestion whose image is horrid. Banquo, speaking to Ross and Angus, remarks on Macbeth's raptness, while the latter decides to leave to fortune every action that should be taken to help him become king.

The whole atmosphere created by the witches' presence, their predictions and their vanishing, the arrival of Ross and Angus with the confirmation of the validity of one of the prophecies ("Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!"), soon after the prediction has been made, cause a great impact on Macbeth, influencing him, so that the title is promptly regarded as given by fate without further questioning ("Do you not hope your children shall be kings, / When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me / Promis'd no less to them?"). He does not even stop to think about the importance of the victory he has just won,

nor about his worth as a general, and that the title may have been awarded on account of merit. The result of this is that an order, in which loyalty, valour and personal merit predominate, is replaced by another in which titles and positions are given, instead of being conquered through valour, in which corruption and evil reign, and in which desires are satisfied. A deep analysis of his performance in the battle, as well as of his whole history of life, to try to find whether he is a strong, brave and competent man, who need not accept the help of the supernatural, is not made by Macbeth.

Macbeth's judgment is weak and it is based on first impressions. His thinking is strongly one-sided and precipitate, and he does not allow himself time to analyse the situation as a whole, taking more points into consideration and examining the question from different angles. There follows an incessant movement which gets him entirely carried away, to the point of losing sight of reality outside. When he says to the messengers: "Thanks for your pains," his sentence is devoid of any real content and sincere feeling, and its tone is calculated to convey a feeling of consideration. He is altogether absorbed in his thoughts and has lost contact with others and reality. Later on when he says to them again "I thank you, gentlemen," this sentence is just as devoid of content as the first. It is also rather out of context as well as hasty and improvised. Its tone is nervous and reveals his internal distraction.

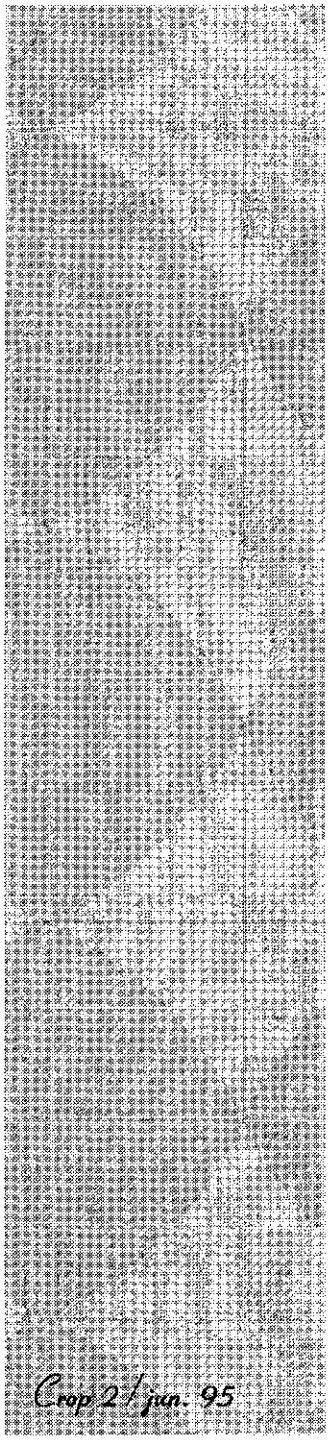
Macbeth does not deeply analyse his position in the world as a man, husband, nobleman, subject to the King, general, or simply as a human being

The acceptance of the title as given by fate is a premise to the validity of the third prediction ("All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!"). Yet in spite of referring to this as a prediction, Macbeth inadvertently looks on it as an objective for which he must fight. For if his becoming King is an affair of fate, he will not have to do anything for his desire to be satisfied. In fact, he even considers this point ("If chance will have me King, why, / Chance may crown me, / without my stir."). Eventually, however, he does not pay attention to his own words and acts otherwise. Also, the prophecy is not taken by Macbeth as something he has been told and which will happen, but somehow, as an idea which has occurred to him, involving an objective which must be quickly attained, as if otherwise it would be stolen from him. This way of looking on the question leads to precipitate action and degenerates in tragedy.

Macbeth does not deeply analyse his position in the world as a man, husband, nobleman, subject to the King, general, or simply as a human being. Human feelings are not considered, and the King's love and esteem, the noblemen's respect, the soldiers' respect, are not taken into account, just superficially mentioned. He does not deeply consider what to be a king really means, for his conception of being a king comprehends only the role of it. It is restricted and does not take into account the responsibilities, duties and sacrifices inherent in the function. This is in fact a childish view which limits the function of king to merely wearing a crown. Furthermore, the prophecy of becoming king seems likely to be materialized through foul play only, and the possibility of its being fulfilled through honest means is not in the least contemplated.

Lady Macbeth's reasoning follows the same movement as her husband's and it is just as reckless and just as marked by one-sidedness. After reading the letter sent to her by her husband, she immediately adopts the idea of his becoming king, without further analysis. Her thinking is abrupt, her feelings exaggerated and the single objective becomes the most important point in life in an instant. Everything else becomes subordinated to it and the first, most evil, least intelligent, simplest and quickest course of action is adopted.

Macbeth's speech, when he says "Two truths are told, / As happy prologues to the swelling act," has a rhythm which coincides with the rhythm of Banquo's speech in "That, trusted home, / Might yet enkindle you unto the crown." Their cadence makes them stand out. Macbeth's speech then, at this moment, is following a pre-arranged pattern, set from outside in relation to the other lines in the play. There are more lines which stand out in the *Tragedy of Macbeth* as for instance when the witches say in the beginning of the play "Fair is foul, and foul is fair. / Hover through the fog and filthy air," which is a charm, or when Macbeth says, before killing Duncan: "Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell / That summons thee to heaven, or to hell" (II, I), or when after having arranged for Banquo's killing with the murderers: "Banquo, thy soul's flight, / if it find heaven, must find it out to-night"(III, I) or when Hecate says: "My little spirit, see, / Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me" (III, V). Macbeth's speech would then be under



influence of rhythm, assonance and alliteration. Would it be under the witches' influence? They have every intention of charming Macbeth and they mention it in the play. They also mention a sailor's wife who has offended one of them and whose husband, the sailor, they will charm in revenge. Would this be an allusion to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth? All we can say is that there is evidence that Macbeth has been charmed. His awareness is in fact limited, his intelligence is restricted and his judgment weak; the point is whether these faculties have been reduced or whether they have always been limited. As to the effects of charm, I will now quote a passage from an essay written by Northrop Frye, entitled "Charms and Riddles":

> Charms have their roots in magic, and the central idea of the magic of charm is to reduce freedom of action, either by compelling a certain course of action or by stopping action altogether. The technique is hypnotic: if A charms B, B is compelled to do what A wants, if a woman charms a man, the man, according to convention, becomes her slave [...] The rhetoric of charm is dissociative and incantatory: it sets up a pattern of sound so complex and repetitive that the ordinary processes of response are short-circuited. Refrain, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, pun, antithesis: every repetitive device known to rhetoric is called into play. Such repetitive formulas break down and confuse the conscious will, hypnotize and compel to certain courses of action [...][1]

The Tragedy of Macbeth is dubious, and allows an interpretation which would consider Macbeth as charmed, as well as another which would take him as an evil man, blind with ambition. It even allows both of them, and to such an extent that it would be difficult to tell one from the other. Let us now examine the passage in which Macbeth meets the witches:

> MACB. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.
> BAN. How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these,
> So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
> That look not like th'inhabitants o' th' earth,
> And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
> That man may question? You seem to understand me,
> By each at once her choppy finger laying
> Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
> And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
> That you are so.
> MACB. Speak if you can. What are you?
> 1. WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
> 2. WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!
> 3. WITCH. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!
> BAN. Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear
> Things that do sound so fair? I' th' name of truth,
> Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
> Which outwardly ye show?

After the witches' speech there comes a most significant lapse, during which Banquo speaks and then the witches speak again. Macbeth is silent throughout. And yet there is a movement going on in the recesses of his mind, which can be due to the effect of charm, transforming him into a man with a reduced consciousness, or a movement due to his own evil side independently of any charm, or even both movements. We become aware of the existence of the process when Banquo asks Macbeth

If Macbeth has been charmed, then The Tragedy of Macbeth *may be even more tragic than it appears to be at first sight*

the reason why he starts and seems to fear what the witches say. As a matter of fact this is indeed a great Shakespearean moment, the sign of the most accurate technique, when an internal process is shown indirectly, through allusion and silence itself, so that its deep and strong effect can be conveyed from the outside. We do not know what is going on in Macbeth's mind. If it is not the effect of charm, then Macbeth's turmoil may be due to a sight unknown to him up until now. This would be the moment when he becomes aware of the existence of his own evil side and lust for power. After listening to the prophecy that he will be king he would be afraid of himself and of all the possibilities which are now open to him, for after his victory he is in a strong enough position to put the king and the kingdom in jeopardy. And when looking into himself he would see a strong desire to become king. Macbeth's limits are not to be set from the outside by some superior power, but from the inside and by himself. It is a moment of great responsibility. At this moment, if all this is happening, it is up to him to decide whether or not to do the King any harm. Listening to the witches would have started all this process of awareness, as he heard what might have been resounding into his subconscious mind long before encountering them.

If Macbeth has been charmed, then *The Tragedy of Macbeth* may be even more tragic than it appears to be at first sight. For in this case it is the story of a man who was

loyal and competent and whose faculty of thinking has been disrupted, as well as his wife's, causing them to become evil, without their being aware of the transformation they have undergone as well as their companions'. They would in this case have lost contact with their own true selves, with their essence, entirely. Certain moments in the play could then be certainly regarded as instants in which their true essences would be trying, in an inarticulated effort, to break through. For instance, when Lady Macbeth says: "Naught's had, all's spent, / Where our desire is got without content. / 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy / Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy" (III, II). This unexpected piece of speech, not at all compatible with her previous behaviour in the play, is disconnected with what was happening before (she was talking to a servant) and with what will come later (she will talk to Macbeth); she says it to herself only. Just for being detached from context, it stands out. It shows that there is a process going on inside her mind, which reveals a transformation as well as the existence of human feelings. Another of these moments is Macbeth's monologue in Act V, Scene V, after receiving the news of his wife's death:

> She should have died hereafter;
> There would have been a time for such a word.
> To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

The Tragedy of Macbeth is placed between two eras, one in which the earth was conceived of as fixed and occupying the centre of the universe, controlled by God, and the other which has recently learnt that the earth is round and rotates about an axis, that it goes round the sun, now thought to be the centre of the universe, and that men are responsible for their own destinies, relying on their intelligence, capacity and courage. In Macbeth's speech in Act II, Scene I, there are allusions to both concepts: "Now o'er the one half-world / Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse / The curtain'd sleep..." which shows that he knows that the earth is round and that it turns (half-word = there is another half the other side = it is round; dead = dark = this half is now dark but there is another half which is lit). But soon afterwards in the same passage he says: "Thou sure and firm-set earth," etc., and this is an evidence that he has learned the new concept but has not internalized it yet, as deep inside himself he still believes the earth is fixed. There is also an allusion to the earth's immobility in Ross's speech (III, IV): "By th' clock 'tis day. / And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp. / Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame, / That darkness does the face of the earth entomb / When living light should kiss it?" The earth is seen as having only one face, in other words as being flat, and the sun is seen as a movable body.

The man from this age, placed between two eras, is torn by a conflict. On the one hand he misses the old order in which there was a God to protect him and who was responsible for his destiny, an order in which the earth was thought to be flat and fixed and the sun crossed the sky every day. On the other hand he has experienced the new era and has been exposed to its concepts and cannot adapt to the old times any longer. And even if he could, this would not take him very far, as his trip is a one-way trip. This man's anxiety is summarised in the play by Ross's speech: "But cruel are the times, when we are traitors / And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour / From what we fear, yet know not what we fear, / But float upon a wild and violent sea / Each way and none" (IV, II).

The man of that era's conflict is expressed in the play through the form of paradox. And the greatest paradox in the play is the hero's own interpretation of fate. His belief in fate is purely nominal. He listens to it, and instead of waiting for it to materialize, starts to act, in order to obtain what had been predicted. The witches' presence was not normal any more in those times, which leads Banquo to ask, in astonishment: "Were such things here as we do speak about? / Or have we eaten on the insane root / That takes the reason prisoner?" (I, III). The witches represent the old order, a power that controls the destinies of men, which can even stop the earth ("It's night's predominance, or the day's shame", etc.) (III, IV). And Macbeth accepts this old order but he accepts it with the mentality of the new era, which believes that men must take initiative and fight in order to attain their objectives. All this will result in another paradox: is the tragedy due to the power of fate or is it the hero's responsibility? For *Macbeth* is centred upon the hero's action on the one hand, linking the chain of tragic events. But it is

oracular in the ancient Greek tragic sense on the other hand, as the apparitions predict that Macbeth will not be harmed by man of woman born, and that he will be defeated only when the forest of Dunsinane begins to move, and both predictions prove to be true in the end.

The cause of this duality is a question of ethics. Macbeth hears the prophecy as "If you do not kill your King you will not become King," which leads him to action. He does not understand it as a terrible sentence as "You shall kill your King," from whose fulfillment he would try to escape to avoid fate. Oedipus, for instance, hears the oracle as a terrible sentence, as it is against his feelings and his internal ethics, and lives *Corinto* to avoid fate. He tries to do right but fails. The whole situation is clear. There is the hero on the one hand, with his personal feelings, good intentions and ethics, and fate on the other hand, manipulating him from above, unavoidably. In *Macbeth* we cannot tell one from the other. If Macbeth had heard the prophecy as terrible, the tragedy would have been purely oracular. The point is that, the man from that era had become aware, after the appearance of Machiavel's *The Prince*, that two different moral codes had always existed, one for the subjects, the other for the rulers, and that the Christian principles of good conduct and honesty do not necessarily apply to the rulers. For these, political triumph is independent of any moral question, and they must choose the means in order to achieve their objectives.[2] And Macbeth hears the witch's sentence as an objective to be directly achieved.

To Macbeth's remark about the weather, Banquo replies with a practical question about the distance yet to be travelled ("How far is call'd to Forres?"). But then immediately he changes subject when he sees the witches, wonders what they are, gives a quick description of them involving their shape and clothing and later on, their faces, makes inferences, draws conclusions, asks about them and directly to them. He has the mind of the experienced soldier who must quickly examine his surroundings, analysing essential aspects available at the moment and making the most of them in a few seconds, making inferences an checking these inferences. To a soldier, it is essential to be fully aware of his surroundings, which includes geography, topography and who is around him; it is a question of survival as well as of efficiency, when carrying out an attack. But this is also the mind of the man of science of the end of the sixteenth century beginning of the seventeenth, who observes and makes inferences. As when arriving at Macbeth's castle together with the King, Banquo infers the quality of the air from the presence of a certain bird nearby.

In the passage in which Ross and Angus bring the message, which I have quoted here (p. 1), when Banquo says: "But 'tis strange!", and then adds: "And oftentimes, to win us to our harm" etc., he first breaks a pattern of rhythm, and then imposes another one. The alliteration in *s*, the softness of the sounds *often*times, *h*arm, tru*ths*, etc., the stress pattern of long words such as *instruments*, *darkness*, *consequence*, etc. cause the beat to be at a slow and regular pace, adequate to the deep and serious content of his words, of careful thought and far-sighted judgment and advice. Then he breaks up, turns to Ross and Angus and asks: "Cousins, a word, I pray you," which shows an independent mind, one that after having finished dealing with a subject turns to another, in order not to lose time. Banquo has a superior intellect and his thinking is full of energy and great maturity.

For all the horror, ambiguity, fears and uncertainty it contains, *Macbeth* may be regarded as a pessimistic play. But it is not. Banquo dies, but his descendants will continue to live for generations and generations as the apparitions predicted. And when Banquo is killed, a third mysterious murderer *not sent* by Macbeth is there. Who is this man and who sent him there? Or did he go spontaneously? Was he sent by the witches themselves? A third murderer makes three, which is the number of witches. Or was he a friend who intended to save Fleance's life? It seems to me that this third murderer was there to grant Fleance's escape. Shakespeare believed that after a period of fears, anxiety, uncertainty and ambiguity, rationalism, intelligence and fairness would continue to exist.

NOTES

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Marcio Antonio Coimbra Amed é mestrando na área de LILINA-USP.

Language
Linguagem

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ELOGIOS/RESPOSTAS A ELOGIOS E AS FÓRMULAS DE ROTINA

ADAURI BREZOLIN

Neste artigo, apresentaremos apenas o aspecto formulaico dos elogios e respostas a elogios, atos de fala que receberam um estudo detalhado na dissertação intitulada *Elogios e respostas a elogios: estudo contrastivo nas línguas portuguesa e inglesa*[1]. Ali ambos os atos de fala foram analisados à luz das noções de face[2]. Os elogios, por um lado, foram estudados a fim de se determinarem as estruturas sintáticas e os itens lexicais comumente empregados em língua portuguesa e comparados com os dados disponíveis na literatura sobre a língua inglesa. As respostas a elogios, por outro lado, foram analisadas visando-se a uma taxionomia quanto ao tipo de resposta utilizado pelos informantes, a incidência de cada resposta e as expressões mais comuns em ambas as línguas. A coleta de dados foi feita por meio de questionário escrito em que os respondentes deveriam preencher minidiálogos. Essa metodologia

foi aplicada para a obtenção do *corpus* dos dois atos de fala estudados. Aqui, no entanto, trataremos apenas de alguns resultados: as estruturas sintáticas e itens lexicais dos elogios e as expressões comumente usadas nas respostas a elogios, ou seja, as fórmulas de rotina empregadas nesses dois atos de fala.

AS FÓRMULAS DE ROTINA

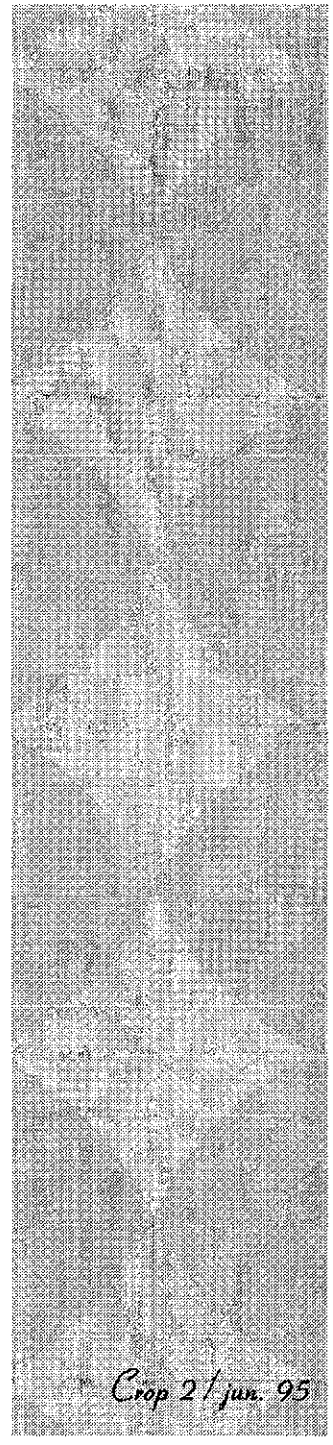
Mas o que são as fórmulas de rotina (FR)? Segundo Florian Coulmas[3], essas fórmulas devem ser vistas como uma expressão idiomática, cujas partes constituintes não podem mais ser interpretadas literalmente, mas compreendidas à luz do aspecto pragmático das interações humanas. Assim, a ocorrência de fórmulas de rotina está intimamente associada a situações sociais específicas que, de certa maneira, são altamente previsíveis no decorrer dos fatos; portanto, seu sentido é condicionado pragmaticamente e seu uso motivado pelas características relevantes dessas situações sociais. Essa previsibilidade está associada ao fato de que, nesse ritual, há um estímulo e uma resposta, ou seja, quando alguém diz "Obrigado", espera-se que o outro complete esse ritual com algo semelhante a "De nada". Estando isso bem claro, é importante salientar que o sentido das fórmulas de rotina não pode ser apreendido por intermédio da semântica composicional, mas deve ser aprendido como uma unidade. Como nas expressões idiomáticas em geral, as expressões formulaicas referem-se a casos em que o significado do todo é diferente do significado das partes ou da somatória das partes, ou seja, o conjunto deve ser entendido como um único bloco e, ainda, à luz da situação em que estiverem sendo usadas. Com relação à função das FR, Coulmas as reduz a instrumentos da *função fática*, que na realidade se referem ao tipo de comunicação que "serve para estabelecer elos de união pessoal através da simples necessidade de companherismo, e não tem o propósito de comunicar idéias". Kröll[4] denomina tais estruturas de *fórmulas de cortesia*, que representam a "condescendência que devemos ter com o nosso próximo". Wills[5] ratifica essas idéias acrescentando que são "eventos comunicativos que preenchem a função de gestos da fala ou sinais convencionalizados de estruturação do discurso", chamando-as de *estereótipos verbais* (*verbal stereotypes*) ou *rotinas conversacionais* (*conversational routines*). Em suma, as fórmulas servem para reduzir a complexidade das interações sociais, que podem gerar estresse ou constrangimento entre os participantes, fazendo-os se sentirem, por vezes, desolados por não saberem o que dizer. Em outras palavras, as FR são utilizadas como atenuantes diante de situações de constrangimento, atuando, dessa maneira, como um apoio social na medida em que representam formas para pronto uso.

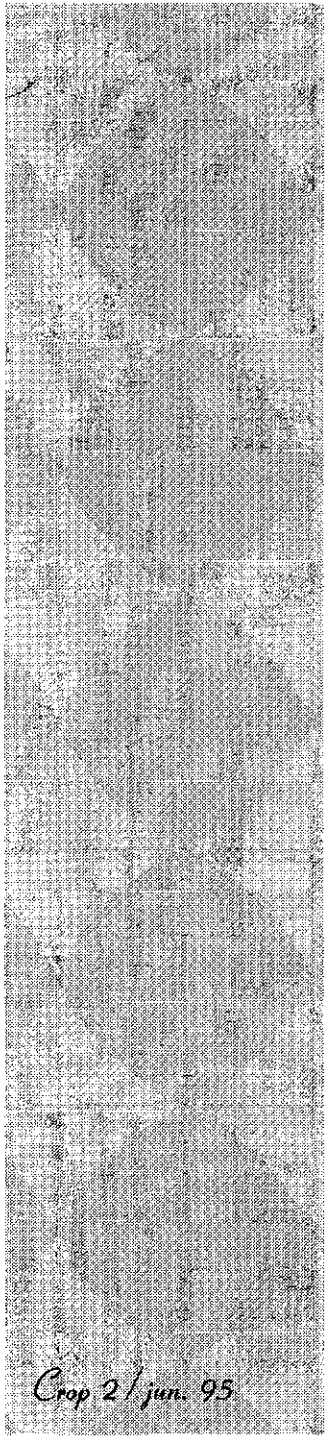
ELOGIOS E RESPOSTAS A ELOGIOS

Diante da necessidade de os interlocutores iniciarem, prolongarem ou interromperem a comunicação, o elogio é uma das estratégias utilizadas para tal propósito, e parece ser comum em várias culturas. Esse tipo de estratégia resulta de uma razão bastante simples: é uma maneira polida de abordar o alocutário. Embora os contextos sociais possam variar de cultura para cultura, veremos que os contextos que motivam os elogios e as respostas a elogios dados por informantes brasileiros e norte-americanos não variam muito entre si. Nessas duas culturas, as situações mais freqüentes referem-se a ressaltar a beleza de uma roupa, a boa aparência de alguém, o gosto saboroso de um prato, o bom trabalho executado etc. Holmes[6] apresenta uma boa definição para elogio, aqui traduzida por mim:

> o elogio é um ato de fala que explícita ou implicitamente atribui crédito a uma pessoa que não seja o emissor, em geral, ao destinatário, por algum "bem" que possua (pertences, característica, habilidade etc.) que é valorizado, de maneira positiva, pelo emissor e destinatário.

Dessa maneira, ante a necessidade aparentemente universal de polidez, os elementos de uma sociedade buscam mecanismos de interação para os socorrerem nas relações sociais e, em determinados momentos, lançam mão de um elogio para facilitar sua participação nas interações. Porém, quando utilizam um elogio, estão criando uma situação que obriga os outros a darem uma resposta. Diferentemente de outras fórmulas, como os cumprimentos nos diversos períodos do dia, em que, às vezes,





nem mesmo pronunciamos as palavras claramente ou por inteiro, o elogio cria uma situação de confronto muito mais explícita e requer uma reação. Pois bem, se esse tipo encomiástico de estratégia requer uma resposta, por que não responder com um simples "obrigado"? Porque nas inter-relações humanas nem sempre tudo é tão simples. Nesse tipo de situação, o elogiado nem sempre se sente à vontade diante do outro e sabe que, às vezes, não pode aceitar o elogio prontamente, pois poderia ser interpretado como presunçoso ou convencido.

De modo geral, esses dois atos de fala, comuns nas duas culturas, desempenham a função fática e, dependendo de quando e por quem são utilizados, têm propósitos variados, tais como: diminuir o distanciamento entre as pessoas, reforçando a solidariedade (*Nossa, que carro bonito!*); atuar como reforço positivo (*Continue assim! Seu trabalho saiu muito bom!*); agradecer (*Seu jantar estava excelente!*); cumprimentar (*Nossa, como você está elegante!*) etc. Os interlocutores, para tanto, necessitam realizar tais atos de fala lingüisticamente por meio de mecanismos calcados em princípios básicos de polidez a fim de amenizar o confronto criado. Entram em cena, assim, as fórmulas de rotina, que não comunicam idéia alguma, simplesmente promovem o bem-estar mútuo dos interlocutores. Vejamos, então, como essas fórmulas aparecem nesses dois atos de fala.

Os elogios

Essas fórmulas apresentaram, em nossa pesquisa, uma estrutura lexical bastante restrita. Mesmo considerando a possível ocorrência de outros adjetivos, constatamos que a maioria dos comentários, principalmente os que se referem à beleza, emprega um grupo razoavelmente restrito de adjetivos, os quais revelam certa falta de originalidade e razoável recorrência. Esse grupo assemelha-se bastante ao que Manes e Wolfson[7] apresentam em seus artigos: os falantes, neste caso os respondentes, parecem preferir adjetivos que possuam um baixo nível de especificidade. Em inglês, os adjetivos mais utilizados são *nice, good, beautiful, pretty* e *great*. Notamos uma certa coincidência quanto ao uso de adjetivos genéricos, pois em português, entre os adjetivos utilizados, estão *bonito, lindo, belo* e *agradável*. O interlocutor parece buscar estratégias facilmente reconhecidas como atenuantes a um confronto, selecionando elementos desse grupo restrito de adjetivos que corroboram a não-especificidade e, ao mesmo tempo, dão aos elogios a característica de fórmulas devido às já mencionadas falta de originalidade e alta recorrência de determinados itens lexicais. Além disso, encontramos alguns verbos (*like* e *love*, em inglês, e *adorar* e *gostar*, em português). Tanto em inglês quanto em português, encontramos o uso de advérbios que dão a carga positiva ao comentário (*You do this kind of writing so* well. / *Esta roupa fica* bem *em você*). Há, ainda, o uso de substantivos ou sintagmas nominais que também reforçam o aspecto positivo do comentário (*You're a* genius / *Você tem* bom gosto). Entretanto, as estruturas mais usadas são as que empregam adjetivos valorativos: 75% e 61,5%, respectivamente, em inglês e português.

Quanto à estrutura sintática, os elogios apresentam estruturas bastante restritas também.

> Em inglês[7]: DET (SUBST) + {is/looks} + (really) + ADJ (*Your hair looks nice. / This is really good.*), I really + {like/love} + DET + SUBST (*I love your hair. / I really like those shoes.*) e DET + is + (really) + (a) + ADJ + SUBST (*That's a nice piece of work. / This was really a great meal.*)
>
> Em português: QUE + ADJ + (DET) + SUBST/QUE + SUBST + ADJ (*Que linda sua roupa! / Que escritório bonito!*), DET (SUBST) + {está/é} + (DET/INT) + ADJ/SUBST (*Esta roupa está linda! / Você está bonito! / Seu escritório é muito bonito. / Seu filho é um amor.*) e COMO + DET (SUBST) + {está/é} + ADJ (*Como você está chique! / Como seu filho é educado!*)

Esses resultados nos levam a crer que os falantes de uma língua, em situações de confronto, preferem utilizar fórmulas sintático-semânticas consagradas com o intuito de promover o bem-estar mútuo, sem deixarem de ser polidos.

As respostas a elogios

Como era de esperar, apesar da extensa variedade das respostas obtidas, todas se equivalem em nível pragmático, isto é, todas as respostas são dadas após um elogio, seja um simples "obrigado" ou outra fórmula de rotina.

Entretanto, essa equivalência pode ocorrer em graus diferentes: algumas expressões apresentam equivalentes também formais, outras, só pragmáticos. Os equivalentes formais referem-se a expressões cuja estrutura sintática ou itens lexicais são extremamente semelhantes. Por exemplo, *O prazer foi todo meu* e *The pleasure was all mine.* A constatação dessa coincidência formal entre as duas línguas prova a "formulaicidade" desses tipos de resposta. Os outros só o são em nível pragmático pois apresentam estrutura bastante variada e são considerados como equivalentes, simplesmente pelo fato de terem sido apresentados em resposta ao mesmo tipo de ato de fala. Por exemplo, *Imagine* e *Stop it.*

A seguir, apresentaremos alguns dos vários equivalentes formais, aqui classificados dentro dos grupos *aceitação, aceitação com desvio* e *rejeição*, independentemente do conteúdo motivador do elogio, isto é, as expressões se referem tanto a elogios feitos a um objeto como ao desempenho de uma pessoa. No entanto, como essas respostas são condicionadas pelo conteúdo, algumas apenas podem ser empregadas em determinada ocasião. Ou seja, se o elogio está sendo feito à roupa, o elogiado não poderá responder com *Você também é muito simpático!.*

• Aceitação
Obrigado (a). / Thanks./Thank you.; O prazer foi todo meu. / The pleasure was all mine.

• Aceitação com desvio
É minha cor preferida. / That's my favorite color.; Prefiro a cor verde. / I happen to like green better on me.; Fiz o que pude. / I did my best.; Aprendi com mamãe. / It's my mother's recipe.; Foi sorte. / I really lucked out.; Você também é muito simpático. / You're a nice person too.; A casa é sua. / Make yourself at home.; Você acha mesmo? / Do you think so?; Que bom que você gostou! / Glad you like it.

• Rejeição
É só uma roupa velha. / It's old.; Você deve estar brincando. / You're kidding.

As expressões seguintes representam algumas das equivalências pragmáticas que, em sua grande maioria, se referem a expressões mais fixas, cujos equivalentes não apresentam nenhuma semelhança quanto à estrutura sintática. Contudo, os itens lexicais que as compõem, mesmo que muito raramente, podem ser idênticos ou pertencer ao mesmo campo semântico. Por exemplo, *Que nada!* e Nothing *to it.*

• Aceitação
Disponha., Não há de quê., Estou às ordens., Não por isso., Não foi nada. / You're welcome., Great., That's okay., Anytime., I appreciate it., Don't mention it., Not at all., No problem.

• Aceitação com desvio
Sério? / Really?; São seus olhos., Impressão sua. / That's nice of you.

• Rejeição
Imagina(e)., Que é isso!, Que nada. / Stop it., Think nothing of it., Nothing to it.

Algumas dessas expressões funcionais, ao contrário das formais, podem ser usadas em quase todas as situações devido a sua baixa especificidade. Um elogio sobre a roupa, a personalidade ou a casa pode ter como resposta um *Imagine.* Observando essas expressões, podemos notar que algumas são culturalmente marcadas — por exemplo, *São seus olhos* e *Impressão sua* —, tipicamente brasileiras, que dificilmente encontrarão equivalentes formais em língua inglesa, pelo menos, pois, ao que tudo indica, deixam transparecer determinada submissão que, provavelmente, inexiste entre os norte-americanos. Assim, diante da necessidade de traduzi-las, por exemplo, uma sugestão seria *That's nice of you.* Todavia, faz-se necessário ressaltar o fato de que é importante sabermos que tais expressões ocorrem naturalmente nessas duas línguas.

As fórmulas mais comuns utilizadas pelos informantes brasileiros são as seguintes: *Obrigado. / Imagina(e). / Que bom que você gostou. / Que isso. / Que nada. / São seus olhos. / Foi um prazer. / Gentileza sua. / Disponha. / Não há de quê. / Não foi nada. / De nada. / Sério? / Estou às ordens. / Jura? / O prazer foi meu. / O prazer foi todo meu. / Não por isso. / Verdade? / Mesmo? / Impressão sua. / Ah, não brinca. / Engano seu. / Bondade sua.*

Eis as fórmulas mais empregadas pelos informantes norte-americanos: *Thanks/Thank you. / I'm glad you like it. / You're welcome. / (I'm) Glad to help. / No problem. / Don't mention it. / That's OK. / Nothing to it. / (Sure) Anytime. / Think nothing of it. / No kidding. / Oh, come on. / Nothing. / Oh, stop it. / You're kidding. / The pleasure was all mine. / I don't mind helping out. / Not at all.*

A análise de todos os comentários dá a perceber que muitos não se referem apenas a fórmulas de rotina utilizadas em resposta a um elogio. Deixemos claro que as fórmulas de rotina caracterizam-se pelo uso constante e ritualizado, ou seja, são praticamente previsíveis em determinados atos de fala. É preciso lembrar que, nessas situações, há um estímulo seguido de uma resposta, a idéia do ritual que deve ser completado. Dessa maneira, cada ato de fala acaba por estabelecer seu conjunto particular de fórmulas. No entanto, como pudemos observar, as fórmulas de rotina empregadas para as respostas a elogios não pertencem exclusivamente a um "conjunto de fórmulas de rotina para respostas a elogios"; pertencem, sim, a um grupo mais genérico de expressões, caracterizadas por estarem atreladas a uma determinada situação, as denominadas fórmulas situacionais. Essas fórmulas mais abrangentes poderão estar vinculadas a outros atos de fala e seu reconhecimento como fórmula desse ou daquele ato dependerá do contexto. Assim, as fórmulas *Obrigado* e *Thanks/Thank you*, quando utilizadas para o ato de fala do agradecimento, representam um estímulo que deverá suscitar uma resposta do tipo *De nada*, ao passo que, quando empregadas após o ato de fala do elogio, já representam uma resposta.

O fato de havermos detectado um grande número de fórmulas de rotina e de situação (situacionais) relacionadas ao ato de fala do elogio reforça a idéia de que devemos aprender essas expressões convencionalizadas dentro de seu contexto de ocorrência, pois somente desse modo o seu uso pragmático será efetivamente compreendido. Assim sendo, esses atos de fala também deveriam ser incluídos nos currículos de cursos de língua estrangeira, para que os alunos possam aprender a reconhecer uma variedade de expressões — muitas das quais já terão ouvido — e passem a empregá-las competentemente. Tais constatações também são importantes para a tradutologia, que busca compreender as semelhanças e diferenças no momento em que os homens se comunicam de língua para língua. Para que tradutores e intérpretes tenham assegurada sua competência tradutológica, devem ter conhecimento das estruturas verdadeiramente empregadas pelos falantes das línguas para as quais estejam traduzindo, para que não transponham essas expressões literalmente, mas sim de forma pragmática.

No âmbito da comunicação interpessoal como um todo, o reconhecimento e a efetiva produção dessas estruturas irão auxiliar o falante a salvar sua face mais facilmente diante de situações de constrangimento, em que, muitas vezes, não sabe o que dizer. Trabalhos sobre variantes de uma mesma língua, como português brasileiro e lusitano, inglês norte-americano e britânico, também podem contribuir de maneira substancial para elucidar o assunto e aparar possíveis arestas deixadas por trabalhos já realizados.

NOTAS

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Adauri Brezolin é mestre na área de LILINA-USP.

FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE CLASSROOM

An Ethnographic View of Classroom Research

FRANCISCO MANUEL DE C. C. FERREIRA

My main purpose here is to discuss how ethnographic classroom research can help teachers become more aware of and understand what goes on in the classroom, and thus help them bridge the gap between research and pedagogy.

In order to do this, I will divide this paper in two parts: in the first, I will present a definition of ethnography and the characteristics of ethnographic research; in the second, I will discuss the reasons why I believe teachers should use an ethnographic approach to classroom research and how they can go about the investigation process.

WHAT IS ETHNOGRAPHY?

According to Watson-Gegeo,

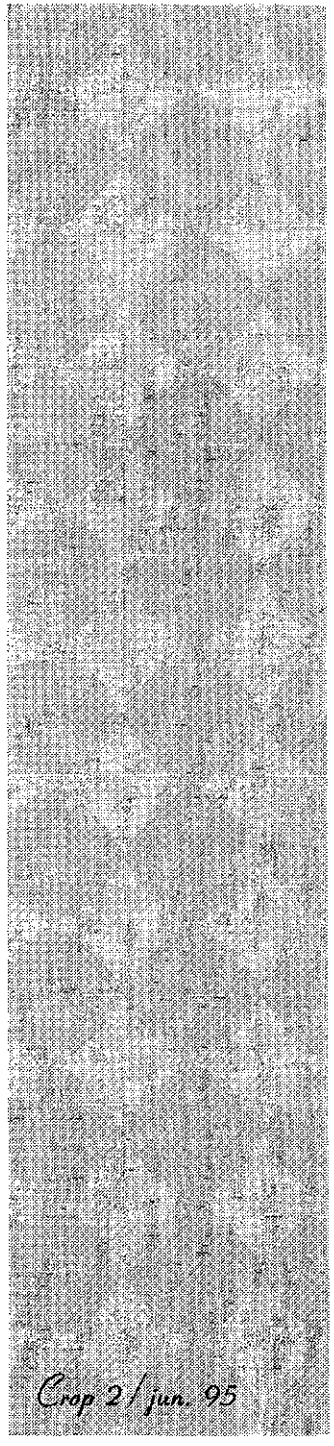
> ethnography is the study of people's behavior in naturally occurring, ongoing settings, with a focus on the cultural interpretation of behavior, and the ethnographer's goal is to provide a description and an interpretive-explanatory account of what people do in a setting [...], the outcome of their interactions, and the way they understand what they are doing (the meaning interactions have for them).[1]

This definition raises several issues related to ethnographic research. The first one I would like to address has to do with the words *description* and *interpretation.*

As J. Clifford points out, "no one reads from a neutral or final position."[2] This means that one's perspective in the context of observation depends on one's knowledge, values and beliefs, and these interfere in the observation. Any description or observation is, therefore, necessarily interpretive, and the researcher has to be aware of the fact that, when describing what happened in a given context, he is actually interpreting what happened based on his assumptions and beliefs.

From this we can infer that ethnographic truths "are inherently *partial* — committed and incomplete."[3] Committed in that they depend on the ethnographer's interpretation, which is based on an established system of frameworks, concepts and categories (what Stanley Fish calls *recognized interpretive strategies*). And incomplete because by assuming that an "event" is "always a function of interpretation,"[4] that "reality" is constructed, or already represented (T. Nieranjana, 1992), one cannot aim at finding the absolute truth, the original or transcendental signified. As Derrida puts it,

> totalization no longer has any meaning [...] because the nature of the field — that is, language and a finite language — excludes totalization. [...] One cannot determine the center and exhaust totalization because the sign which replaces the center, which supplements it, taking the center's place in its absence — this sign is added, occurs as a surplus, as a *supple-*



ment. The movement of signification adds something, which results in the fact that there is always more, but this addition is a floating one because it comes to perform a vicarious function, to supplement a lack on the part of the signified.[5]

An issue which is entailed by the above discussion refers to objectivity and the scientific character of ethnography. Defenders of positivist research methods argue that since ethonographic research does not have as a point of departure, a hypothesis to be verified, and accepts that there may be several different interpretations of an event, it has a subjective character and, therefore, it is not scientific.

"Scientific," in this sense, refers of course to methods that use statistically measurable data. This data is said to be objective because "it does not involve the subjectivity of the observer."[6] The idea of a "detached, impartial observer"[7] is, however, an illusion.

Let us consider, for instance, a researcher who is conducting research on classroom interaction. He decides to compare the number of teacher-student interactions to the number of student-student interactions in order to find out how interactive a particular class is. He sits in a desk "without being seen" and in such a way as to "read without interruption,"[8] and fills out a table with the information above. This methodology is apparently objective, but it actually reflects the researcher's beliefs and assumptions about the teaching/learning process. His decision to compare the number of interactions (T-St, St-St) without taking into account other aspects such as the nature and the purpose of the interactions probably means that he believes that interaction is a matter of quantity: the more interactions there are in a class, the more interactive a class will be. He also seems to believe that he will not affect and will not be affected by the participants' attitudes and behavior: he will not be seen and will not be disturbed throughout the observation process.

A second point that should be made regarding this issue is that the fact that "the point of departure of ethnographic research is not an elaborate hypothesis to be verified [...] does not mean that the researcher does not start off with questions and intuitions in mind,"[9] or that his work is not guided by an explicit theoretical framework. It just means that each situation must be investigated in its own terms and that the aspects to be explored during the course of the research may be redefined as a result of the observation and the analysis of the data.

Finally, it is important to stress that ethnographic research acknowledges its subjective character and tries to reduce the risks of such subjectivity through what is known as data triangulation. This can be done in two different ways:

- using different data collecting instruments (field notes, audio or video recordings, interviews, questionnaires, diaries);
- confronting viewpoints and interpretations of the various participants.

By doing so, we confer an intersubjective character on the research because a number of subjectivities come into play: the subjectivities of the researcher and those of his informants who, in this way, "will contribute directly to the construction of interpretations and findings."[10]

This process of construction of interpretation is based on the principle of dialogical textual production. According to Clifford, this construction of interpretation is dialogical because it specifies "the discourse of informants, as well as that of the ethnographer, by staging dialogues or narrating interpersonal confrontations."[11] In ethnographic classroom research, the researcher will confront his own views and perceptions with those of the participants (teacher, students) in order to negotiate meanings and build up interpretations of an event.

In ethnographic classroom research, the researcher will confront his own views and perceptions with those of the participants

Another aspect which is raised by Watson-Gegeo's definition of ethnography refers to the participants' perspective of an event, "the way they understand what they are doing." This is related to one of the main characteristics of ethnographic research, the emic-etic principle of analysis.

According to him, etic analyses and interpretations

are based on the use of frameworks, concepts and categories from the analytic language of the social sciences and are potentially useful for comparative research across languages, settings, and cultures.[12]

For instance, terms and phrases such as *positive attitude, praise, correction, silence or confusion, asks referential questions, initiates interaction, gives instructions* are typical of etic terminology, and are commonly found in classroom interaction coding schemes. Several objections can be made regarding this kind of analysis and terminology:

- although it claims to be neutral and objective, it establishes categories which reflect one's beliefs and assumptions about the teaching/learning process;
- the fact that the categories are pre-established directs the researcher's attention to those aspects which are implicit in the categories, thus preventing him from considering other aspects of the process;[13]
- the categories are not usually defined in a consistent manner, which makes it difficult to operationalize them;
- the categories, "along with their operational definitions, may or may not have validity for the teachers and students whose behavior is being rated or evaluated."[14]

Emic analysis, on the other hand, refers to "culturally based perspectives, interpretations, and categories used by members of the group under study to conceptualize and encode knowledge and to guide their own behavior."[15]

Therefore, an analysis which is built on emic concepts attempts to understand a given situation from the perspective of the participants by incorporating their own interpretations of their behavior. As researchers, we gain different understandings of events when we are confronted with the views participants have of what is going on.

To conclude this discussion of the concepts underlying ethnography, we should turn to another basic principle of ethnographic research: the holistic principle, according to which events should be examined in relation to the context in which they take place. Thus, an instance of teacher-student interaction in a classroom has to be related to other interactions that took place during the lesson, to other lessons throughout the course, to the context of instruction, and to society as a whole.

WHY AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO CLASSROOM RESEARCH

Until recently the classroom was a place where theories, methods and approaches were applied. Therefore, the type of classroom research that was conducted focused on verifying whether hypotheses about teaching and learning a second language, which were developed *outside* the classroom using theoretical concepts and frameworks from linguistics and psychology, worked out in the classroom. The results of such research projects were measured through the administration of language proficiency tests.[16]

From an ethnographic perspective, a classroom has a life of its own and must be understood in its own terms and in relation to the whole system of which it is a part

In this view, the teacher's role was to receive knowledge and apply it, and the classroom was seen as a consumer of knowledge.[17] The assumption was that theories could not be developed from the investigation and analysis of what went on in the classroom.

From an ethnographic perspective, a classroom has a life of its own and must be understood in its own terms and in relation to the whole system of which it is a part. This means that the researcher or the teacher-researcher has to become aware of the values, beliefs and assumptions underlying one's teaching practice, has to take into account and incorporate the participants' perspectives, has to develop his knowledge of theory concerning the teaching-learning process, has to investigate what happens in the classroom and be ready to redefine his research questions whenever the observation and analysis of data lead him to do so.

In this view, the classroom becomes not only a consumer but also a source of knowledge.[18] The researcher or the teacher- researcher makes use of theories that help him understand the teaching/learning process, but he also

makes use of knowledge which results from an analysis of what happens in the classroom (experiential knowledge). Experiential and theoretical (received) knowledge are in constant interaction with each other, thus enabling teachers to interpret critically theories dealing with the teaching/learning process, as well as analyse data and construct interpretations of what happens in the classroom.

The teacher-researcher starts the investigation process with questions, puzzles or intuitions about his teaching practice. He makes use of received and experiential knowledge, constructs the interpretation of events by incorporating the participants' perspectives and by relating the events to the context in which they occur, and develops integrated practical theories. This is an ongoing process: the teacher will redefine his research questions and start a new investigation process, which in turn will generate new theories and again new questions or puzzles. In this way, teachers will start bridging the gap between research and pedagogy: the classroom is the starting point for the investigation process and it benefits from the knowledge which is thus produced. Teachers' choices and decisions will be informed by an understanding of what underlies their teaching practice and of what contributes to effective teaching and learning.

NOTES

[1]WATSON-GEGEO, Karen A. Ethnography in ESL, Defining the Essentials. *Tesol Quarterly*, v. 22, n. 4, p. 576, 1988.

[2]CLIFFORD, J. Introduction: Partial Truths. In: CLIFFORD, J. & MARCUS, J. (eds.). *Writing Culture*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986, p. 18.

[3]CLIFFORD, op. cit., p. 7

[4]FISH, S. *Is There a Text in This Class?*, p. 342.

[5]DERRIDA, J. *Writing and Difference*. London, RKP, 1981, p. 289.

[6]SOUZA, Lynn M. T. M. de & GRIGOLETTO, M. Towards Autonomy in Teacher Education: Bridging the Gap Between the University and the Secondary State School. In: LEFFAR, V. (ed.). *Autonomy in the Classroom*. Porto Alegre, UFRGS, 1994.

[7]Rosaldo, R. *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1989, p. 36.

[8]CLIFFORD, op. cit., p. 14.

[9]SOUZA & GRIGOLETTO, op. cit.

[10]Id., ibid.

[11]CLIFFORD, op. cit., p. 14.

[12]WATSON-GEGEO, op. cit., p. 579.

[13]CAVALCANTI, M. C. & LOPES, L. P. da Moita. Implementação de pesquisa na sala de aula de línguas no contexto brasileiro. *Trabalhos em Lingüística Aplicada*, Unicamp, n. 17, 1991.

[14]WATSON-GEGEO, op. cit., p. 580.

[15]Id., ibid.

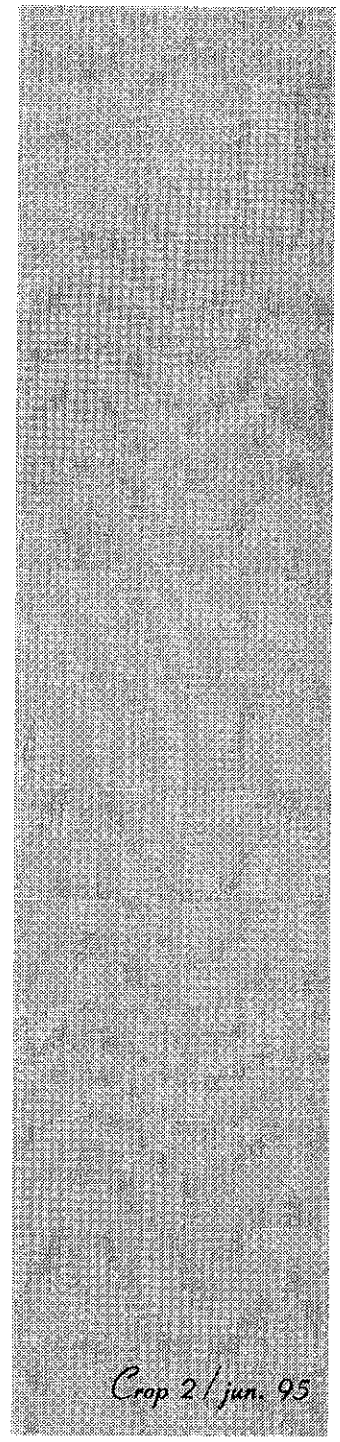
[16]CAVALCANTI & LOPES, op. cit.

[17]SOUZA, Lynn M. T. M. de. Presentation at the 1st Yázigi International Language Teaching Seminar, 1993.

[18]Id., ibid.

Francisco Manuel de C. C. Ferreira é mestrando na área de LILINA-USP.

Translation
Tradução



A posição da literatura traduzida diante da expansão das literaturas em língua inglesa

Heloisa Gonçalves Barbosa

O lugar da tradução no polissistema das literaturas de língua inglesa

Após ocupar lugar central na evolução da literatura de língua inglesa durante o Renascimento, período em que traduções, re-criações e imitações da literatura européia, principalmente a italiana, deram novo impulso à literatura inglesa na Inglaterra, a tradução ocupa hoje um lugar não mais que periférico no polissistema composto pelas literaturas em língua inglesa[1]. Segundo Bassnett, "o constante declínio da atividade tradutória durante o século XIX, à medida que o Reino Unido se tornou um poder imperial, pode ser ligado a transformações na auto-estima e a uma crença na superioridade inerente do sistema literário inglês"[2].

É sabido que o público de língua inglesa não se mostra favorável ao texto traduzido, o que se manifesta sob várias formas. A primeira, e mais notória, é a reação adversa ao filme legendado, que faz com que filmes em línguas que não o inglês ocupem parcela mínima do mercado não só de língua inglesa, mas também internacional, comprimidos que são tais mercados pela força avassaladora dos produtores e exibidores norte-americanos. Tamanha é essa força que chegou a comprometer as recentes negociações do GATT[3].

A aversão do público de língua inglesa pelo texto traduzido se manifesta, mais diretamente, no exíguo número de traduções, de qualquer gênero, publicadas no universo falante de língua inglesa. Tal fato já foi observado por Venuti[4] e pode ser facilmente verificado em consulta ao *Index Translationum* da Unesco (1932-86), que deixa patente o fato de que sequer há dados sobre os Estados Unidos em alguns anos, demonstrando que nenhuma tradução foi publicada no país durante tais anos.

Essa passagem da avidez para a aversão pelas traduções, que se processou em meio milênio, tem profundas raízes históricas. Se, por um lado, o Renascimento foi um momento de busca às raízes da formação cultural da Europa Ocidental, foi também o primeiro momento da expansão colonialista que terminou por colocar dois terços do mundo sob o comando da Coroa britânica — constituindo, no dizer da rainha Vitória, um império sobre o qual o sol nunca se põe. As conseqüências dessa expansão se fazem sentir ainda no final do século XX. Quando a rainha Elizabeth II, em seu discurso de Natal de 1993, se referiu aos progressos feitos em direção à paz na África do Sul, em Israel e na Irlanda do Norte, referiu-se na verdade a locais em que a colonização e a intervenção britânicas é que foram responsáveis pelos conflitos, pelo genocídio que resultou da invasão, do colonialismo, do racismo e da destruição de culturas milenares. O século XX, na verdade, testemunhou ação bélica colonialista por parte da Coroa britânica contra a Argentina.

A expansão da língua inglesa

Conseqüência direta do colonialismo britânico foi, naturalmente, a expansão da língua inglesa. Não, como querem vários lingüistas britânicos, por alguma vantagem da língua inglesa sobre as demais do planeta. Apontam esses apologistas as características que consideram responsáveis pela tão decantada supremacia da língua inglesa, dentre elas o poder de aglutinação, capacidade que a língua inglesa tem em comum com outras consideradas "primitivas", tais como as línguas indígenas do Brasil, e o extenso léxico, por vezes dito "o maior do mundo"[5] — resultado na realidade da intensa atividade lexicográfica dos centros emanadores da língua inglesa, ao contrário do que ocorre em centros falantes de línguas de menor poderio político e econômico (embora com número de falantes nativos maior ou igual ao número de falantes nativos do inglês, e.g. árabe, chinês, russo, espanhol), em que a pobreza impede o investimento em projetos lexicográficos.

O que se encontra por trás do sucesso quase hegemônico da língua inglesa não é portanto qualquer qualidade intrínseca que esta porventura tivesse, mas o poderio político e econômico, resultado do colonialismo que financiou a revolução industrial — alicerçado, por exemplo, no ouro brasileiro chegado à Inglaterra via Portugal, que, desde a assinatura do Tratado de Methuen de 1703, era virtual protetorado inglês[6]. Não se pode esquecer tampouco que uma ex-colônia britânica, os Estados Unidos da América do Norte, é que é hoje o carro-chefe da propagação da língua inglesa e de suas literaturas pelo mundo, não tanto mais o Reino Unido, despojado de seu império.

Neste momento em que aumenta a conscientização dos povos colonizados em torno de sua vivência do colonialismo surge também um interesse maior pelas literaturas em língua inglesa oriundas de países de menor poderio político e econômico, antigas colônias britânicas. É vital assinalar que, quando se fala da expansão das literaturas de língua inglesa, a referência é tão-somente às literaturas oriundas dos países que ocupam uma posição fraca no jogo do poder, pois é de longa data que a literatura norte-americana ocupa um lugar central no polissistema formado pelas literaturas em língua inglesa. Se, por um lado, em círculos fechados como o constituído pelas universidades de Oxford e Cambridge, a literatura norte-americana pode ainda ser considerada como estando fora do centro, é inegável que o mesmo não ocorre fora desse pequeno círculo. A literatura norte-americana é central até mesmo nos currículos universitários de um país periférico como o Brasil, conseqüência da posição hegemônica dos Estados Unidos no panorama mundial, que se consolida também através da cultura popular, seja ela veiculada pela televisão, pelo cinema ou pelo livro.

É evidente, por outro lado, que as literaturas de língua inglesa que tanta atenção atraem hoje não ocupam posição central no polissistema. Ao contrário, permanecem periféricas. Ao mesmo tempo em que seus textos começam a fazer parte dos currículos escolares e se tornam matéria obrigatória de provas de segundo grau no Reino Unido, que departamentos universitários inteiros se dedicam a seu estudo, a reação do público em geral é de repúdio a tais literaturas, o que se comprova pelo baixo índice de vendagem dessas obras quando editadas tanto no Reino Unido como nos Estados Unidos.

Contudo, não é só no Reino Unido e nos Estados Unidos que as literaturas das antigas colônias britânicas têm atraído interesse. O mesmo vem ocorrendo em todo o mundo, inclusive nas próprias antigas colônias, quer na Ásia ou na África. Assim, torna-se necessário examinar o que ocorre em tais países em decorrência da expansão das literaturas de língua inglesa.

Literatura pós-colonial e tradução

Mukherjee[7] discutiu em detalhe a situação da Índia, grande país multicultural e multilíngüe. Aí, o inglês vem servindo de língua de comunicação intergrupal e se tornando hegemônico para as pessoas instruídas. Assim, faltam na Índia traduções de uma língua local para outra, seja do hindi para o bengalês, por exemplo, mas abundam não só as traduções das línguas locais para o inglês, como as obras literárias ou de qualquer outro gênero escritas por indianos originalmente em inglês. Falta, portanto, material de leitura para aquele alfabetizado em sua língua mãe, mas ignorante do inglês. Falta, portanto, comunicação direta entre os grupos lingüísticos e étnicos autóctones, comunicação esta cuja realização passa a se dar obrigatoriamente através da língua do antigo colonizador.

Situação semelhante é encontrada nas jovens nações africanas, a julgar pelas observações de Hamilton[8] e Nintai[9], por exemplo, com a agravante de que as línguas da África subsaariana são em sua maioria ágrafas. Assim, a própria alfabetização tende a ser feita em inglês (ou francês), a língua do colonizador, e não nas línguas mães dos grupos étnicos locais. Ganha força, portanto, a língua do colonizador em detrimento das línguas dos povos colonizados.

Acresce que os autores, tanto africanos como indianos, deixando de lado posições políticas de maior coerência, tendem a preferir não só terem suas obras traduzidas para o inglês, como também escrevê-las diretamente em inglês. Deste modo, na África, por exemplo, em vez do favorecimento da língua franca de maior penetração na porção oriental do continente, o suaíle, o autor opta pelo inglês, que pode levá-lo inclusive para além das fronteiras africanas, onde se encontram os mercados e onde há possibilidade de fama e fortuna em moeda forte[10].

Cria-se então um círculo vicioso: há dificuldades de editoração e distribuição de obras no mercado africano, por falta de um leitorado que sustente o mercado editorial. Opta-se então pelo inglês, com o que diminui ainda mais a possibilidade mesma da formação e manutenção de um público leitor versado nas línguas africanas autóctones. O autor africano que se furta à responsabilidade política para com seus compatriotas é parcialmente responsável pela situação de uma literatura que ainda hoje luta para se definir. Análises recentes, tais como a de Nintai[11], ainda debatem a questão de como definir "literatura africana". Seria aquela escrita em língua africana? Escrita por autor africano? Por autor africano residente na África, ou pelo africano exilado?

As perguntas parecem válidas principalmente quando se considera o grande número de autores africanos que escrevem no exílio, voluntário ou involuntário, o mesmo se dando em relação a autores de outras antigas colônias britânicas. Ademais, como a maioria dessas colônias só há pouco conquistou sua independência, ainda estão em fase de construir sua identidade, o que leva ao conflito entre o europeu colonizador que reside nas antigas colônias e o povo nativo. Do mesmo modo, o antigo colonizado que deixa seu país de origem muitas vezes deixa também sua identidade cultural, a identificação com sua pátria. Essa perda de identidade é muitas vezes evidenciada e discutida na literatura que produz em inglês (ou francês), a língua do colonizador.

É, finalmente, essa literatura produzida pelo exilado, na língua do colonizador, que vem sendo aceita na periferia do cânone das literaturas de língua inglesa. É no sentido de englobar tal literatura que vem ocorrendo a expansão das literaturas de língua inglesa. É forçoso dizer que o interesse por tais literaturas se dá não exclusivamente, nem primordialmente, por uma qualidade literária que se suponha inerente à obra, mas pelo que tais obras apresentam de exótico, de étnico — sendo esta última palavra usada aqui na acepção que tem em inglês, de qualificar roupas, música, alimentos etc. que "são característicos das tradições de um grupo étnico em particular, e muito diversos do que é encontrado na moderna cultura ocidental"[12].

Literatura e mercado

Assim, pode-se dizer que uma porção significativa do interesse pelas literaturas de língua inglesa não se deve apenas a uma visão multiculturalista e igualitária do mundo moderno. Deve-se também ao fato de que tais literaturas atendem à demanda do mercado por material que transporte o público leitor para longe de sua vivência cotidiana e que lhe sirva também, em certa medida, de válvula de escape. Tais literaturas levam ainda ao público leitor discussões sobre as questões que preocupam a humanidade no momento presente, tais como guerras civis, deslocamentos populacionais e outras. De grande relevância dentre essas questões é o choque cultural entre Ocidente e Oriente, que se faz sentir também nas metrópoles, antigos centros colonizadores, que hoje recebem igualmente imigrantes e exilados de suas antigas colônias.

Como demonstrei em meus trabalhos anteriores[13] é, atualmente, muito semelhante a função do texto traduzido e da literatura escapista dentro do polissistema das literaturas de língua inglesa[14]. Esse sistema ocupa hoje posição dominante e não se encontra aberto para inovações vindas de fora, tal como ocorreu antes e durante o Renascimento. O interesse pela literatura traduzida é, conseqüentemente, do tipo que denominei "tópico"[15], ou seja, haverá interesse pelo texto que trou-

xer à baila as questões que preocupam o leitor moderno, mesmo que esse texto seja periférico na literatura de origem.

Mesmo o texto central, canonizado, da literatura de origem é traduzido não necessariamente por sua centralidade ou qualidade, mas por sua "topicalidade". Assim, Clarice Lispector[16] é traduzida e se torna matéria de prova (não de literatura, mas de estudos sociais) no Reino Unido não tanto pela qualidade literária que um crítico como Hélène Cixous[17] lhe atribui, mas por ser a autora mulher e terceiro-mundista. Assim, *Boca do Inferno*, de Ana Miranda (1989), vê suas edições esgotas no Reino Unido e se torna o livro de autor brasileiro mais lido no sistema de bibliotecas públicas do país[18]. Assim, *O alquimista*, de Paulo Coelho (1988), atinge o primeiro lugar de vendagens na França, Bélgica e Suíça, fato inédito em relação a autores brasileiros traduzidos no exterior[19].

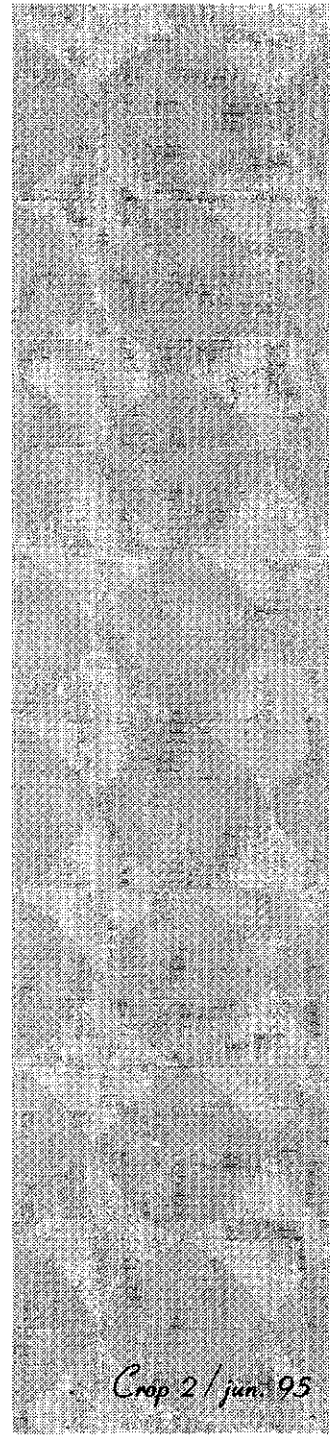
Contudo, a demanda por obras de interesse tópico, em relação ao Brasil, por exemplo, pode, e é, freqüentemente atendida por obras periféricas, de qualidade duvidosa, tais como *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* (P. Matthiessen, 1968), *Brazil* (E. L. Uys, 1986), *The Boys from Brazil* (I. Levin, 1976), *It's All True: In the Cities and Jungles of Brazil* (P. Rambali, 1993) e *Brazil* (J. Updike, 1994), escritas diretamente em inglês, por autores ingleses ou norte-americanos. Desse modo, o interesse "tópico" pelas literaturas traduzidas se choca com o interesse pela literatura periférica ou marginal de língua inglesa, já que todas atendem à mesma demanda do mercado por material exótico. Nesse embate, sai perdendo a literatura traduzida. Como foi exposto aqui, é notória a aversão do público leitor de língua inglesa pelo texto traduzido. O texto traduzido passa, de fato, por um intermediário, o tradutor, e, portanto, muitos o consideram de "segunda mão", inferior ao texto original. É aí que as literaturas escritas diretamente em inglês levam vantagem: são consideradas "originais" e, portanto, de "primeira mão", detentoras de um "valor" que, por definição, a literatura traduzida é incapaz de possuir, como querem alguns.

Fica patente, portanto, que as literaturas africanas, por exemplo, não escritas originariamente em inglês, mas traduzidas em inglês, ocupam um lugar mais periférico do que as escritas originalmente em inglês, fato este já assinalado por Lefevere[20]. Quer dizer, nem mesmo em se tratando de literaturas africanas o interesse pelo exótico e pelo "tópico" é capaz de sobrepujar a aversão pelo texto traduzido. Tal texto é considerado de difícil leitura porque, por exemplo, introduz elementos estranhos (lexicais, fonológicos, imagísticos etc.) à língua meta da tradução. O mesmo ocorre, porém, com praticamente qualquer texto não-europeu produzido em língua européia, como atestam as dificuldades encontradas na tradução de textos literários africanos do inglês para o francês e vice-versa, apontadas por Nintai[21]. É possível concluir, de acordo com Bassnett[22], que a dificuldade que os leitores experimentam com o texto traduzido "não tem nada a ver com a qualidade de uma tradução; tem tudo a ver com o modo como os leitores lêem, incorporando os textos traduzidos aos padrões de familiaridade de seu próprio sistema literário" — ou não.

A literatura traduzida e a construção da identidade

Resta, portanto, aos produtores de literaturas traduzidas em inglês realizar esforços tais como o do Brasil na recente Feira de Frankfurt (1994). Ou esforços maiores como os que vêm fazendo Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna na presidência da Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro e Márcio de Souza como autor, editor e ex-presidente do Instituto Nacional do Livro, para divulgar a literatura brasileira no exterior[23]. De outro modo, a literatura traduzida corre o risco de assumir posição de tal maneira periférica ao polissistema das literaturas de língua inglesa que pode vir a ser totalmente eliminada do sistema.

Os esforços no sentido de fazer traduzir seus textos em inglês e outras línguas dominantes são vitais na medida em que, em primeiro lugar, são os grupos subordinados que precisam ser bilíngües — ou seja, as antigas colônias é que adotam a língua do colonizador e que, portanto, se abrem para a cultura dele. Assim, os grupos subordinados perdem a autonomia na construção da própria identidade, que é forjada também através da imagem que tais grupos projetam para fora. Sendo essa imagem também construída através do texto, é importante que os grupos subordinados lancem mão de seus textos traduzidos em língua inglesa para fortalecer sua identidade, transformando-a numa possibilidade de resistência ao domínio cultural e político.



NOTAS

[1]Para uma definição do conceito de *polissistema*, ver EVEN-ZOHAR, I. Polysystem Today. *Poetics Today*, v. 1, p. 287-309, 1979. Para uma discussão de sua visão da posição da literatura traduzida no polissistema, ver: The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polysystem. In: HOLMES, J. S., LAMBERT, J. e VAN DEN BROECK, R. *Literature and Translation: New Perspectives in Literary*. Leuven, Acco, 1978, p. 117-27.

[2]BASSNETT, S. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1993, p. 143 (minha tradução).

[3]Cf. BRANEGAN, J. And That's a Wrap: In Late Night Poker, Hollywood Folds Its Hand, Finally Clearing the Way for a GATT Deal. *Time Magazine*, 27 dez. 1993, p. 30; HARBRECHT, D. GATT: "It's Yesterday's Agreement". *Business Week*, 27 dez. 1993, p. 30; RICHMAN, L. S. What's New After GATT's Victory? *Fortune*, 10 jan. 1994, p. 39.

[4]VENUTI, L. Introduction. In: — (ed.). *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. London, Routledge, 1992, p. 1-17.

[5]Por exemplo: "The statistics of English are astonishing. Of all the world's languages (which now number some 2,700), it is arguably the richest in vocabulary" (MCCRUM, R., CRAN, W. e MACNEIL, R. *The Story of English*. [1. ed. 1986]. 2. ed. rev. London, Faber and Faber, 1992, p. 10.

[6]NUNES, M. L. *Becoming True to Ourselves: Cultural Decolonization and National Identity in the Literature of the Portuguese-Speaking World*. New York, Greenwood Press, 1987.

[7]MUKHERJEE, S. *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays on Indian Literature in English Translation*. New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1981.

[8]HAMILTON, R. G. *Voices from an Empire: A History of Afro-Portuguese Literature*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1975.

[9]NINTAI, M. N. "The Relevance of a Theory of Translation of African Literature". Trabalho apresentado no Translation Studies Congress, Viena, 9-12 set. 1992.

[10]Id., ibid.

[11]Id., ibid.

[12]SINCLAIR, J. (ed.). *Collins Cobuild English Languages Dictionary* [1. ed. 1987]. 7. reimpr. London, Collins, 1992 (minha tradução).

[13]BARBOSA, H. G. Brazilian Literature in English Translation. *Proceedings of the XIII FIT World Congress*, 6-13 ago. 1993, p. 722-30. Org. C. Picken.; BARBOSA, H. G. *The Virtual Image: Brazilian Literature in English Translation*. Tese de Doutorado, Universidade de Warwick, Inglaterra, 1994 (mimeo).

[14]Vanderauwera já havia chegado a conclusões semelhantes, baseada em análise da literatura holandesa traduzida em inglês. Cf. VANDERAUWERA, R. The Response to Translated Literature: A Sad Example. In: HERMANS, T. (ed.). London, Croom Helm, 1985, p. 198-214; *Dutch Novels Translated into English: The Transformation of a "Minority" Literature*. Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1985.

[15]BARBOSA, *The Virtual Image...*, cit.

[16]LISPECTOR, Clarice. *The Hour of the Star*. Trad. G. Pontiero. Manchester, Carcanet Press, 1992.

[17]CIXOUS, Hélène. *Vivre l'orange/To Live the Orange*. ed. bilíngüe. Trad. A. Liddle e S. Cornell. Paris, Ed. Des Femmes, 1979; L'Approche de Clarice Lispector. In: . *Entre l'écriture*. Paris, Ed. Des Femmes, 1986, p. 113-38 [publicado pela primeira vez em *Poétique*, n. 40, p. 408-19, 1979]; *Reading With Clarice Lispector*. Ed. e trad. V. A. Conley. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1990; Clarice Lispector: The Approach. Letting Oneself (be) Read (by) Clarice Lispector *The Passion According to C.L.* In: JENSON, D. (ed.). *"Coming to Writing" and Other Essays*. Trad. S. Cornell, D. Jenson, A. Liddle e S. Sellers. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 59-77; *Readings: The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Kleist, Lispector, and Tsvetayeva*. Ed. e trad. V. A. Conley. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

[18]BARBOSA, *The Virtual Image...*, cit.

[19]Cf. *O Globo*, 26 jan. 1995, p. 3.

[20]LEFEVERE, A. Anthologizing Africa. In: — (ed.). *Translation, Rewriting, & the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London, Routledge, 1992, p. 124-37.

[21]NINTAI, M. N. African Literature in European Languages: Major Features and Implications for Translation. *Proceedings of the XIII FIT World Congress*, cit., p. 564-72.

[22]BASSNETT, op. cit., p. 45 (minha tradução).

[23]Esses esforços se concretizaram na realização do seminário "Literatura, Livro e Mercado", em 1994 (IBM/Faculdade Cândido Mendes).

Heloísa Gonçalves Barbosa é mestranda na área de LILINA-USP.

"WHAT DID THE AUTHOR MEAN BY SAYING THIS?"

— Changes on Theories on Translation —

MARIA HELENA LUCHESI DE MELLO

Devant un objet aussi vaste, aussi mouvant, il semble que la souplesse soit de rigueur. Il importe de percevoir les activités de traduction dans leur spécificité et de relativiser les points de vue d'où se mènent les réflexions. Sans nier les vertus des synthèses qui s'efforcent de prendre de la hauteur nous avons laissé parler les expériences pour que s'exposent les problèmes, dans leur diversité sans doute, mais aussi dans leur indéniable concordance[1].

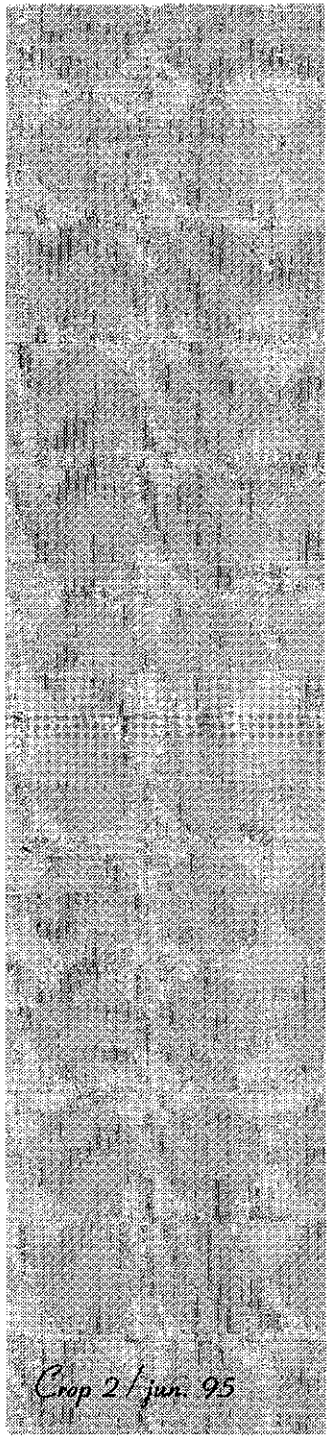
Although we consider that we are living in a time of constant and rapid social change that affects also what we may call literary studies; and although such rapid change causes deep alterations on the presuppositions that support the literary theories, modes and categories which come to us from the past still (under some points of consideration) seem to fit the reality experienced by a new generation of theorists and critics.

At least this is what we see when reading some works that have been produced in the area of translation studies. We cannot, at first, determine what it is that generates this situation — if it is just a question of resisting the process of change or if it is a kind of assumption that some points are still valid. The fact is that even though new concepts of literary forms and modes have been proposed as well as new notions of the nature of literature itself and of the theories of communication and its new role in relation to society have been established, Alexander Tytler's principles of translation, brought out in his *Essay on the Principles of Translation,*[2] can be detected in some theoretical and critical works, although they were first published in the eighteenth century. Tytler was concerned with setting up what he considered to be the three principles of the translation process:

1) the translation should give a complete transcript of the idea of the original work;
2) the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original;
3) the translator should have all the ease of the original composition.

To him, the act of translating can only be carried out successfully by those who have the necessary abilities for such a difficult task. Talent is the key to a good translation.

He also considers that paraphrase leads to loose translations; instead of using it as a device in translation,



one should be able to clarify obscurities in the original, even where it entails omissions or additions. Tytler compares the translator to the painter, considering that if he, on one hand, can not use the same colours as the original, on the other hand he is required to give his picture "the same force and effect" and this is what makes translation a task for few.

> Tytler considers the status of the translator still is that of the "servant-translator," even if he is not an amateur...

To him, translating is concerned with the idea of re-creating the soul of the work of art. There is in fact this problem of re-creation that goes far beyond formal structure; in this sense, what is much needed is the translator's talent, as we have already said, and that leads us to conclude that Tytler's view of translation is that it's a work of art too.

However, he considers the status of the translator still is that of the "servant-translator," even if he is not an amateur (taking into account the accomplishments he possesses in order to be able to circulate the contents and the soul of a given work), because the translator is not the original writer/artist, but merely another artist who was able to realize and understand the original ideas of his predecessor.

Taking into consideration a linguistic approach, we have Cary's *Comment faut-it traduire?*, that accounts for the fact that the theory of translation should consider also the extralinguistic elements and the diversity of genres. Creativity and talent (again) are the qualities of a virtual translator. He is criticized however by Ballard,[3] who says that although Cary considers creativity necessary in order to allow the occurrence of choice of substitutive terms when translating, he does not account for the occurrence of this choice as a linguistic phenomena in a strict sense. That is the idea of translational competence as the union of two skills:

1) the ability to generate, for a given or imagined source text, a series of more than one target text;
2) the ability to select only one target text to propose it as a translation of source text for a given or imagined reception situation, with *justified* confidence.

In translation the translator must be able to justify his/her choices or else he is not a good translator and his translations are an arbitrary product. In this same sense, we can include Levy's proposal of a model of translation; for him one should generate a paradigm and select one option. There is a concept of probability and priorities which means no possibility is wrong, but there are those which are unmotivated. Also like Tytler, Levy considers that the instructions for translation are in the text itself and that there should be compensation along the translation (if the translator is able to improve the given text).

Lederer & Seleskovitch in their *Interpréter pour traduire* go towards the same direction when they say that one cannot give or create a version of a given text in another language if one is not able to interpret it — that the interpretative operation is much more concentrated on the ideas expressed than on the "énoncés eux-mêmes."[4] This distinction they point out — between that sort of translation that comes from a real comprehension of the ideas in the text (deep reading) and that kind that comes from linguistic abilities and knowledge — is also a distinction presented by Tytler, who cares about the translator's real capacity of understanding and penetrating a text's ideas and meanings in order to process a good translation.

Lederer & Seleskovitch also wonder that

> Entre la description d'une langue donnée — le français, l'allemand, le chinois — et l'analyse d'une intention individuelle traduite en une parole — quelles sont les raisons qui amènent X à dire cela? Quels sont les mobiles qui poussent Y à dire ceci? — il y a une place à prendre. Cette place la tradutologie la revendique (p. 264-5).

As we can see, they are concerned with the observation of the translation process at the moment of its effectiveness. Tytler did not think about any specific science, of course; but he too was concerned with observing the translator's acts while translating and also dealt with a

scientific method of describing and prescribing and defining laws, although he could not count on any linguistic apparatus such as we can count on nowadays. However, in a certain way, Lederer & Seleskovitch and Tytler deal with the sense of the text, taking it as the object of any good translation; the act of translating is linked to

> The act of translating is linked to the act of being out in search of sense

the act of being out in search of sense, either interpreting (Lederer & Seleskovich) or as a consequence of the sensibility of a translator-artist (Tytler), although it generally depends as much on the talent of the translator as on the translation method chosen, etc.

What has happened along time is that translation studies have been exploring new ground, linking different areas, like stylistics, linguistics, literary history, semiotics. It has become a kind of "inclusive" theory, which comprehends different areas instead of separating them. Systematic study of translation comes from facing the problems which appear during the process of translating — we believe that it is impossible to exclude and separate practical experience from theoretical discussion as it is impossible to consider that there is such a thing as an ultimate translation, as one of the contemporary conclusions of translation studies is that the process of creating/translating and the functions of creation/translation must be taken account of in a given context. Theories, once proposed, cannot be disconsidered — that is a fact. But more than this, it is necessary to realize that translation represents a process of such a complexity that all theory already existent is not enough yet to start establishing parameters towards an internationalization of translation criteria and answer other "hot" questions which are frequent in this field, specially those related to translation as creative dialogue and the duty of a translator.

NOTES

[1]BALLARD, Michel (org.). *La Traduction plurielle*. Lille, Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1990, p. 12.

[2]TYTLER, Alexander F. *Essay on the Principles of Translation*. London, JM Dent & Co.

[3]BALLARD, op. cit.

[4]SELESKOVITCH, Danica & LEDERER, Marianne. *Interpréter pour traduire*. Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, Didier Érudition, 1986.

Maria Helena Luchesi de Mello é mestranda na área de LILINA-USP.

IMPRESSÃO:
BARTIRA GRÁFICA E EDITORA S/A
(011) 458 - 0255