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DEPARTAMENTO DE LETRAS MODERNAS

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Apresentação

O presente número da revista *CROP 4/5* é uma edição dupla com novo formato editorial que continua com o objetivo de divulgar a produção acadêmica dos docentes e alunos do nosso Programa de Pós-Graduação em Língua Inglesa e Norte-Americana (LILINA), do Departamento de Letras Modernas da FFLCH-USP.

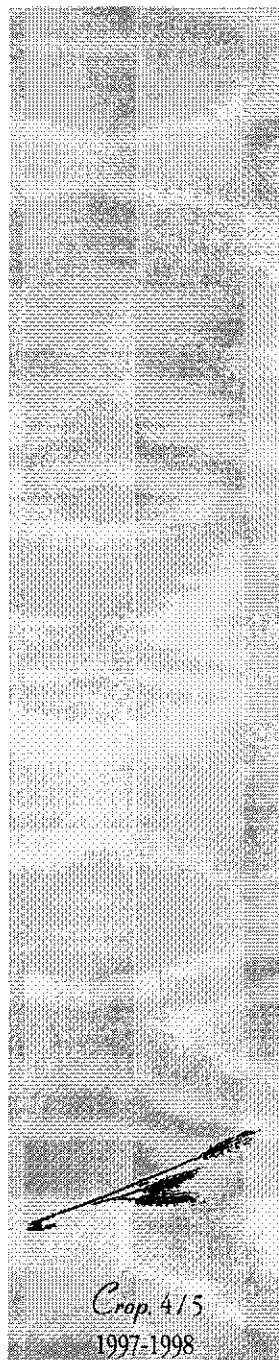
A primeira parte focaliza uma nova área de pesquisa, os *Estudos Culturais*, para o qual se desenvolve um projeto de intercâmbio entre a Universidade de São Paulo e Middlesex University, em Londres, sob a coordenação da Profa. Dra. Maria Elisa Cevasco, e com o apoio do British Council, USP e CAPES. Esta seção contém contribuições de pesquisadores nacionais e internacionais como Sérgio Prado Bellei (UFSC), Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira (UFOP), Sandra Regina Goulart Almeida (UFMG), Bella Dicks (University of Wales, Cardiff) e Julio Jeha (UFMG). Os três primeiros participaram na USP, em outubro de 1997, de um seminário (“*think-tank*”) que reuniu professores do LILINA e representantes dos cursos de pós-graduação de instituições brasileiras e do exterior, como Alan Sinfield (University of Sussex) e Kenneth Parker (University of East London), para refletir sobre os Estudos Britânicos no Brasil. Para encerrar a primeira parte e com o intuito de dar a conhecer os primeiros reflexos do projeto nas áreas de pós-graduação e graduação, publicamos os trabalhos de dois alunos que cursaram novas disciplinas sobre Estudos de Cultura, incluídas nos respectivos currículos do Curso de Língua Inglesa e Literaturas Inglesa e Norte-Americana há dois anos.

Apresentação

A segunda parte recebe a contribuição de pesquisadores e docentes não só de nosso programa como também de outros programas representativos da pós-graduação nas universidades brasileiras, tais como Rajan Kanavillil Rajagopalan (UNICAMP), Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira (UFOP), Sandra Regina Goulart Almeida (UFMG) e Dilvo Ristoff (UFSC), e do exterior nas pessoas de John McRae, com a palestra proferida na Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro, e Göran Kjellmer (Gothenburg University; Sweden), que estará ministrando um curso na área de Tradução na USP, no primeiro semestre de 1999.

Laura Patricia Zuntini de Izarra

*Cultural Studies/
Estudos Culturais*



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Notas sobre os Estudos Culturais, a Crítica Aduaneira e a Crítica Histórica

*Sérgio Luiz Prado Bellei**

How are we to write
The Russian novel in America
As long as life goes so unterribly?

.....
We get what little misery we can
Out of not having cause for misery.
It makes the guild of novel writers sick
To be expected to be Dostoievskis
On nothing worse than too much luck and comfort.

Robert Frost, "New Hampshire," (1923)

1. INTRODUÇÃO

Em ensaio publicado originalmente na *New Left Review* em 1973, Raymond Williams define o que lhe parece ser o problema básico de *todas* as teorias literárias da atualidade e aponta para a necessidade de corrigir tal problema para que, em um segundo momento, torne-se possível pensar um novo método para o estudo do discurso literário e cultural. "Todos os tipos de teorias críticas

* Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

contemporâneas”, diz Williams, “são teorias *de consumo*. Ou seja, têm como objetivo o entendimento de um objeto de tal forma que ele possa ser consumido de forma proveitosa e correta”.¹ São teorias de consumo do objeto tanto aquelas baseadas em conceitos tradicionais como “o gosto” ou a “sensibilidade” estética (a noção de “gosto” apontando de forma exemplar para um certo consumo saboroso), como aquelas mais recentes, a exemplo da Nova Crítica, das teorias do efeito estético, ou até mesmo do Estruturalismo. Trata-se em todos os casos de explicitar o que motiva uma certa forma de consumir, o que levava o crítico a direcionar o foco analítico para os componentes essenciais do objeto a ser consumido, ou seja, para o texto como artefato isolado de suas condições de produção históricas e sociais. Contrapondo-se a essa análise do objeto para o consumo, a contribuição da crítica marxista consistiria precisamente em chamar a atenção também para essas condições de produção do objeto enquanto prática cultural existente entre outras tantas práticas sociais correlatas. Um estilo literário, por exemplo, não seria assim meramente o resultado do uso de certas regras de composição, mas uma forma de produzir textos relacionada a outras formas sociais de produção e consumo em um momento histórico específico. O que se procura em tal estudo é, portanto, o reconhecimento “da relação entre uma forma coletiva (“collective mode”) e um projeto individual” e o exame tanto da atividade de composição como das suas condições de possibilidade.² Qual seria, por exemplo, a “forma coletiva” dessa teoria de consumo conhecida como “A Nova Crítica”, que prevaleceu na academia anglo-americana na primeira metade do século? Quais eram, em

¹ Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory”, in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, ed. Robert Con Davis e Ronald Schleifer (New York and London: Longman), 388.

² Williams, 389.

outras palavras, *as condições de produção* dessa tecnologia profundamente *idealista* de análise *objetiva* de textos que se pretendia capaz de revelar em qualquer texto a *essência* do poético por intermédio da análise que sempre apontava para uma estrutura de contradições em equilíbrio harmônico? Como explica certamente um outro crítico marxista britânico, Terry Eagleton, reinventar o poema enquanto um objeto artístico bem trabalhado (“a well-wrought urn”) para apresentá-lo como antídoto da “objetividade” científica significa, entre outras coisas, precisamente imitar o projeto científico que se quer negar, ou seja, o processo científico de reificação do mundo. “Em resposta à reificação da sociedade”, diz Eagleton, “a Nova Crítica reificou triunfantemente o poema”.³

Se transpusermos a distinção de Williams para o contexto atual de circulação internacional de teorias críticas, será forçoso admitir que, não apenas por uma questão de escolha entre ênfase na produção ou no consumo, mas por questões de ordem geopolíticas e de divisão de capital e trabalho intelectuais, a teoria (seja ela originalmente voltada para a produção, para o consumo, ou ainda para ambos) torna-se inevitavelmente uma atividade de *produção* em certos espaços e de *consumo* em outros. Vale dizer, a teoria é produzida em certos territórios metropolitanos e necessariamente consumida em territórios periféricos que não conseguem produzi-la. Ao ser consumida nessas áreas, evidentemente, a teoria não perde as marcas de suas condições de produção, mas estas tornam-se mais difíceis de ser percebidas em virtude da distância de sua origem. Nesses casos, no consumo da teoria, as suas condições de possibilidade são mais facilmente esquecidas do que no caso do “esqueci-

³ Terry Eagleton, “The Idealism of American Criticism”, *New Left Review* 127 (May-June 1981), 53-54.

mento” feito por opção ideológica no local onde a teoria é produzida e consumida e no qual se torna mais fácil denunciar o esquecimento, que é precisamente o que faz Williams. Nas áreas periféricas, por assim dizer, é “natural” esquecer as condições históricas de produção de um aparato teórico qualquer.

O que tende a acontecer quando se esquece as condições históricas de um aparato teórico no processo de transplantá-lo para outro solo cultural é a sua transformação em uma metodologia a ser aplicada a tantas situações quanto possível. Nessa aplicação mecânica, a *história* do aparato teórico é de tal forma ignorada ou domesticada que tende a perder o seu sentido político de origem por mais radical que este lá tenha sido. Uma alternativa para evitar a idealização metodológica, se aceitarmos a proposta de Robert Frost citada acima, seria simplesmente a recusa de tentar rescrever o texto estrangeiro em solo nativo e incompatível. Ainda que a alternativa fosse possível (e, particularmente hoje, na aldeia global, provavelmente não é), os resultados poderiam ficar aquém do desejado. A própria poesia de Frost é um bom exemplo: querendo ser nativa e descartar outras histórias em um contexto de pouca história e de muita afluência, acaba por voltar-se para a tópica da “natureza” desprovida de história e tende a tornar-se uma poesia alienada. A tentativa de rescrever o texto estrangeiro em solo nativo, por outro lado, só se faz com o risco de reduções brutais já apontado e talvez inevitável.

Um exemplo claro de transformação em metodologia conservadora de um aparato teórico politicamente radical é, sem dúvida, a apropriação do Desconstrucionismo pela academia norte-americana. Qualquer leitor atento (ou até mesmo desatento) que tenta colocar lado a lado um desconstrucionista de Yale como Hillis Miller e o também (mas não talvez primariamente) desconstrucionista Jacques Derrida percebe de saída que tem diante de si textos que não tem muito em comum.

Derrida impôs a si próprio a difícil ou impossível tarefa de questionar o binarismo da metafísica ocidental sem ter outra linguagem disponível para tanto a não ser a própria estruturação binária a ser questionada. Para realizar tal tarefa, utiliza uma estratégia discursiva de resistência ao sentido que acaba por tornar seus textos, particularmente após a *Gramatologia*, mais próximos da poesia do que da exposição filosófica. Miller, por outro lado, tipicamente analisa textos em um discurso transparente e naquele detalhe microscópico característico dos Novos Críticos para demonstrar o jogo livre de significados e a impossibilidade de fixar o sentido textual em sua origem. Enquanto Derrida, por assim dizer, só consegue fazer sentido ao lutar contra o sentido, Miller demonstra em linguagem transparente a teoria de como a linguagem dissemina sentidos sem origem e exemplifica, nessa demonstração, uma metodologia de leitura de textos universalmente aplicável. Essa metodologia, uma vez aprendida, pode ser repetida *ad infinitum*, em contraste com os textos e o estilo de Derrida que, como notaram muitos leitores, *não se deixam imitar ou repetir*. O discurso de Derrida nega a possibilidade de constituição de uma metodologia, o de Miller produz constantemente essa metodologia a ser ensinada e divulgada como prática de análise.

Essa operacionalização metodológica de uma problematização discursiva radical e revolucionária do método e do binarismo, se não faz muito sentido em termos da prática discursiva de Derrida, tem significado preciso no contexto do mercado universitário norte-americano, que necessita para consumo fácil textos de legibilidade máxima capazes de constituir um sistema metodológico *universalizante e sem história* a ser “democraticamente” oferecido a uma intelectualidade (alunos e professores) predisposta a consumi-lo porque mais aceitável do que discursos mais indigestos. Como percebeu Terry Eagleton, essa repressão da história pelo método, característica de grande parte da crítica acadêmica

norte-americana, “leva à negação da materialidade da obra literária (“dematerializing [of] the work”) e acaba por reduzi-la a um espelho no qual o crítico encontra obedientemente refletidas as suas próprias estratégias de interpretação”. Nesse contexto, é difícil não concordar, pelo menos parcialmente, com a conclusão de Eagleton, sempre caracteristicamente marcada pelos exageros de um inconfundível humor ao mesmo tempo fino e ferino. Nas palavras do marxista britânico, “a reciclagem [feita pelos pós estruturalistas de Yale] da obra de Jacques Derrida para consumo na “Yvy League” pode bem ser vista como o último exemplo do imperialismo cultural norte-americano”. E Explica:

Apesar do seu iconoclasmo Nietzscheano, os Derrideanos de Yale representam, como bem observou Lentricchia, “o último refúgio formalista do tradicionalismo”. A celebração que fazem da ausência do momento fundador do discurso (“groundlessness”), de sua capacidade ambígua de escapar dos condicionamentos históricos, depende da estratégia explícita de transformar a história em texto, puro material sem forma esperando pelo contador de histórias. Nesse contexto são eles *renegados* em relação ao seu mestre, que reconheceu publicamente, talvez um pouco tarde, as forças determinadas do autor, da intencionalidade, da matriz produtora e das condições históricas vigentes na construção do sentido, e que negou vigorosamente ser um pluralista. (O grifo é meu)⁴

Como Derrida foi frequentemente tachado de “formalista” tanto por parte de um diletantismo crítico desinformado e irresponsável (o que é meramente irrelevante) quanto da parte de posturas críticas supostamente bem informadas (o que é surpreendente), é importante enfatizar a distinção que mesmo um adversário político como Eagleton faz: não se pode dizer de Derrida o que é verdade dos seus seguidores.

⁴ Eagleton, 57.

Se estes últimos são formalistas, o mestre não o é. No entanto, como estou tentando mostrar, não é surpreendente o fato de uma postura originalmente histórica diluir-se em formalismo e metodologia mecânica ao ser transplantada de um solo cultural para outro. É que, na distância da origem, a história de produção tende mais facilmente a ser esquecida. Mesmo nas poucas repercussões que a obra de Derrida teve no Brasil, as coisas não se passaram de modo muito diverso. Derrida foi também aqui recebido e percebido mais como Hillis Miller do que como Jacques Derrida, e isso até mesmo em discursos críticos inegavelmente sofisticados. Veja-se, por exemplo, as observações de Roberto Schwarz sobre a “filosofia européia, p. ex., de Foucault e Derrida” em “Nacional por Subtração”. Trata-se de filosofia que se especializa em “demonstrar o infundado de hierarquias” que estabelecem que “a cópia é secundária em relação ao original, depende dele, vale menos, etc.” O que esses “filósofos europeus” propõem, segundo Schwarz, é que “seria mais exato e neutro imaginar uma seqüência infinita de transformações, sem começo nem fim, sem primeiro ou segundo, pior ou melhor”⁵. O problema aqui não é simplesmente que se está colocando propostas radicalmente diversas como as de Derrida e Foucault no mesmo saco da “filosofia européia atual”, mas também e principalmente a aceitação não questionada do que ficou conhecido como o “jogo infinito de significados sem origem” e que é aqui mal compreendido como a proposta essencial de um método de análise textual que tenta simplesmente inverter hierarquias. Essa proposta não é a base da “filosofia” (se é que pode ser assim chamada) de Derrida, e muito menos da de Foucault. Schwarz está portanto produzindo aqui precisamente aquilo que critica exemplarmente como “idéias fora de lugar”, ou seja, está *reproduzindo uma*

⁵ Roberto Schwarz, “Nacional por Subtração” in *Que Horas São?* São Paulo, Cia de Letras, 1987, p. 35.

idéia fora de lugar porque distante das suas condições históricas de origem. Não é difícil perceber por que tal distorção redutora do texto de Derrida ocorre em Schwarz. Em primeiro lugar, o Derrida aqui lido não é o francês, mas muito provavelmente aquele Derrida antropofagicamente devorado por Silviano Santiago com o objetivo de derivar de sua obra uma metodologia de leitura de textos brasileiros que os valorizasse mais do que os textos europeus. Falando supostamente de Derrida, Schwarz está na verdade falando de um certo Derrida inventado por Santiago. Em segundo lugar, tanto Santiago como Schwarz exercitam-se (obviamente por motivos diversos) na prática de esquecer a história da produção teórica original que, como estou tentando mostrar, ocorre quase inevitavelmente nas culturas periféricas.

2. CRÍTICA ADUANEIRA E INTERVENÇÃO HISTÓRICA

Por falta de melhor termo, chamemos de “crítica aduaneira” aquela que se exercita na função alfandegária de tornar possível a introdução, em um novo território cultural, de um pacote teórico desprovido de história e transformado em metodologia ou tecnologia de leitura de textos. Transformado em mero instrumental tecnológico, o pacote transforma-se na ocasião para a produção mecânica de sentido, ou seja, transforma-se em uma *semiótica* pura e simples. Vale dizer, a crítica aduaneira é marcada por uma tendência semiotizante que tende a ocorrer mais ou menos intensamente dependendo de quem a pratica e da própria natureza do material crítico. Há pacotes que já vem, por assim dizer, prontos para a semiotização porque negadores da história em sua própria origem, como é o caso do *Estruturalismo* na forma como foi absorvido no Brasil. Lévi-Strauss, Greimas, Todorov e Propp, entre outros, iam aos

poucos tornando disponíveis para setores da intelectualidade brasileira fórmulas para a análise textual que se traduziam em, por assim dizer, manuais de maior ou menor complexidade dependendo da postura crítica aduancira. Na época, um desses manuais foi escrito por Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna e amplamente divulgado. O título do livro, *Análise Estrutural de Romances Brasileiros*, apontava claramente para a proposta básica de aplicação de fórmulas a textos como *O Guarani*, de José de Alencar⁶. Um outro manual, mais sofisticado e menos divulgado, foi preparado por Luiz Costa Lima. *A Metamorfose do Silêncio* consistia em tentativa de utilizar a proposta de análise do mito em Lévi-Strauss para leitura de textos de, por exemplo, Guimarães Rosa⁷. São, evidentemente, estudos desiguais, mesmo levando-se em conta que nos dois casos o questionamento da história nas propostas teóricas originais tornava mais fácil a ausência histórica nas aplicações metodológicas. É que, em Costa Lima, talvez em virtude de uma leitura mais rigorosa e atenta de Lévi-Strauss, problemas de resolução ficcional de contradições sociais, e portanto históricas, tornavam-se mais visíveis na análise.

A semiotização ahistórica que se torna, por assim dizer, natural com o Estruturalismo tende a complicar-se um pouco quando a teoria apresenta-se mais ou menos explicitamente contaminada pela história em sua origem. A teoria que assim chega ao novo território cultural pode ou ser descontaminada da história e transformar-se em pura metodologia ou, quando praticada com mais cuidado e inteligência por uma crítica aduaneira que é preciso agora chamar de *maior* em contraste com uma *menor*, transformar-se em *uma nova forma de intervenção histó-*

⁶ Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna, *Análise Estrutural de Romances Brasileiros*, Petrópolis, Vozes, 1977.

⁷ Luiz Costa Lima, *A Metamorfose do Silêncio*, Rio de Janeiro, Eldorado, 1974.

rica. Nesse contexto, é uma crítica aduaneira menor aquela de Affonso Romano citada acima, ou uma adaptação da nova crítica que se esquecesse de suas origens no conservadorismo sulista norte-americano e na falência da política agrária da década de trinta. Mas uma forma de crítica aduaneira maior pode ser exemplificada no uso do Pós-Estruturalismo feito por Silviano Santiago e brevemente mencionado acima. Na prática crítica como apresentada em *Uma Literatura nos Trópicos* (1978), Silviano apropria-se do aparato teórico de Jacques Derrida e o altera não para transformá-lo em uma metodologia neutra, mas em um instrumento conceitual de leitura de textos capaz de resgatar histórias literárias periféricas e esquecidas. O conceito de “entre-lugar”, por exemplo, não é meramente a fabricação de um método de leitura a partir, digamos, da noção de “traço” em Derrida. É antes uma prática de crítica ao mesmo tempo aduaneira e histórica para valorizar em um contexto internacional discursos culturais e artísticos brasileiros.⁸ Não é por acaso que o subtítulo do volume de Silviano Santiago é “ensaios sobre dependência cultural”. Trata-se sempre, em tais ensaios, de enfrentar, pela apropriação ou devoração antropofágica de material alienígena, o problema histórico doméstico de dependência cultural e de propor para tanto soluções possíveis.

3. ESTUDOS CULTURAIS E HISTÓRIAS LOCAIS

Os três textos da década de setenta aqui brevemente mencionados (os de Affonso Romano, Luiz Costa Lima e Silviano Santiago) são exemplos de crítica aduaneira (menor) ou histórico-aduaneira (maior)

⁸ Silviano Santiago, *Uma Literatura nos Trópicos*, São Paulo, Perspectiva, 1978.

que podem nortear uma breve reflexão sobre a importação, que ocorre atualmente, dos Estudos Culturais para o território cultural brasileiro. Se a história da crítica aduaneira da década de setenta serve de alguma forma para apontar para tendências futuras, é possível sugerir que os Estudos culturais podem ou transformar-se em metodologia mecânica ou tornar-se uma forma de intervenção histórica. No primeiro caso, tornar-se-iam mais uma vez uma forma discursiva de alienação em um contexto social marginalizado que necessita desesperadamente de consciência crítica. E o perigo de tal semiotização apolítica dos Estudos Culturais é real porque vêm eles sempre acompanhados de receitas práticas sobre como fazer e sobre as formas de usar. É possível, por exemplo, fazer o estudo de um discurso literário ou fílmico usando as várias receitas (ou “*approaches*”) disponíveis: a semiótica, a psicanalítica, a sociológica, a marxista, a feminista, a desconstrucionista de Yale, etc. Nesse exercício “crítico” mais ou menos mecânico, seria perdida a lição fundamental que pode ser historicamente aprendida dos Estudos Culturais, ou seja, a lição a respeito de sua vocação original para resistir localmente a *formas específicas de poder opressivo em espaços e tempos históricos diversos*. O problema merece breve explicitação.

Textos fundadores dos Estudos Culturais Britânicos, como *The Uses of Literacy*, de Richard Hoggart (1957) e *Culture and Society: 1780-1950*, de Raymond Williams (1958), revelam já nas origens do movimento certos problemas centrais a serem atacados pela disciplina: a questão do relacionamento entre cultura e poder opressivo; a cultura da classe operária; as implicações da separação de uma cultura de elite das culturas populares e da cultura de massa. Não custa lembrar, nesse contexto, que tanto Williams como Hoggart são originários de famílias da classe operária. O que interessa ressaltar aqui é que esse interesse nas formas de cultura e poder dos grupos marginais, tanto nos fundadores como nos seus seguidores, vai aos poucos produzindo textos críticos

politicamente progressistas em situações históricas locais e específicas, o que acaba por marcar a utilização do aparato conceitual desenvolvido para análise com certas limitações (o conceito de cultura como ‘a whole way of life’, de Williams, por exemplo, não se aplica da mesma forma a trabalhadores britânicos da década de sessenta e da década de oitenta). Um dos textos clássicos dos Estudos Culturais do final da década de setenta, *The “Nationwide” Audience* (1980), de David Morley, é um bom exemplo para se entender melhor o problema. Estudo de cunho etnográfico voltado para um programa da BBC característico da década de setenta, “Nationwide” (caracterizado mais pela preferência por assuntos locais do que nacionais ou internacionais), o livro de Morley desenvolve um instrumental de análise que pode ser de início tentador para ampla aplicação. Tentando entender o exercício de controle ideológico de uma programação de assuntos locais que se apresentava como neutra mas que, na verdade, utilizava mecanismos discursivos para promover a perspectiva de que a categoria do “local” é mais valiosa do que o “nacional” ou o “internacional”, Morley estabelece, em pesquisa de campo, uma tipologia da audiência que ora aceita os valores dominantes apresentados (audiências com certo nível de educação formal, por exemplo), ora os rejeita (grupos de nível educacional mais baixo), ora ainda aceita os valores de forma crítica (audiências que percebem o funcionamento do processo ideológico mas ainda assim aceitam os valores veiculados)⁹. Não há dúvida de que tais categorias tem um certo alcance universalizante bastante parecido, de resto, com o alcance que tem as categorias de análise propostas em 1957 por Roland Barthes para a análise do mito.¹⁰ Tendo tal alcance, poderiam facilmente, por exemplo, ser

⁹ David Morley, *The “Nationwide” Audience: Structure and Decoding*. BFI Television Monographs, 11. London: BFI.

¹⁰ Roland Barthes, “Myth Today”, in *Mythologies*, New York: Noonday Press, 1992.

aplicadas a um programa televisivo como o “Você Decide” da Rede Globo, já que, também aqui, os mecanismos ideológicos operam e a maior parte da audiência que pensa que decide, na realidade, decide muito pouco. Mas valeria a pena, digamos, recomendar a um aluno que escrevesse uma tese em perspectiva comparativa sobre o assunto?

A resposta deveria ser: sim e não. Não, se o estudo em questão significar meramente a utilização de uma metodologia para mostrar o óbvio: que a televisão manipula ideologicamente audiências diversas de formas diferentes. Nesse caso, são ignoradas as situações históricas específicas de exercício de poder e resistência e a generalização a respeito do funcionamento da ideologia (de resto conhecido e previsível) pouco significa. Sim, se o estudo for enriquecido com contextualizações históricas específicas que deixem entrever *diferenças* nas formas como interagem culturas dominantes e culturas de resistência. Tais diferenças poderiam, por exemplo, levar a uma compreensão maior a respeito das razões por que certas formas de resistência cultural são mais eficazes que outras, ou porque certas formas de resistência são inócuas em certos tempos e lugares e eficazes em outros. A Rede Globo e a BBC não são simplesmente “canais de televisão”, mas instituições culturais de exercício de poder cultural tornados historicamente diversos. A BBC, por exemplo, é até os dias de hoje um canal televisivo patrocinado pelo estado e com dinheiro público (o contribuinte britânico, ainda que prefira assistir os canais comerciais de TV, paga um imposto para a BBC) e marcada por vestígios do ideal de uma missão civilizadora que tenta educar o povo e, pelo menos teoricamente, não precisaria fazer concessões excessivas para obter recursos de propaganda. A TV Globo é um empreendimento comercial de mercado que mantém certas relações com o Estado mas que depende da máquina de propagandas e de níveis altos de preferência popular.

Os estudos culturais atualmente em fase de importação para solo nacional, em outras palavras, poderiam tornar-se uma contribuição para a compreensão crítica de problemas locais na medida em que se percebesse não simplesmente como crítica aduaneira divulgadora de metodologias, mas como crítica aduaneira historicamente informada. Se o crítico na periferia, hoje, não pode escapar à condição de crítico aduaneiro, nem por isso deve ele deixar de estabelecer distinções entre diversos tipos de atividade alfandegária para finalmente optar pelo que lhe parecer melhor. Optar, por exemplo, por uma crítica que se exercitasse naquilo que Fredric Jameson chama de “internacionalismo das situações nacionais”¹¹, ou seja, uma crítica que esteja permanentemente atenta às diferenças existentes tanto na situação histórica e estrutural local como na global, o que tornaria possível uma leitura de ambas a partir dessas diferenças. Não é, evidentemente, tarefa fácil, já que o crítico seria aqui forçado a trabalhar com arquivos históricos em volume significativo e de difícil acesso. A alternativa fácil, evidentemente, seria a redução metodológica de aparatos teóricos estrangeiros. Mas, nesse caso, a pergunta necessária, particularmente após a recepção do Estruturalismo no Brasil, que significativamente ocorreu durante o regime ditatorial, poderia ser formulada nos seguintes termos: quem são os beneficiários de, e quem os prejudicados por, uma crítica aduaneira de cunho metodológico?

¹¹ Fredric Jameson, “The State of the Art”, *Critical Quarterly* 29, number 4 (winter 1987), 17-25.

Estudos Literários e/ou Estudos Culturais? Eis a Questão

*Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira**

Fim da literatura, fim da história, fim das utopias – vivemos num mundo que, a se acreditar nos arautos do vazio, assiste aos últimos suspiros de noções que alicerçaram nossa formação acadêmica. As declarações apocalípticas sequer soam uma nota nova. Como o filósofo que, em fins do século XIX, proclamava a morte de Deus, também o poeta pré-modernista passava o atestado de óbito da poesia. “Nada nos resta, tudo já foi dito”, lamentava. À beira do silêncio suicida, Mallarmé, “Hamlet da escritura”, julga ver sua obra num beco sem saída; Valéry aponta para a página em branco como o poema ideal; Rimbaud, mal tendo alçado seu vôo, caminha para a agrafia definitiva. Em nossos dias, Barthes reitera a ameaça de silêncio, e atribui a sobrevivência da literatura à paradoxal necessidade de melhor cantar a sua morte.

Um lançar de olhos à literatura contemporânea faz parecer prematuros tantos atestados de óbito. Eles não impediram a florescência poética de seus próprios signatários, nem o irromper de obras monumentais, logo incorporadas ao cânone ocidental. Com uma ponta de esperançosa ironia, pode-se lembrar que o romance de Proust desponta quase simultaneamente com a pretendida morte da literatura. A obra

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teria nascido morta, caso tivesse sido ouvido o parecer de André Gide, que desaconselhou a publicação de *À La Recherche*, por não lhe reconhecer a forma de romance. O julgamento de Gide apenas serve para demonstrar o quanto a literatura teima em renascer das próprias cinzas: o texto de Proust punha em cheque o próprio conceito do gênero, daí o parecer negativo emitido sobre ele. O atestado de óbito costuma, pois, anunciar na verdade um nascimento, ou renascimento literário, ilustrando a “tradição de ruptura”, que Otávio Paz associa à própria modernidade. Em nossos dias, Barthes, arauto recente das exéquias da arte, confirma a boa convivência de sua pretendida morte com uma renovação ostensiva: o próprio semiólogo contribuiu para a criação de um gênero novo, híbrido entre ensaio crítico e texto literário.

Em horizontes não muito distantes, Borges, outro gigante literário, também não se deixou silenciar por pronunciamentos soturnos a respeito da obra de arte literária, nem lhes pediu licença para publicar suas *Ficciones*. A seu nome poder-se-iam acrescentar muitos outros. Na literatura brasileira, fontes matriciais, também já incorporadas ao cânone internacional, como Clarice Lispector e Guimarães Rosa, Drummond e Cabral, não deixaram de jorrar por medo de se converter em água estagnada. O fenômeno se multiplica nas várias literaturas nacionais. Há que mencionar ainda as literaturas pós-coloniais. Supranacionais, na sua diversidade lingüística e cultural, vêm dando testemunho da possibilidade de rejuvenescimento para as antigas literaturas européias, oferecendo nomes como Soyinka, Walcott, Naipaul, muitos deles agraciados com o prêmio Nobel – reconhecimento oficial acima da avaliação interna de cada tradição nacional.

Essa ininterrupta renovação do cânone, onde cada acréscimo altera toda a série literária anterior, numa permanente transformação do passado pelo presente, nunca deixou de ocorrer. É ela, sobretudo, que

se tem em vista, quando se propõe, por exemplo, o estudo das literaturas das minorias: não para destruir o cânone, mas para enriquecê-lo e alterá-lo pela voz dos excluídos. Diante disso, parece difícil retomar a proclamação da morte da literatura, ou da arte em geral. A obra nova, ao mesmo tempo causa e consequência da renovação do gosto e dos padrões culturais, continuará possibilitando a re-leitura até de textos recentes. Ela está sendo elaborada, desconhecida, ainda, talvez diante de nossos próprios olhos, sem nos pedir permissão. Aguarda o momento, milagroso e fortuito, quando a “comunidade interpretativa” oficializar sua existência. É fácil prever essa renovação, embora seja impossível precisar sua data: a história literária pode ser entendida como um contínuo movimento de sístole e diástole, expansão e contração, esgotamento e renovação, continuidade e ruptura. Não há como declarar dogmaticamente que vivamos um período marcado pela tendência ao primeiro ou ao segundo termo dessas séries. Só se pode afirmar que os movimentos de renovação continuarão a existir; a arte, contrariamente à profecia de Hegel – já desmentida pela produção de mais de um século – não está moribunda, sequer parece próxima dessa condição.

A diversidade dos seres humanos aí está para evidenciar que, para certos indivíduos, o fator decisivo para a comunicação será sempre o estético, sem que, por isso, sua obra e seu relacionamento com outros seres dotados de um *make-up* mental semelhante sejam desqualificadas como objeto de estudo. O elemento estético, dominante na obra literária, dificilmente deixará de existir, enquanto houver seres que, pela produção ou pela recepção ativa, possam ser chamados de artistas. Desconhecer seu trabalho como objeto de análise constituiria restrição, para não dizer discriminação, injustificável.

Estas considerações nada originais podem ser justificadas pela explosão de análises que, na prática de alguns profissionais de nossa área, parecem preferir o estudo de textos como documentos culturais,

independentemente de sua qualidade literária. Estarão partindo da premissa implícita da morte da literatura? A premissa parece desmentida pelos fatos, de forma tão evidente que não seria necessário recapitulá-los. Ora, se a arte literária continua viva, por que deixaria de ser objeto de análise? E quem deveria dedicar-se a essa análise, senão profissionais como nós, filiados a instituições voltadas para os estudos literários?

Procurando ver o outro lado da questão, poder-se-ia tentar justificar o abandono dos estudos literários em favor dos culturais, lembrando a relevância intrínseca dos últimos. Ela é tão indiscutível quanto a vitalidade do fenômeno artístico; tal como a existência da obra de arte, impõe-se como evidente, não necessita de comprovação. Altamente discutível é que a relevância do fenômeno cultural elimine a do fenômeno artístico, a necessidade e /ou a viabilidade de seu estudo, ou, ainda, que a análise do objeto estético elimine necessariamente o conhecimento do social, ou com ele se mostre incompatível. Mesmo o mais alienado dos textos literários permite a abordagem cultural e pode ser usado de forma a denunciar mais incisivamente o conluio freqüente entre arte e ideologia.

A abordagem centrada na *differentia specifica* da obra literária não implica no abandono do elemento cultural. O estético, inseparável do humano, é sempre já cultural, percorre o mesmo campo de estudo, entrecortando-o em todas as direções possíveis. Eliminar o elemento cultural na análise literária constituiria discriminação não menos injustificável que ignorar o fator estético. Ignorar o cultural, e, com ele, o social e o político, implica necessariamente na aceitação tácita do *status quo*, constituindo uma opção política não menos clara e repreensível pelo fato de poder ser silenciosa.

Urge, pois, fugir do Caribdis do esteticismo tanto quanto da Scylla de um culturalismo demasiado vasto e flutuante, onde o objeto de análise

se torna-se quase impossível de definir. Acreditando na necessidade de evitarem dois extremos igualmente indesejáveis, refiro-me a uma abordagem integradora, situada na interface do literário e do cultural, a qual, sem ignorar os elementos estéticos da obra, volte-se também para seus aspectos contextuais mais amplos. Essa abordagem pode ser exemplarmente ilustrada, entre nós, pela crítica de Antonio Candido.

Tomemos como exemplo o seminal “Dialética da Malandragem”. Partindo de um traço francamente literário – a impropriedade do conceito de pícaro para *Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias* – Candido acaba oferecendo uma análise da sociedade brasileira do século passado. Priorizando o estudo da forma literária, mas movendo-se sempre entre a ficção e a realidade (como comenta Schwarz em texto recente), o crítico termina por esboçar uma esperança utópica. Herdeiro de homens nascidos em condições sociais adversas, mas marcados por um talento consumado para a arte da sobrevivência, o brasileiro, acredita Candido, poderá um dia dar ao mundo o exemplo de uma sociedade menos puritana, mais tolerante e humana, que a moldada pelo capitalismo.

Essa análise do romance de Manuel Antonio de Almeida constitui um modelo insuperável da conciliação de estudos literários e culturais que aqui defendo. No ensaio de Candido, nenhum aspecto fica a descoberto. A atenção à forma literária não significa o abandono do substrato ideológico que, consciente ou inconscientemente, impregna qualquer discurso. A atenção simultânea ao literário e ao cultural lembra os dois lados indissociáveis de uma mesma moeda, como na antiga imagem saussurreana, ou, como quer Amado Alonso, o vínculo indissolúvel entre significado e significante.

O modelo oferecido por Candido aponta para uma tradição nacional que não temos o direito de ignorar. Sua relevância para a literatura contemporânea pode ser facilmente demonstrada. Tomemos como exemplo as literaturas pós-coloniais em língua inglesa. Nascidas de sociedades outrora colonizadas, podem ser estudadas com proveito a partir de um recurso formal característico da literatura de nossos dias: o uso de um certo tipo de paródia, que simultaneamente critica e homenageia o texto parodiado, revelando, nas palavras de Linda Hutcheon, a “discontinuidade irônica revelada no âmago da continuidade, a diferença, no âmago da semelhança”. Lida sob esse aspecto, a obra de autores tão variados como os negros canadenses George Eliott Clarke e Dany Laferrière, os caribenhos Ian McDonald, Hazel D. Campbell, V.S. Naipaul e Earl McKenzie, a escritora indiana Bharati Mukherjee (hoje residente na América do Norte) e N. Scott Momaday, descendente de índios peles-vermelhas, pode revelar uma nova atitude estética e política: a troca daquilo que Said denomina “retórica da censura” por uma postura humorística, ocasionalmente épica ou lírica, no tratamento das questões levantadas pela colonização. A forma paródica insinua uma incipiente superação dos justos ressentimentos do passado, em favor de um redobrado interesse pela construção das nações pós-coloniais.¹

A lista de exemplos focalizando a literatura contemporânea poderia prolongar-se *ad infinitum*. Limito-me a acrescentar um: a possibilidade de uma abordagem simultaneamente formal e cultural da obra de Clarice Lispector. Seus aspectos feministas podem ser investigados a partir de imagens recorrentes, marcadas pela aversão aos estereótipos convencionais para a representação da identidade feminina. A inusitada

¹ Ver, a respeito, Oliveira, Solange Ribeiro de. “Post-Colonial Literature in English: The Wrong End of Telescope”. *Anais do XXVII Seminário para Professores de Literaturas em Língua Inglesa*. Ouro Preto, Imprensa da UFOP, no prelo.

associação entre a maternidade e um mundo puramente animal, a conjugação da busca da identidade feminina com a imagem de uma centaurea, representam pontos de partida estimulantes para a penetração do texto clariceano.² Ou, ainda, a oposição seco/molhado, associada ao trajeto entre o nordeste e o sul do país, podem servir de base para um estudo que articule os aspectos estilísticos, sociais e políticos do romance de Clarice.³

A abordagem exemplificada, que explora a interface entre o cultural e o estético, pode, evidentemente, ser adotada de formas muito diversas, pouco importando que se parta do aspecto formal para o cultural, ou, pelo contrário, do político-social para o estético. O primeiro procedimento responderá à pergunta: qual o objetivo do *modus operandi* literário observado no texto? A que configurações culturais, ideológicas, ou sócio-políticas remete esse procedimento formal? Igualmente profícua, a segunda estratégia buscará desvendar os aspectos formais responsáveis pelo viés cultural e político subjacente à obra. Em cada caso específico, a escolha do ponto de partida, de um ou de outro ponto da escala que articula o literário e o social, será decidida em função do gosto individual do crítico ou das exigências do próprio texto.

Afinal, o que se propõe é simplesmente a articulação não hierarquizada dos elementos culturais e estéticos. Como no seminal texto de Candido, essa conciliação permite uma abordagem, não apenas sólida e pertinente, mas também a mais adequada para a sobrevivência da análise.

² Ver, a respeito, Oliveira, Solange Ribeiro de. "Rumo à Eva do Futuro: A Mulher no Romance de Clarice Lispector". *Remate de Males*. Campinas, (9) 95-105, 1989.

³ Ver Oliveira, Solange Ribeiro de. "The Dry and the Wet: Cultural Configurations in Clarice Lispector's Novels". *Feminisms: Brazilian Perspectives*. Oliveira, Solange R. and Still, Judith (eds). Manchester University Press (in press).

se literária a modismos e parafernália críticas, que, como em outros aspectos das sociedades de consumo, propõe sucessivos objetos descartáveis, destinados a aguçar o apetite para o próximo lançamento. (Eis aqui um tópico bastante sugestivo para um estudo cultural.)

Gostaria de acrescentar um breve comentário a respeito de estudos que, embora empreendidos em departamentos de Letras, e visando à formação de profissionais na área, dedicam-se a objetos de interesse cultural, mas desprovidos de caráter estético. Tais estudos estariam mais bem situados, creio eu, em outros departamentos, cujo alvo específico seja o sócio/cultural e o político. Sendo primordialmente análises culturais, não interessadas em aspectos literários, tais estudos poderiam inserir-se num currículo como o da Universidade de East London, cujo título é, especificamente, *Estudos Culturais*. Tendo seu alvo claramente indicado pelo próprio nome, esses estudos privilegiam qualquer texto de interesse cultural, tenha ou não cunho literário. Nos catálogos dos seminários, incluem-se títulos de disciplinas intituladas, por exemplo,

England and the Empire; Histories, Popular Cultures, Social Identities: England 1780- 1914

ou

Knowledge, Truth and Power; Modern Times; Cultural Change in the Late Twentieth Century.

No material bibliográfico referente a cada curso, os textos literários constituem exceções, e, em alguns casos, nem existem. Nada mais coerente: o tema dos cursos é claramente cultural, e o cultural não inclui necessariamente o literário.

É bem diversa a condição dos estudos literários. Tendo o estético como sua marca específica, incluem, entretanto, obrigatoriamente, o cultural. Mostra-se útil aqui a definição de Clifford Geertz, que conceitua como culturais “as configurações de sentido transmitidas historicamente.” Cabe ao estudioso da literatura delinear as formas estéticas adotadas para tecer essas redes de sentido.

Também vale lembrar outro exemplo da Universidade de East London: seu *Curso de Estudos Literários*. Voltado para a formação de um pesquisador/profissional provavelmente semelhante aos nossos graduados, é totalmente independente do *Curso de Estudos Culturais*, com uma bibliografia própria, pontilhada de referências literárias e críticas típicas de nossa área. *Estudos Literários e Estudos Culturais* são, pois, nessa Universidade, dois cursos distintos e autônomos. Embora com enfoques diversos, haverá certamente disciplinas que possam ser ministradas em ambos os cursos: trata-se, afinal, de vasos comunicantes, e não de compartimentos estanques....

Para concluir, esclareço que não estou sugerindo a adoção desse modelo bipartido no Brasil. Mil variáveis teriam de ser avaliadas antes de sequer considerar tal hipótese. Estou apenas tentando discutir tanto a permeabilidade quanto as divergências que simultaneamente aproximam e opõem os estudos culturais e os literários. Minha proposta resume-se, apenas, na continuidade da tradição brasileira tão brilhantemente exemplificada pela obra de Antonio Candido. Sua conciliação da abordagem cultural com a literária (que, instintivamente, muitos de nós sempre adotamos na sala de aula) impõe-se como a mais defensável – pelo menos enquanto ainda não se verificar a morte efetiva desse cadáver sempre adiado que se chama literatura. Até lá, poderemos dizer: A LITERATURA NÃO MORREU! VIVAM OS ESTUDOS CULTURAIS!

A Crítica Feminista no Âmbito dos Estudos Culturais: Uma Interrupção Indesejada?

*Sandra Regina Goulart Almeida**

Cultural studies does not, of itself, afford a sufficient place from which to speak.

Alan Sinfield

Os estudos culturais têm, desde seu surgimento sobretudo nos países de língua inglesa, encontrado respaldo em uma prática política de oposição e confronto e à produção de significado através das relações de poder (Wilson 367). Têm sido, ainda associados a uma forma de resistência de culturas periféricas e marginais a discursos hegemônicos. Segundo Alan Sinfield, o materialismo cultural de Raymond Williams, vertente teórica inglesa que serviu de base para o que se denomina “estudos culturais”, investiga “the historical conditions in which textual representations are produced, circulated and received. They engage with questions about the relations between dominant and subordinate cultures, the implications of racism, sexism and homophobia, the scope for subaltern resistance, and the modes through which the system tends to accommodate or repel diverse kinds of dissidence” (9). Dentro da mesma perspectiva, Lídia Curti chama aten-

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ção para o fato de que os estudos culturais têm, desde o início, privilegiado as margens; na verdade, segundo ela, os estudos culturais nasceram nas margens de um discurso hegemônico (135).

Dois aspectos centrais dos estudos culturais merecem ser destacados quando se discute seu alcance, limite, campo e mesmo objeto de estudo. Em primeiro lugar, como adverte Stuart Hall, os estudos culturais, apesar da aparente abertura de enfoque e da ênfase em discursos múltiplos, plurais e trajetórias várias, sendo constituídos por um número de diferentes metodologias e posições teóricas, devem se limitar ao que ele denomina de “the arbitrary closure” (o fechamento arbitrário), isto é, devem ser capazes de estabelecer o âmbito das discussões que os norteiam e os diferentes posicionamentos que os constituem. Em suas palavras, embora admita que tenha, por muito tempo, sido discutida a desejada amplitude dos estudos culturais, “it does matter whether cultural studies is this or that” (263).

O segundo ponto de destaque está relacionado à suposta marginalidade e deslocamento dos estudos culturais, uma marginalidade ameaçada pela iminente institucionalização e apropriação desses estudos pelo “centro”, principalmente através de sua implantação em currículos de cursos universitários na Europa e Estados Unidos. Mas como observa Stuart Hall com relação ao momento de grande “perigo” da institucionalização dos estudos culturais, “dangers are not places you run away from but places that you go towards” (273), isto é, faz-se necessário enfrentar e questionar o problema que por hora se configura. Para Hall, o risco iminente, que se observa sobretudo no contexto americano, traduz-se num esvaziamento dos discursos de poder através de uma textualização superficial dos vários discursos presentes nos estudos culturais, discursos estes que abordam aspectos da política, raça, classe, gênero, marginalidade, dominação, exclusão, alteridade, dentre outros. (274).

Dentro do âmbito da discussão sobre a suposta marginalidade dos estudos culturais e sua inerente conexão com os discursos distos “periféricos”, cabe ressaltar a ambivalência da posição dos estudos de gênero, em especial dos estudos da mulher e da crítica literária feminista, face aos estudos culturais. Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda salienta a importância que o pensamento feminista adquiriu, nestas duas últimas décadas, como expressão de uma “tendência teórica inovadora e de forte potencial crítico e político”, mediante ao que ela percebe como “a ineficácia dos discursos contestatórios da atualidade” (7). Tal importância se deve ainda pela interferência dos estudos de gênero no rumo originalmente determinado para o desenvolvimento das teorias críticas contemporâneas como, por exemplo, o pós-modernismo (Owens 61) e os estudos culturais (Hall 268). Argumenta-se mesmo que os estudos feministas abriram caminho para outros questionamentos de discursos periféricos.

Dentro da mesma perspectiva, Stuart Hall estabelece dois momentos altamente positivos e produtivos na teorização dos estudos culturais, para os quais ele desenvolve a metáfora do trabalho teórico como “interrupção”. Esta interrupção externa provém, em primeiro lugar, dos estudos feministas e, em segundo, dos estudos de raça. O feminismo, por sua vez, causou uma “ruptura” no caminho teórico dos estudos culturais definida por Hall nos seguintes termos: “As a thief in the night, it broke in; interrupted, made an unseemly noise, seized the time, crapped on the table of cultural studies” (268-269). O negativismo e a violência da metáfora da invasão, da apropriação ilegal e da dessacralização empregada por Hall explicita claramente a resistência com a qual os estudos feministas foram recebidos no âmbito das teorizações dos estudos culturais, e a conseqüente necessidade de fazer desta rejeição inicial uma aceitação incondicional, isto é, de “forçar” uma entrada, de “questionar” posicionamentos, de “interromper” um fluxo crítico ou-

trora contínuo. Como sugere Ann Wilson, os estudos culturais nem sempre estiveram conscientes dos estudos de gênero e por isso mesmo, o problema da convergência das duas disciplinas se configura no fato de que os estudos culturais acabam por tornar-se um outra forma de tradição intelectual europeia que, historicamente, não tem acomodado o interesse das mulheres, em especial das mulheres de culturas não europeias” (367).

A resistência dos estudos culturais ao feminismo não impede, entretanto, que eles tenham uma agenda em comum que reside em um engajamento político que vai além dos limites disciplinares acadêmicos. Tanto os estudos da mulher como os estudos culturais têm em comum uma forte ligação com bases políticas localizadas além do âmbito acadêmico, como observam Sarah Franklin, Celia Lury, and Jackie Stacey, em *Off-Centre: Feminism and Cultural Studies* (1).

A crítica feminista contemporânea tem, de um modo geral, se dividido ao discutir a viabilidade dos estudos culturais como forma de articular as questões de gênero. Por um lado, esta ligação proporcionaria uma visão do posicionamento da mulher na sociedade através de diversas formas de expressão cultural, permitindo, assim, uma análise mais diversificada e menos unificadora. Permitiria ainda a participação do projeto feminista num contexto cultural mais englobante tendo-se o cuidado, entretanto, de preservar suas características específicas.

Por outro lado, tal confluência, segundo alguns críticos, levaria a um esfacelamento dos estudos da mulher, uma vez que estes correriam o risco de perder sua especificidade própria ao se aliar a outras formas de expressão culturais. Ann Wilson, por exemplo, teme que nuances do debate sobre certos assuntos específicos dos estudos de gênero se percam e que as mulheres, mais uma vez, fiquem relegadas a uma cate-

goria indiferenciada em que “a mulher”, seja visualizada como o outro que define o imaginário masculino. Mais importante ainda, como salienta Charlotte Brunsdon, esta ligação poderia ocasionar um “double-shift of intellectual work for women”, que resultaria no surgimento de duas esferas dos estudos culturais: um ligado a aspectos culturais gerais (“the boys carried on with the state, the conscious and the public”) e outro especificamente relacionado à problemática feminista (282). Isto levaria não somente ao isolamento dos estudos feministas dentro do âmbito dos estudos culturais, como também a uma dupla função dos críticos feministas de fazerem distintamente crítica cultural e de gênero. As feministas do “Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies” da Universidade de Birmingham, como relata Brunsdon, optaram por se constituírem em um grupo fechado apenas para mulheres, cujo resultado foi o indesejável “double-shift” de que ela nos fala acima (283). Wilson atena ainda para o perigo do feminismo se ligar a uma área de estudo que pode vir a se caracterizar pela atualidade e “moda” (“fashionableness”) de suas propostas, que, por sua vez, tendem a se desvincular do caráter político e questionador das relações de poder.

Entretanto, faz-se necessário argumentar que fica cada vez mais problemático, no limiar do ano 2000 e face a uma cultura globalizante e pluralizante, sustentar uma prática discursiva feminista excludente. Gostaria, portanto, de focar e, para tanto, questionar a tendência da crítica feminista no fim deste milênio; afinal, poderá ela ficar às margens do debate sobre os estudos culturais? Como observa Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, “alguns estudos de ponta, sintonizados com a urgência da renovação e ampliação da área de investigação sobre a mulher, começam a questionar as atuais categorias de análise feministas e enfrentar o desafio de pensar a situação da mulher em relação a um sistema mundial de produção, reprodução e comunicação pós-industrial na era de uma ‘informática da dominação’” (17).

Dentro deste debate, torna-se relevante focalizar o posicionamento específico do discurso feminista latinoamericano através de seu *lôcus* próprio de enunciação, debatendo-se e questionando-se a aceitação, ou mesmo a rejeição, de modelos deste debate, principalmente no que tange os estudos culturais, que são, em sua grande maioria, como já mencionado, provenientes de culturas hegemônicas.

Por um lado, mesmo o transplante acrítico dos parâmetros dos estudos culturais para a realidade latinoamericana deve ser avaliado e questionado. Walter Mignolo salienta que o “Terceiro Mundo” não é apenas um lugar a ser estudado, mas um lugar de onde se fala, um *lôcus* de enunciação alternativo, cujo “centro” foi deslocado, multiplicado (123-124). Portanto, faz-se necessário articular esta vertente dos estudos culturais a partir deste *lôcus* de enunciação, deste lugar de onde se fala, deste outro centro que é a América Latina. Partindo desta relevante argumento de se focalizar em especificidades próprias, Jon Stratton e Ien Ang salientam que um questionamento dos estudos culturais deve insistir em uma resistência à universalização e, em contrapartida, em uma insistência na importância do posicionamento local. Argumentam, entretanto, que “what cultural studies needs to do if it wants to avoid universalization is not just valorize any asserted particularity, but reflect on the concrete processes of particularization itself, and to interrogate its politics” (367). Stratton and Ang debatem ainda sobre a necessidade de se posicionar, ao mesmo tempo, numa perspectiva local e internacional de modo a quebrar a dicotomia vigente entre o local e o internacional, na medida em que todos, de alguma forma, falam de uma posição localizada dentro da distribuição de poder global. Este argumento quando direcionado para as confluências ou divergências entre os estudos culturais e de gênero se traduz numa importante questão de posicionamento, como sugere Hall (264).

Esses diferentes posicionamentos são relevantes mediante às tendências finisseculares que evocam uma globalização massificante através da economia de mercado e de um pluralismo neoliberal, levando a uma glorificação acrítica dos conceitos de multiplicidade e desterritorialização, observado sobretudo na teorização que rege muito dos estudos culturais feitos hoje, como observa Maria Elisa Cevalco (33-34). Apesar da aparente visão inovadora, essas tendências vêm, por vezes, colaborar para preservar uma posição unilateral de mundo, remetendo a um universo aparentemente plural, mas que se revela unificado espacial e temporalmente.

Em termos da crítica literária feminista, faz-se necessário uma certa cautela diante de tendências tão universalizantes e generalizadoras que aparentam englobar um número diversificado de teorias, posicionamentos e sujeitos, como é, por vezes, o caso dos estudos culturais, quando na verdade acabam por rotulá-los de maneira massificadora. O feminismo de final de século, como observa Maria Consuelo Cunha Campos, não mais se apega a uma agenda de reivindicação da igualdade, como ocorria anteriormente, o que Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda chama de “crítica do desagravo” (11), mas se apóia em noções contemporâneas de diferenças. Há, contudo, o risco de, através da utilização do rótulo de “diferenças”, limitar-se a reproduzir posições estereotipadas pois, segundo ela, “as **diferenças** têm um alvo contra, que é a hegemonia excludente de todas elas” (p. 132).

As tendências finisseculares que têm afetado o posicionamento da crítica feminista contemporânea apontam para pontos nevrálgicos da questão que se observa sobretudo no feminismo latinoamericano, a saber, a transposição de teorias globais e provenientes de um discurso crítico tradicional de uma cultura dita dominante (que se define por ser de centro e masculina), como se observa nos estudos culturais; e a

conseqüente assimilação de pressupostos teóricos feministas provenientes de uma cultura européia e/ou “primeiromundista”. Tais posicionamentos não satisfazem a crítica literária latinoamericana que deve, antes de tudo, estar voltada para não somente para a posição da mulher em uma sociedade patriarcal, mas sobretudo à posição “terceiromundista” da mulher latinoamericana. Como observa Márcia Navarro, é preciso pensar especificidades críticas que reflitam a condição feminina e a produção literária feminina na América Latina através, sobretudo, de uma “resistência ao uso mimético das teorias do primeiro mundo” (p. 39). Embora não seja possível “passar ao largo das grandes questões que mobilizam os debates teóricos críticos contemporâneos”, como salienta Rita Schmidt (120), faz-se necessário, contudo, problematizar os modelos teóricos advindos do primeiro mundo, sobretudo com a forte interferência do debate atual sobre os estudos culturais, levando-se em conta as especificidades de um discurso feminista latinoamericano.

Há que se pensar a posição da mulher latinoamericana não em relação a uma multiplicidade generalizada, mas através da heterogeneidade de sua situação socio-cultural específica examinando as diferenças como “diferenças de posicionamento”, como sugere Brunsdon (284). Um questionamento de tais posições impedem generalizações e interpretações globalizantes ao mesmo tempo que enfatiza, não uma multiplicidade genérica, mas uma multiplicidade de códigos, quer sejam sociais, sexuais, raciais ou políticos, através dos quais se manifesta um discurso feminista resistente à unilateralidade do discurso hegemônico, que os estudos culturais correm o risco de se tornar como observam vários críticos (Hall, Cevasco, Sinfield). Como observa Nelly Richard, um feminismo latinoamericano deve dar conta da heterogeneidade de posições culturais que levam a leituras pluralizantes, pois um feminismo latinoamericano se concebe “como um feminismo no de *la* diferencia

sino de las diferencias: um feminismo que postula múltiples combinaciones de signos y 'transiciones contingentes' (Laclau-Moufflé) entre registros heterogeneos y plurales de identificación sexual, de participación social y de lucha cultural contra el menú conformista (passivizante) de las indiferentes diferencias que promueve el pluralismo institucional e de mercado" (744).

A necessidade de se pensar as particularidades do contrato socio-cultural latinoamericano leva à problematização das noções do "lócus" de enunciação da mulher latinoamericana. Afinal, como argumenta Alan Sinfield, em relação aos estudos culturais, "The ultimate question is not What texts do you study? or What do we say? but Where do we speak from?" (17). Os estudos culturais por si só não constituem suficientemente um espaço de onde se possa falar (34). É necessário que se enfoque, que se valorize, o que ele chama de *subculturas*, dentro dos estudos culturais de modo que as especificidades próprias de cada discurso não se percam em generalizações englobantes. Segundo ele, "subcultures are important, then, because they constitute *partially alternative subjectivities*" (18).

Para os estudos de gênero, sobretudo o feminismo latinoamericano, tal conceito se traduz em diferenças de posição ou em uma questão de "posicionamento", da valorização do lugar de onde se fala, do estabelecimento de uma subcultura qualquer, dentro de um âmbito maior que é o dos estudos culturais. Faz-se necessário, principalmente, abrir um espaço, ocupar uma posição mesmo que esta seja inicialmente refutada, mas que venha a tornar-se um espaço pioneiro que contribua para forçar os limites, as fronteiras dos estudos culturais. Uma posição contrária acabaria por relegar os estudos de gênero ao silêncio e à sua consequente exclusão dos discursos que nor-teiam a crítica contemporânea. Mesmo que a crítica feminista tenha entrado para os estudos cul-

turais pela porta dos fundos, como um “invasor”, um “ladrão” disposto a desbancar a hegemonia do discurso masculino nos estudos culturais, pode-se afirmar que contribuiu de forma altamente positiva, através do impacto causado, para estabelecer um espaço de articulação e questionamento, sem contudo, permitir o esvaziamento de seu discurso político.

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The Production of Heritage Culture* And thoughts on the question of determination in cultural studies

*Bella Dicks***

INTRODUCTION

A key contemporary site for the mediation of public history is the new generation of local heritage centres and ethnographic ‘living museums’, where a particular construct – the culture and working lives of ‘ordinary people’ – is put on display. These heritage centres claim to offer the public something different from the traditional heritage fare of castles, stately homes, the estates of celebrities, national collection museums, and so on. They aspire to present the public with a mirror of its historical self, framed as ‘the people’s history’, and thus consciously align themselves with vernacular as opposed to official historiography. In the UK, these sites are located primarily within particular locality-based industrial work-cultures, such as coal-mining in the Northwest (the Wigan Pier Inheritance Centre), in the North-East

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(Beamish Open Air Museum), and in South Wales (the Rhondda Heritage Park), steel-making and manufacturing in the Midlands (Black Country Museum), early industrial iron-making in Shropshire (Ironbridge Gorge), and so on. In the rest of Europe, too, particularly in the north, there is a proliferation of small, independent or publicly-run museums celebrating the lives of 'ordinary people' and their occupations, lifestyles and domestic environments.

What all these sites have in common is an exhibitionary grammar which eschews traditional museum principles of display (artefacts in glass cases) in favour of the logic of interpretation (people in environments). In this sense, they embody an ethnographic, quasi-anthropological principle of display which insists on two things: that the object of display should not be the elite or ceremonial but the everyday order of life, and that the material culture on display should be fully 'interpreted' so that all artefacts appear in their 'natural' settings: in cottages, houses, workplaces, public meeting-places, etc. This has meant that a central aspect of their exhibitionary logic has been the principle of reconstruction. The older rural sites typically have genuine workers' houses brought on to site from various locations and reconstructed in situ to form a recreated 'village'. These kinds of sites are not new: their origins are in the ethnographic museums of folk life in Sweden that began with the opening of Skansen in the last century (Bennett, 1995; Sandberg, 1995). They were slow to catch on in the UK, however, and the Museum of Welsh Life (then the 'Welsh Folk Museum') was the first of its kind to open here in 1948.

Since then, however, these sites have been joined by newer ones concentrating instead on the industrial communities of steel and coal. Many of these newer ventures are distinguishable from the earlier ones in two respects. Firstly, they are primarily conceived as key developments

in local economic *regeneration* strategies – intended to bring in the ‘leisure pound’ and to create jobs lost with the demise of the industries and communities they represent. This regenerative function means they are subject to particular commercial pressures, as this paper will discuss. Secondly – for want of the large capital budget and land acreage required for full-scale reconstructions – they have taken advantage of new electronic media to provide interpretation through *simulation* rather than reconstruction.

In academic commentaries, these new heritage centres have tended to be interpreted as part of a general late-modern ‘heritage boom’, and have been discussed alongside the appearance of other cultural sites for signifying the past – such as retro-style urban developments (e.g. quayside developments playing heavily on historical associations of particular places, such as the Albert Dock development in Liverpool), new-build urban architecture quoting past styles, the growth in retro consumer items (from 50s styling in dress to old-fashioned telephones and wrought-iron bedsteads), and so on. In this sense, they have received critical attention as indicators of a popular ‘turn to the past’ as a general feature of (late/post) modernity (Harvey, 1989a; Jameson, 1991; Bauman, 1992; Baudrillard, 1994; Lash & Urry, 1994; Huyssen, 1995).

These commentaries have fallen into two camps. There are those analyses, mainly from the humanities, which concentrate on the **cultural and ideological** developments underpinning the heritage boom, seeing it as indicating, for example, a contemporary ‘waning of historicity’ through the ‘flattening out’ of historical depth-narratives (Jameson, 1991), as a symptom of national political decline (Hewison, 1987) and right-wing populism (Wright, 1985), or, conversely, as pointer to a renewed post-1960s popular engagement with unofficial ‘history from below’ (Samuel, 1995). On the other hand are those analyses which focus

instead on the **economic** developments which give rise to the urban heritage explosion. Urban geographers and sociologists have been concerned about the commodification of history for economic restructuring and the enlistment of heritage in the marketing of towns and localities (Harvey, 1989b; Corner & Harvey, 1991; Sadler, 1993; Massey, 1995; Bagguley et al., 1990).

In both accounts, heritage is seen as a general means of *appropriating* the past: either as a cultural and ideological force, or as an economic, capitalist strategy for shifting vast amounts of tourists and consumer goods around the country. In this sense, Crang (1994) notes that heritage practices tend to be conflated together into one 'master signifier' of generalised contemporary trends. Local heritage centres have too often been subsumed in analyses which fail to distinguish between their particular appeal and, say, the popular appeal of castles or theme parks. Recent arguments call for a more detailed attention to the specifics of the different kinds of enterprise which are subsumed under the general accolade of heritage, and a concern that the particular significance of local heritage centres has been neglected (Macdonald, 1996; Crang, 1994, Urry, 1996). Thus, more focused accounts have begun to emerge which concentrate on particular heritage centres and which acknowledge the differences among them (Bennett, 1995; Macdonald, 1997, Crang, 1994).

Bennett (1995), for example, sees a clear difference in the appeal made by Beamish Hall in the North-East and by The People's Palace in Glasgow, arguing that the latter offers the visitor a more enlightened and emancipatory experience of history than the former. Macdonald's (1997) study of a Skye heritage centre investigates the specific local cultural context of its development, and Crang (1994) looks in depth at the exhibitionary practices of a canal-work heritage centre in order to

interrogate the particular appeals it makes. In the important edited collection *Theorising Museums* (Macdonald and Fyfe, 1996), Urry (1996) makes the point that we need to look in depth at *how* popular historical sense-making and reminiscence come to be translated into public sites of heritage display. In other words, we need to add the missing dimension of *the local* to analyses of heritage which see it as merely symptomatic of wider cultural/economic conditions.

Analyses that fail to consider this local dimension are operating – though rarely explicitly – with a particular model of determination which reduces it to symptomology (i.e. particular cultural forms emerge as ‘reflections’ of wider cultural/economic trends). At the same time they replicate an unhelpful division between economic and cultural levels of explanation. Heritage is seen either as a *cultural* arena for the playing out of narratives of the people, place and the past, or as an *economic* commodity for appropriation in the uneven dynamics of restructured capital. By contrast, a more nuanced and complex view of determination would bring together analysis at the general and local levels, and enable heritage to be analysed as the intersection of *both* economic and cultural processes and conditions. What is needed is the kind of detailed research on encoding and decoding (cf. Hall, 1980) which television and other sites of mediation have received. Little has been written about how heritage centres came into existence and how their narratives of history take shape.

Through confronting the question of determination, we can examine the social, economic and cultural relations through which local heritage centres have developed, and discover, rather than assume, what forces underlie their historiographical imaginaries. I thus want to approach heritage as a case study for seeing how the concept of determination can be enlarged and made more flexible through

reconciling analysis along the local/non-local and cultural/economic axes. I have selected a mining heritage centre in South Wales, UK – the Rhondda Heritage Park² – as an example of the kind of new-breed heritage centre I have been describing. I will first present a preliminary

² The case-study presented here is drawn from doctoral research undertaken by the author (Dicks, 1997). A description of the RHP visitor experience is as follows: The Rhondda Heritage Park (RHP) presents the story of the 'Black Gold community'. Set within an old Victorian colliery, the exhibitions – comprising walk through reconstructed shops, three audio-visual multi-media presentations, a walk-through guided tour underground culminating in a thrill ride to the 'surface', and various displays and mining artefacts around the colliery yard – aspire to tell the story of a traditional South Wales mining community. This history of a people-in-place is displayed within the confines of what was once just a place of work (a colliery), but which has now been transformed into a space that contains and displays much more than this – the 'community of the Rhondda'.

The first stop on the visitors' itinerary is the first multi-media show housed in the immense stone-built Bertie Winding House. They are led inside by a Guide, himself an ex-miner, who is dressed in the garb of a 1950s collier, with lamp, helmet, battery case, work clothes and blackened face. The winding engine room is in darkness as the visitors arrive. They sit down. Suddenly, a tableau is illuminated, composed of life-sized figures. It is a mid 19th century family, speaking in Welsh, just at the start of the Rhondda's rapid industrial expansion as a world class producer of coal. A disembodied voice booms out of the darkness. It belongs to Bryn Rees, a local miner, who is the cipher for the story that is about to unfold. As he speaks, a series of slides begins to flash across a suspended screen high up in the vaulted ceiling, showing scenes from the Rhondda. Bryn introduces his grandfather and father too, who, together with voices from historical figures illuminated in *tableaux vivants* in different areas of the building, tell the history of the origins and development of the 'Black Gold community'.

At the end of the show, the Guide returns to pick up his group, and escorts them out of the back of the Bertie winding house, into the 'cage' at the top of the Bertie shaft, to make the descent down into the 'underground experience': 'A Shift in Time'. At the end of their tour underground, visitors are led into an awaiting dram-like carriage. The lights go out, an underground roadway suddenly stretches out on a screen in front, and the dram 'sets off' on a jerky and disorienting thrill ride back to the 'surface'.

discussion of some of the problematic issues involved in reconciling cultural and economic analysis within a cultural studies agenda, and will then go on to consider how the selected case study can illuminate these debates.

CULTURAL STUDIES AND DETERMINATION

In cultural studies, determination has been fruitfully configured through the theoretical construct of articulation (Hall, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1994). This construct was developed through an awareness of the need to understand the effectivity of social practices in the production of culture, without falling into economic determinism or reductionism. Articulation brings analysis of *texts and contexts* together, in that it shows how particular discourses and 'ways of seeing' become embedded in particular social practices which link them (articulate them) to other discourses and institutionalised 'ways of seeing'. In this perspective,

When the visitors alight from the carriage, the Guide is ready to escort them to the fan house, where they sit down to watch the second audio-visual show. Narrated by Neil Kinnock, it tells the story of the social and cultural history of the 'Black Gold community'. Here, there is a particular emphasis on the role that women played in the life of the coalfield, detailing the arduous nature of their daily lives as wives, daughters and mothers of miners. All kinds of 'Rhondda traditions' are described and illustrated by means of a slide show projected on the screen.

The final show takes place in the Trefor winding house, which houses the colliery's original steam winding engine. Bryn Rees reappears and, again with the aid of life-size figures, projected images and sound effects, he tells of his life as a miner at the Lewis Merthyr colliery. Visitors hear about the changes in working conditions and organisation of the colliery since his grandfather's day. When the narrative reaches the 1950s, the lights come back on and visitors have come to the end of their encounter with the 'Black Gold community'.

culture is not directly expressive of social or economic relations, but is 'relatively autonomous', in that the same set of images and narratives (e.g. nationalism) can be mobilised in quite different political projects. No one social set of interests (class, political grouping, race, etc.) 'produces' a corresponding set of ideas and images. Instead, there is 'no necessary correspondence' between the sphere of culture and the sphere of the social or the economic – although Hall himself has hung on to the Althusserian notion of determination 'in the last instance' – later amended to determination 'in the first instance' (Hall, 1986, 1994).

However, the nature of this determination remains ambiguous and a somewhat neglected domain in Hall's post-1980s work. Sparks (1996) argues that 'the central concerns with the problem of determination and the nature of ideology have more or less disappeared' from contemporary cultural studies as a whole (1996: 96). This is perhaps an exaggeration, as the work of Kellner (1995), in particular, illustrates. It rather depends how cultural studies is defined, and who is taken to be inside or outside of the cultural studies project. There is little doubt, however, that the preoccupation of cultural studies with ideology and, later, discourse, has tended to establish the domains of texts, styles, images, narratives, etc. as its quintessential fields of enquiry. In the process, sustained analysis of the relations between these and economic, social and political organisation has figured much less prominently (McGuigan, 1992; Ferguson & Golding, 1997). This is in spite of the fact that the concept of articulation in itself offers a very productive means of making just these kinds of connections.

It is arguable that the careful specification of relations among different practices that would characterise such an approach has been a particular casualty of the postmodern turn in cultural theory. Firstly, the very project of *locating* meaning as such has been destabilised by

deconstructionist thinking, which challenges the concept of signification. The notion of the 'audience' as subject-position and the text as a structure of meanings have both come under attack within the postmodernist conspectus (Chen, 1991). Secondly, the specification of different and separable sites of analysis (the social, the economic, the cultural, the political) has also been subjected to question by the increasing recognition of the inter-penetration of these sites. If many in cultural studies have been impressed by the undoubted potency of the postmodern insistence that signs and discourses are central to the category of 'the economy', it is mainly from within political economy that the reverse insight has been forcefully aired – that culture is in turn centrally concerned with economic circuits of commodity exchange and particular patterns of capital ownership and control.

The specification of determination appears to involve identifying an originating practice or moment which determines all others, and thus may strike the cultural analyst as simplistic and overly preoccupied with one sphere of influence. However, determination does not have to be thought in this way, as this paper will suggest. Recently, there have been major concerns expressed about the textualism of much current cultural studies work – for example Morley (1997), and there is a growing conviction that cultural studies needs to expend more energy on coming to terms with the social and economic organisation of culture (Grossberg, 1995). Grossberg nevertheless wants us to accept that political economy and cultural studies ultimately have different trajectories and different sets of motivations, and need to proceed as separate disciplines. Kellner (1997) on the other hand, argues that the divide in itself is a false one and that the study of media culture cannot proceed devoid of insights from political economy. Kellner is not afraid to use the word 'determination': 'The system of production often determines what sort of artefacts will be produced, what structural

limits there will be as to what can and cannot be said and shown, and what sort of audience expectations and usage the text may generate' (1997: 105).

This paper follows Kellner in arguing that analysis has to proceed at both the cultural and economic levels, without reducing one to the other, and without losing sight of their inter-penetration. We need fully to acknowledge the centrality of signs and discourses whilst still appreciating that other 'central' practices (the flow of finance, the circuits of commodity distribution, the organisational structures of socio-economic and political institutions, etc.) are inextricably entwined in the production of the cultural sphere. Clearly, we are confronted with a situation in which the linear logic suggested by deterministic analysis (if this happens, then that happens, and so on) and by reductionist analysis (this can all be traced to that) is not appropriate for capturing the intense interconnectivity of different practices. This also seems to be Hall's current thinking, who, unconvinced of the Baudrillardian move from a necessary recognition of the complexity and multiplicity of cultural codes to an assertion that representation is therefore at an end, argues instead for continuing the project 'of having to recognise what is new, and of struggling to mobilise some historical understanding of how it came to be produced' (in Grossberg, 1996: 137).

Thus to accept that the economic is thoroughly sign-saturated does not mean that there is no longer any distinction between different levels of analysis. In television studies, for example, as well as analysing the tv text (as in textualist analysis) and looking at audience readings (as in ethnographic approaches), we should not neglect to study a) how that text was literally constructed (the spatio-temporally located process of *encoding*) and b) how that process of construction is itself located in wider regimes of both ideology *and* the ownership/ control of

distribution, that constitute its limits and its direction (the historically-contingent conditions of the social/economic and cultural fields). Analysis of specific texts produced for an identifiable audience (such as tv programmes and heritage displays) constitutes one level of analysis. But that analysis is, in my view, infinitely enriched if a second level of enquiry is opened up: the analysis of the contexts and processes of the production of that text. The rest of this paper is an exploration of how such an analysis might look. The objective is to see how 'the economic', 'the social' and 'the cultural' can be brought together to account for the production of heritage displays, without falling into a reductionist position which destroys the full specificity and 'relative autonomy' of different practices. This task is carried through via the conceptual construct of articulation.

ARTICULATIONS OF HERITAGE

How can we define the 'field of production' (cf. Bourdieu, 1984) of heritage? The production of heritage is not simply about the encoding of displays (texts) *per se*, but also about how encoding is determined through the articulation of specific historically contingent social practices and cultural discourses (contexts). In Foucauldian terms, the production of heritage is a site constituted by a network of relations of power (Foucault, 1979), and it is the job of the analyst to reconstruct those relations and to trace the ways in which they intersect to form a particular historic 'assemblage' of practices. So, the construction of heritage centres is not only about the putting together of particular narratives and displays, or the construction of particular built spaces into an 'itinerary'. It is also about the field of power relations within which these diachronic processes are located. The construct of articulation can aid such an

endeavour through its recognition of the contradictoriness and contingency of particular historical formations (such as heritage) whilst also alerting one to the continuities and embeddedness of the structural relations of power which give rise to a variety of such formations in any given space/time location. Whereas Foucauldian analysis focuses on the intersection of discourses, articulation uncovers linkages/breaks at all levels of the social formation.

To try and reconstruct or to make visible this field of power relations is to make successive moves outwards from the object of analysis itself. As in other forms of cultural production, the production of heritage enlists and co-opts, and is enlisted and co-opted by, a range of social forces and discourses which are not directly 'about' heritage itself. In other words, different kinds of practice are brought into alignment with each other (articulated) so as to produce a unity. The task of cultural analysis is to deconstruct this unity, by reconstructing the articulations through which it is produced. Instead of seeing these articulations as being between two levels of the social formation (as in the separation between 'culture' and 'economy'), it is more helpful to think of them linking different kinds of *practice*.

Hall's (1980) paper on Encoding/Decoding was centrally concerned with exploring a theoretical approach capable of dealing with television texts in their full contexts of production and consumption, and for this reason remains arguably the most valuable theoretical model for cultural studies, even today. In that paper, Hall suggests a useful analytic nomenclature that distinguishes between 'relations of production', 'frameworks of knowledge' and 'technical infrastructure'. Using these terms, we can examine how discursive formations (frameworks of knowledge) and organisational formations (relations of production) are articulated together through particular technologies (technical infrastructure) in the production of heritage culture.

As I have indicated above, this kind of cultural analysis requires reconstituting the fields of relations within which the heritage texts³ themselves materialised. Two levels of analysis are implied here. Some of these fields relate quite narrowly to the local specificities of the geographical area in which the heritage centre is located. Thus, one realm of analysis comprises the more local 'frameworks of knowledge' and 'relations of production' through which the heritage site takes shape. A wider realm of analysis is provided by attending to how these local specificities are themselves embedded in regimes of significance which are not specific to the locality in question (but which impinge upon it in important ways). Rather than moving directly from a macro analysis of modernity to the emergence of heritage centres, or producing a micro analysis of particular heritage centres themselves, articulation requires examination of the relations between the wider and local contexts of production. We have, then, to look at both the local and the wider picture in order to understand the production of heritage. The following section takes each of these in turn.

THE PRODUCTION OF HERITAGE: THE WIDER PICTURE

In relation to the Rhondda project, these wider sets of conditions include:

³ By 'heritage texts' I mean the ensemble of communicative media that confronts the visitor at the RHP and which tells her/him about the 'heritage of the Rhondda'. Specifically, I focus on the three multi-media shows housed in the three winding houses, which tell the history of the colliery and of the Rhondda (the 'Black Gold Community').

1. the restructuring of the British economy in the 1970s and 1980s in which venture capital abandoned certain geographically located sectors of the economy (heavy industry, coal-extraction and manufacturing) leaving huge swathes of unemployment and dereliction in its wake, and turned its attentions instead to the service (particularly tourism and retail) and information sectors (Allen & Massey, 1988). The wholesale closure of the mining industry in the Rhondda by the mid 1980s and the failure of industrial diversification left the area with endemic problems of high unemployment, high rates of ill health, and a dwindling and ageing population (Rees & Rees, 1980; Cook, 1982; Massey, 1984);
2. a global/local nexus in which globalising economic forces (conglomeration, concentration, instantaneous commodity transfer, global banking, etc.) increasingly depend on local micro centres of production that can respond flexibly to market fluctuations (Robins, 1991). This means that local areas and regions are not merely subsumed within globalising flows of capital, but are increasingly important in developing a critical mass of local expertise to support bids for particular specialised areas of production (Goodwin, 1993). In the Rhondda's case, the entrenched relations of core-periphery from the earlier era of heavy industry has meant that such an attempt has been unsuccessful – thus stimulating hope in other solutions, such as tourism;
3. the increasing pressure on deindustrialised localities to market their identities competitively as destinations for tourists as well as cultural spaces for local people, by selling particular images of a specialised identity – through heritage and the culture industries – that can aid 'civic boosterism' and thus attract capital back (Jarvey, 1989b; Sadler, 1993). In the Rhondda's case, this involved rigorously promoting

the Valleys (via the RHP) as a vibrant, re-greened, post-industrial, leisure-oriented land of opportunity, in which the topography and buildings of old industry could be repackaged as a tourist attraction;

4. the simultaneous, and contradictory, pressure on localities to compete for access to any public money going that can aid this project of attracting inward investment by businesses: this means producing a set of images for the administrators of public funding (in the Rhondda's case, these were primarily the Welsh Office and its quangos such as the Welsh Development Agency and the Wales Tourist Board) that proclaim the *neediness* and burdens of the local area (Robins, 1991);
5. a political discourse from Whitehall in the 1980s which eschewed central planning, job creation and regional aid, and which simultaneously reduced the autonomy, financial health and effectiveness of local government in areas of declining income (by setting up local development corporations, training and enterprise councils, etc. to bypass local government) (Harvey 1989b). In the South Wales Valleys, this has meant that local areas are particularly vulnerable to the machinations of quangos and government agencies (Massey, 1984);
6. the restructuring of the tourist industry around stratified lifestyle destinations addressing people's social identities, rather than merely offering mass activities and a simple escape from work, as had previously prevailed (Urry, 1990). This has produced new categories of tourist destination, including the industrial heritage of coal mining communities;

7. new technologies of video and audio production, and computer-controlled simulations, which allow quite complex non-mechanical recreations of historic places and times;
8. an increasingly vigorous consumer culture which celebrates the acquisition and cultivation of lifestyle identities through the activity of consumption, and which is particularly focused on accumulating commodities that signify 'the past' as a means of expressing authenticity and 'roots' (Featherstone, 1991). This has helped to underpin musicalisation and the 'heritagisation' of town centres;
8. a de-differentiation and a pseudo-democratisation of cultural identities and products, such that the realm of elite or high culture is deprived of the automatic esteem it previously held, and is replaced by proliferating sites of 'ordinary cultures' (Bauman, 1987; Lash & Urry, 1994);
9. a desire for access to an ever-expanding repertoire of narratives of history and identity, in which 'the History' of the nation fragments into histories that tell 'the stories' of different groups of people (Huyssen, 1995). This is related to an expanding popular enthusiasm for the preservation of local historic buildings and sites not officially deemed as 'national heritage' (Samuel, 1995; Urry, 1995);
10. the continued and invigorated currency of 'images of community', in which the traditional work-based community is held up as a popular political ideal in nostalgic discourses harking back to the 1950s and the 1930s (Bauman, 1991);
11. proliferating forms of visual mediated culture (through the multiplication of tv channels, videos, computer games, advertising,

and so on) which create diverse sites of spectatorship, and establish the 'gaze on the other' as a core feature of late-modern social relations. Key developments in visual culture are placing an increasing premium on ever more sophisticated simulation techniques (Burnett, 1995).

All of these conditions (and this is not an exhaustive list) can, and have, been brought into play in order to account for the emergence of heritage as a key cultural form in Europe and the US in the late twentieth century. Clearly, many of these phenomena are inextricably related to each other, and could not occur without these parallel developments at different points in the social formation. Some of these developments appear to be 'economic' in origin (such as numbers 1-4), and others appear to be purely 'cultural' phenomena. Yet there is little to be gained, and much to be lost, in going through the list and labelling them in this way. For example, should the 'turn to the past' be seen as a cultural or an economic phenomenon? Is it merely the result of capital's search for new commodity markets? Or is it an expression of popular grass-roots disillusionment with the artificial lifestyles on offer in the post-war marketplace? Clearly, it can be read as both, as Harvey's (1989) and Samuel's (1995) respective analyses illustrate.

Through the concept of articulation, it is possible to show how, although there is 'no necessary correspondence' between what happens in the economic market and in the cultural sphere, there are nevertheless always complex linkages available at any one time that enable new cultural forms to emerge. It is the job of cultural analysis retrospectively to reconstruct these linkages and to see how they all work together – not in a conspiratorial way but in relations of historical contingency and inter-dependency. In this sense, the above list serves the purpose of delineating a series of linked transformations in the cultural and

economic spheres which paved the way for the explosion of local heritage centres that occurred in the 1980s. In terms of political economy, local areas such as the Rhondda were politically weakened as well as asked to provide for themselves through participation in the economy of signs and images. In terms of popular culture, a vigorous set of consumption-oriented identities were becoming visible and desirable – via the public display of community, tradition, industry, place and the vernacular. To say that one of these levels produced or was produced by the other and thereby accounts for the heritage phenomenon is to fall back on reductionism.

THE PRODUCTION OF HERITAGE: THE LOCAL PICTURE

Let us take two of these wider discourses – the discourse of entrepreneurialism in economic regeneration and the discourse of popular historicism and preservationism – and examine how they are articulated with local social relations in the Rhondda. In fact, these were two separate seeds that were being sown in the Rhondda as the 1970s gave way to the 1980s. This was the decade of rapid deindustrialisation and colliery closure in the South Wales Valleys, and many old mine workings were being cleared and slag-heaps grassed over in an effort, administered by the Welsh Development Agency and funded from central government via the Welsh Office⁴, to create a new image for South

⁴ The Welsh Office is that wing of the British civil service that administers many areas of political policy in Wales, and which has been particularly active in pursuing economic regeneration strategies in the ex-mining Valleys of the south.

Wales in the bid to replace the thousands of jobs lost. Although some diversification had been achieved in the 1970s, the Valleys entered the 1980s with considerable problems of high unemployment, out-migration, and a growing economically-inactive section of the population (Rees and Rees, 1980).

As Thatcherite free-market approaches to urban renewal became consolidated and a generalised hostility to public sector sponsored job creation took hold in central government in the UK, the Welsh Office increasingly framed its policies within that wider 'entrepreneurial' model of regeneration discussed above. Indeed, in the Valleys themselves, and increasingly throughout the 1980s, there has been a right-wing populist 'revisionist' current which seeks to disassociate the area from connotations of proletarianism and mining, and which looks instead to the cultural space of Cardiff and the M4 corridor for its inspiration, to the re-greening of the Valleys and their transformation into commuter villages and post-industrial leisure spaces (Humphreys, 1994).

In opposition to these images has been a strong tradition within local mining families and within local Council circles, that the area's mining heritage is a source of pride and deserving of greater public recognition than it has so far received. As a result, as the last but one colliery in the Rhondda (the Lewis Merthyr Colliery) closed in 1983, there was a vigorous campaign by certain local mining enthusiasts connected to the mining industry to save the colliery as a memorial and a museum dedicated to the Rhondda's mining history. I have called this elsewhere a memorialist discourse (Dicks, 1997). This memorialist discourse is linked to that wider popular 'turn to the past' noted above, but is imbued with specific characteristics in the local social sphere.

In the Rhondda, local specificities include the fact of rapid de-industrialisation, a wide sense of disillusionment with the policy-makers' promises to provide alternative employment, the beginning of the bitterly-fought Miners Strike in 1984, and a particular local political culture heavily imbued with a 'labourist' ethos of the dignity of manual labour, the desirability of collectivism as opposed to individualism, and a strong allegiance to the ideal of community (cf. Rees, 1997). Decades of Labour Party hegemony in the Valleys (and the marginalisation of Plaid Cymru⁵) have produced a traditionalist, rather ageing council membership underpinning this labourist political culture which insists on the identity between place and occupational base. It has long used the images and rhetoric of community to try and stem the flow of jobs from the mining industry (unsuccessfully), and to plea for regional aid (somewhat more successfully).

During the Miners Strike, when the local activists were campaigning for a museum of local history to act as a popular-educational resource for future generations, the project of preserving the Lewis Merthyr Colliery suddenly became noticed by those in the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) who were convinced of the efficacy of leisure/tourism solutions to urban renewal in the Valleys. They were looking for a suitable project to pursue, which would steer the local Councils away from their traditional reliance on building more industrial units or encouraging regeneration through manufacturing. The heritage project at the Colliery seemed to fit the bill. However, it was not a project to be entrusted to Rhondda Borough Council alone, in whose dominion the colliery lay. Instead, the WDA set up a consortium⁶ to further the

⁵ The Welsh Nationalist Party

⁶ The consortium comprised two Borough Councils (Rhondda and neighbouring Taff Ely) as well as the County Council (Mid Glamorgan), the Wales Tourist Board, and was dominated by the Welsh Development Agency.

project, and in the process, transformed it into an entrepreneurial vision of large-scale, leisure and tourism-based regeneration. Plans now hinged on a massive three-site development integrating the mining museum idea with a garden-festival-style development including country parks, a ski slope, chairlift, forest walk and camp, a retail development, a railway museum and a steam train to connect all parts of the Park together.

When the plans for the preservation of Lewis Merthyr Colliery were taken over by this consortium, the labourist and memorialist agendas were effectively taken over too, in that the Rhondda Borough Council and the group of Rhondda mining enthusiasts who had originally proposed the idea of a commemorative museum lost control of the project. Instead, it became subject to that post-1980s planning discourse discussed above, which divides space culturally into specialised landscapes and destinations of work and leisure (Shields, 1992; Zukin, 1995). It mutated into plans for a multi-plex concentration of different elements – from retail centres to business units to heritage attractions and open green spaces – to be part of the Welsh Office attempt to forge a new set of place-myths for the Rhondda, replacing the images of industry with those of post-industrial renewal. The Rhondda Heritage Park was to offer everything that the Rhondda previously had not: a diversified and leisure based economy that incorporated its coal-mining heritage only as *one aspect* of a much wider commercial plan.

The images were to be varied and eclectic – in direct contrast to the sedimented and established place-myths of the Rhondda enshrined in its mining traditions. Thus the labourist desire to display the virtues of community *were* to be accommodated (in the actual colliery buildings of Lewis Merthyr through the three audio-visual shows and the underground tour) but were relegated to just one small part of a much wider development – most of which celebrated the end of mining and

re-greening, rather than the traditions of mining themselves. However, as things turned out, this vision was never achieved, and the multiplex site never materialised⁷. Instead, the funding package collapsed and development was concentrated at Lewis Merthyr alone – ironically as the original intention had been. This is what it still constitutes to this day⁸ – a small heritage site housed in old colliery buildings.

However, although the RHP by 1994 had shrunk back to the Colliery site alone, the discourse of entrepreneurialism continued to haunt the project as it had done throughout the 1980s. In fact, the Lewis Merthyr Colliery site eventually became the major attraction, but was required to *do the same work as* the multiplex whole. Thus it was to commemorate mining, provide leisure and ‘fun’ spaces, deliver profitability, be entertaining as well as informing, and so on. It was not, above all to be limited to a ‘mining museum’ but was to fulfil the same regeneration and image-marketing objectives as the original proposals, albeit on a smaller scale. In this commercially-driven model, the accepted model

⁷ The reasons for this failure are indicative of contradictions inherent in the entrepreneurial model (see Dicks 1996). When one of the consortium members, Taff Ely Borough Council, was taken over by Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist Party, it severed its associations with the Rhondda Heritage Park, and the funding package collapsed.

⁸ Although an ironic footnote to the story is now possible, in that – with local government reorganisation in Wales in 1996 which removed County Councils and replaced them with reconstituted single-tier councils – all the original development land now lies once more under the control of a single local authority: this time jointly controlled by Rhondda, the Taff Valley and the Cynon Valley. However, as this is one of the poorest local authorities in the whole of the UK, and the Welsh Office has lost its enthusiasm for funding large scale leisure developments, it's unlikely that the RHP will expend much further. The advent of the Welsh Assembly in 1999 however, may once more shift the political ground, although in what direction is currently unclear.

of development became that of commissioning outside consultants actually to carry out the work – commercial interpretative and design companies that can be seen as representatives of the so-called ‘heritage industry’. This is a methodology developed in the 1980s and based on an ideological commitment to bringing in the private sector to public projects through the insistence on competitive tendering to outside consultancies.

The perversity of the situation is striking. Here were local government officers, some of whom were intimately acquainted with the local area through both residence and occupational sphere, along with an assortment of locally-placed mining and local history experts and enthusiasts, including the vestiges of local NUM lodges, many of whom were initially available and eager to provide the project’s creative and historiographical direction. Yet the business of doing local heritage is reserved for an army of outside consultants, who are specifically *not* tied to the local area. Indeed, the consultants were chosen because of their track records in *other* local heritage projects, such as the White Cliffs of Dover Experience, the Yorvik Viking Centre and the Wigan Pier Inheritance Centre. What is valued is the general ability to do the geographically-varied job of general ‘interpretation’, rather than the intimate and place-specific knowledge of local residents and workers.

Through the consultancy model, a series of consultancy reports were produced over the course of the 1980s and early 1990s which passed down through the development years an emerging concept of what was to constitute the visitor experience at the RHP. The question is: did the marginalisation of local people and their stories, and the entrepreneurial relations of production at the site, themselves determine the nature of this concept? If they did, one would expect to see reflected in the multi-media shows eventually produced at the RHP fairly bland and dis-placed narratives, relying on an audience-friendly, predictable

and generalised evocation of ‘the traditional mining community’. Yet the narratives produced through the audio-visual shows are not this. Instead, they construct a story which goes into considerable detail about the miners’ struggles for better conditions, and describes (some of) the strikes and disputes which have characterised the industry in South Wales. The evocation of the Rhondda, though full of common-places, also succeeds in detailing the social history of the Valleys in surprising depth.

Such surprises can be explained by remembering that consultants have to work within the local sphere and with locally-derived stories and historical materials. They cannot merely ignore the locality and present visitors with a generalised theme-park version of an any-place ‘Community World’ – for that is not what heritage centres are about. Thus encoders have to search out ‘local detail’ and ‘local stories’ to put the flesh on wider tropes. This immediately short-circuits the easy project of banal representation, since it involves encountering local social subjects in local social space. In the Rhondda project though, because local people’s involvement had been seriously marginalised due to the relations of production described above, consultants had little choice but to search out the voice of local vernacular history themselves. The strategy employed by consultants to retrieve the sense of local authenticity that the project required was to look for a local historian as script-writer for the audio-visual shows. Having no access to residents’ oral history, they were desperate to find someone who would give the project a recognisable local identity.

In the end, they had no choice: local councillors (committed to the labourist discourse) ensured that they chose the only eminent local historian with ‘roots’ in the Rhondda’s mining industry. Ironically, therefore, they were confronted with a scriptwriter who was committed to that form of historiography consistent with the labourist (even

socialist-humanist) discourse of community discussed above. In this way, a left-wing narrative found its way into the scripts 'on the ground', in spite of all the talk from on high of post-industrial and entrepreneurial renewal. The three scripts the historian produced were subsequently translated into the consultants' 'creative treatment' – which provided a dramatic narrative with dips and highs for ensuring the visitors' emotional involvement, and which staged spectacular encounters between historical personalities in the form of the *tableaux vivants*. The resultant audiovisuals, in fact, emerged as complex hybrids. Through them, two discourses were articulated together: a historiographical narrative (broadly a socialist narrative relying heavily on the trope of community), and an exhibitionary principle strongly oriented to spectacle and simulation, emotional stimulus, personalisation, and the translation of the past into dramatic encounters between personalities (see Dicks, 1997).

The audio-visuals therefore, are not the compromised and trivialised narratives of history that are often imputed to heritage centres (cf. Hewison, 1987; Wright, 1985; Walsh, 1991). Instead, they are the outcomes of several different types of articulation between the specific conditions of the project's spatio-temporal relations of encoding and the wider context of cultural frameworks of knowledge and economic conditions quite outside the control of the encoders themselves. From this analysis, encoding emerges as the complex outcome of a series of negotiations between these wider conditions and the specificities of spatially and temporally located processes in the production of heritage culture itself.

CONCLUSION

In the case-study described, we can see the articulation of a wider popular discourse celebrating the past and the specificity of local place-identity (in turn articulated to a set of economic conditions in which capital abandons older geographies in a new spatial division of labour) with a political Whitehall-brokered 1980s Thatcherite discourse that actually diluted the power of localities to act independently or to make use of their own indigenous cultural resources (i.e. by removing the freedom of local government to favour local sources of knowledge and encouraging instead the growth of a dis-placed general professional heritage-industry brought in by outside tendering). Thus, the popular enthusiasm for place-identity and the display of local history is accommodated in the market through the operation of a dis-placed 'heritage industry' that itself responds to and encourages such enthusiasm in the first place.

However, in the case of heritage, any simple promotional projects are forestalled. In order to qualify as heritage rather than mere advertising, the creation of a site to 'tell the story of place' has to take shape within local relations of production and frameworks of knowledge. This means that 'the local' can not only be approached by encoders as a commodity, as its history needs to be located in and found in local social space. Instead, local sources of authentication have to be found, even if local political control has been jettisoned. Thus, we cannot see heritage as merely the reflection of promotional culture. Since it also has to answer to the demand for 'the story of place *x*' it is more likely to emerge as a hybrid, crossed through with complex negotiations of both common-place and place-specific narratives.

This articulation is actually an instance of that deeper articulation between 'the wider picture' (wider frameworks of knowledge/relations of production) and 'the local picture' (local frameworks of knowledge/relations of production) that we have been discussing. The determination of culture has to take account of this level of analysis and to trace the fault-lines wherein wider discourses become inflected through local contexts. In the case study presented, the widely-noted fascination for local histories and places in the cultural sphere does not directly 'produce' an explosion in heritage centres, and neither does it determine their nature. Equally, the economic imperative for places to construct and sell a marketable identity in the competition for resources does not of itself account for or determine heritage production.

Instead, these wider conditions are implied in the production of heritage via particular articulations with local contexts⁹. Because heritage promises to represent 'the local', 'the local' plays an important role in

⁹ A further level of analysis would seek to interrogate the dialectics of the wider/local relation, through asking the question of how each is implied in and transforms the other. The analysis presented here has shown how the wider picture impinges upon local relations (e.g. by furnishing local planners with pragmatic discourses of regeneration aimed at funding packages, or, at a more general level, by providing the economic conditions of restructuring which led to the steady flight of capital from the Rhondda). However, a further set of questions would address how wider social and political-economic relations are in turn themselves crossed through with local reverberations. For example, it is only through repeated experiences at the local level that the wider entrepreneurial model has evolved and taken particular directions. Current wider disillusionment with industrial tourism as a resource for regeneration has taken hold through various experiences of failed or under-achieving projects at the local level. This in turn means that the 'tourism option' vigorously promoted as a benchmark private-public strategy by both central and local planners may also lose hold. It is possible that the entrepreneurial/community 'hybrid heritage' projects of the type discussed in this paper will start to assume new forms as a result.

mediating wider discourses and economic conditions. The final 'outcomes' of heritage production – the sites and the texts – can not therefore be reduced to a particular level of the social formation, as in reductionist analysis. A web of determination can, however, be traced, and, though its threads may be more difficult to generalise from than straightforward models of linear determination, the effort involved in following them rewards one with an insight into the entanglement of culture, power and social organisation. In this way, we can begin to take seriously Raymond Williams' proposal to study culture as the 'relations between different elements' and not as a separated level of social life that can be approached as a single object of study.

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F or F: Homoeroticism in Action Movies

*Julio Jeba**

Masculinity, as a cultural construction, has left its signifying tracks exposed for all to see.

(Nakayama, 1994: 171)

Social images are typically constructed in relation to the other, that which is different from the dominating group. The media disseminate these images, which thus offer a useful site for exploring forms of difference at play in the construction of identity. Hollywood in particular dramatizes this process of signification through which race, gender, and sexuality – mainly but not exclusively – take form in the social space. In this paper, I analyze some action movies against the backdrop of critical tensions in identity politics surrounding sexuality. As I explore the construction of white masculinity, I raise questions about how the homosexual identity, and consequently homoeroticism, is made invisible in U.S. popular culture.

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Attitudes toward homoeroticism are changing in the film industry, but “it remains one of the greatest ironies that while many prominent players operating in the shadow of the Hollywood sign are closeted gays – including the heads of at least two major studios, and production vice-presidents at two others – the industry shuns gay themes, gay characters, and gay actors” (Ryan 1992: 59). In a homophobic society like the American – but not only it – where movies mirror it and inform its perception of itself, gay roles, when there are any, “generally reinforce negative stereotypes: flamboyantly lisping hairdressers (*Birds On A Wire*), transvestite serial killers (*The Silence Of The Lambs*), lesbian assassins ([...] *Basic Instinct*)” (Ryan 1992: 59). Invariably the gay world is presented as sick, degrading, and ritualistic as in *Cruising*, or as a grotesque caricature of heterosexual relationships as in *The Birdcage*.

One Hollywood product, however, displays scene after scene of homocrotic content that seem to go unnoticed by the audience and censors alike: the action movies. In such movies, male-acting and -looking characters declare their sexual intentions to similar male characters and nobody in the audience so much as blinks in surprise. While in other kinds of film this behavior would stir boos and whistles from the audience, in movies where manly characteristics are at a premium, this is considered socially acceptable. Behind this apparent paradox in action movies there seems to lie a politics of homoeroticism that makes their gay content invisible. We may propose with moralists that it’s a pervert’s scheme to make kids grow up gay, or like weary observers of the fast-growing gay market, we could dismiss it all as “a cynical sales ploy” (Crysell, 1992). There is more to it, though: action movies provide characters – and the audience – with the social space where to recenter their white, heterosexual masculine identities.

HISTORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF SAME-SEX DESIRE

Historically, the view of homosexuals has changed from accepted to outlawed invisibility to willing visibility – in political terms, gay men were part of society, then were banned, and eventually returned to assert their rights. Up to a point in time and in various Western Societies, male-male desire was considered an integral part of the sexual make-up not only of the average citizen but also – and mainly – of warriors and soldiers. Examples range from Plutarch’s description of the sacred Theban squad composed exclusively of lovers to Frederick the Great’s saying, “If you want a sex life, go to the soldiers’ barracks,” in the 18th century. Masculinity and same-sex desire were not exclusive terms in the accepted sexual framework.

The next century saw the creation of the term “homosexual” that defines, by contrast, “heterosexual.” David M. Halperin (1989: 8-9) gives the following account of this sexual paradigm shift:

Homosexuality and heterosexuality, as we currently understand them, are modern, Western, bourgeois productions. Nothing resembling them can be found in classical antiquity... In London and Paris, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there appear ... social gathering places for persons of the same sex with the same socially deviant attitudes to sex and gender who wish to socialize and to have sex with one another... This phenomenon contributes to the formation of the great nineteenth-century experience of “sexual inversion,” or sex-role reversal, in which some forms of sexual deviance are interpreted as, or conflated with, gender deviance. The emergence of homosexuality out of inversion, the formation of a sexual orientation independent of relative degrees of masculinity and femininity, takes place during the latter part of the nineteenth century and comes into its own only in the twentieth.

As early as classical antiquity, the ban was not on same-sex love but on unmanly behavior, that is, cowardly acts unbecoming a man. Effeminate gays still exist but seem to have been upstaged by male-looking and -acting gays on the one hand and by drag queens on the other. Not to mention that many straight men are now in touch with feminine side and looking less masculine than the previous generation. A reversal in the horizon of sexual expectations seems to be taking place and the United States have become a nation obsessed with finding out who's bedding whom ... of the same sex (Kamp 1996).

"I DON'T KNOW IF I WANNA FIGHT YOU OR FUCK YOU"

A culturally-accepted practice may be at play in viewing of action movies, that of males admiring other males' courage and skill, or, on a more sensual/sexual level, other males' bodies. Homoeroticism is flagrant in many Hollywood action movies, and those by Jean-Claude Van Damme provide a good example. In most of them, there is always an opportunity for Van Damme to strut his stuff, to have other men comment on his body, on the nasty things they'd like to do to it (sometimes they actually do), and to find ways of displaying his naked torso and buttocks.

In his early movies, Van Damme appears in a series of nude scenes that would make his the most famous ass outside porn movies. In *Bloodsport* (1987), for instance, without any plausible reason, he coyly drops his underpants so that the woman lying with him – and the audience – can see his checks. Jim McClellan (1992: 44) notes that *A WOL* (1991, a.k.a. *Lionheart* or *Wrong Bet*) is “[p]ossibly Jean-Claude’s most

overtly camp film – check all the sweaty manual labour, the skimpy cycling shorts, and the shots of him wiggling his way down the street.” Sex is barely under control in this movie where every boy and girl around wants his ass. Same-sex desire gets vocal as the bullying black sailor tells Van Damme: “Get your ass down below,” and “I want you down stocking my boilers, boy.” But one fighter best describes the politics of homoeroticism in Van Damme’s movies: “I don’t know if I wanna fight you or fuck you.” And, yes, there is a nude scene as Van Damme heads for the shower.¹

In the 90s Van Damme’s career gathered momentum, and the exposure of his body reached a maximum in *Universal Soldier*. His first movie of the decade was *Death Warrant* (1990); here the homoerotics of *AWOL* continues: a variety of sweaty sadistic prison guards pursues him, strips him naked, and beats him up. As expected in a prison, inmates want sexual favors from the “fish,” the newly arrived prisoner. *Universal Soldier* (1992) offers the longest shot of Van Damme’s naked body viewed from behind. In *Nowhere to Run* (1993) he plays an escaped con who comes to the aid of a widow in distress and her two kids. After a lake bath he comes out naked and is watched by the widow’s children. The boy later comments to his mum that Van Damme has a big penis. So much for children’s shyness in front of perfect strangers.

With *Street Fighter* (1994, Van Damme finally moves from R-rated to PG-13 territory in acknowledgment of his young fans. That does not mean, however, that homoerotics are kept in the closet. Quite the contrary. This is a pure eye-candy, a fun movie that a video game and

¹ I am aware that in *Bloodsport*, *Kickboxer* (1989), and *Double Impact* (1991), other issues are at stake. To use Nakayama’s words (1994: 164), Jean-Claude as “a white male typically enters Asian or Asian-American social space and emerges victorious from whatever conflict is at hand”.

yet incorporates so many gay references that you wonder how it got its new rating. Homosexual references appear as soon as the action begins. A woman journalist asks about Van Damme: “He just don’t like women, does he?” Homosexual aesthetics appear just as quickly, with kickboxers exposing their pecs and staging fights to the sound of *Carmen*’s “L’Amour est un oiseau”, the aria Carmen sings to tease her lover.

Sexual innuendoes and jokes abound in the dialogue: one character is imprisoned and asks another for help, “Give a little hand here,” to get the answer “We’ve been in prison for only two hours. Maybe next month.” Such a request suggests a proposal for masturbation. Notice that the respondent refuses but in a month’s time, who knows? Another character comments to a seminude guy: “Nice uniform.” When Guile (Van Damme) and Bison (Raul Julia) have their showdown, Van Damme exclaims, “Your ass is six months overdue. And it is mine.” He also asks, “Are you man enough to fight me?” Following the logic in *AWOL*, which equates fight with fuck, this translates as “Are you man enough to fuck me?”

The Allied Nations are the thinly disguised United Nations and serve the purpose of criticizing diplomacy. Soldiers are the ones who know what to do, while diplomats are always ready to surrender to terrorists. Diplomacy is the game for sissies, ineffectual, afraid of risking their lives, and only too ready to deliver the country to the hands of bullying criminals. Soldiers follow the motto of *No Retreat, No Surrender*, which, not surprisingly, is the title of a 1986 Jean-Claude movie.

By the mid-90s, Jean-Claude stars *Sudden Death* (1995) as heroic ex-fireman Darren McCord, now working as a temporary security guard in a stadium. The American Vice-President is going to attend the final

game in the hockey series, while terrorists are planning to take him hostage and demand a fabulous ransom. Van Damme has long moved from the Asian forests to a more urbane setting. Here, masculinity is constructed within the sports milieu, where hockey suggests violence. Most of the homoerotic references occur in the locker room, a man's world and the territory of male companionship, where being naked is the rule.

Van Damme introduces his son to this domain of masculinity, and the boy ecstatically admires his athletic heroes. Van Damme asks the team star Luc Robitaille, "Ce soir, quelles sont vos chances?" (What are your chances tonight?) and Robitaille brags, "On va les enculer" (We're gonna fuck them). Of course, a young boy is not supposed to understand this as a natural, masculine behavior, as a sports code shared by male players. So instead of the sexual threat, the father translates it as "He thinks ... they're gonna win." Shortly after this exchange, muscular Brad Tolliver teases Van Damme: "Show up one of these afternoons. I'll show the difference between the game you played and I play." Van Damme stares at his bulging naked torso and replies, "I can see the difference." He can. Nevertheless, we cannot and are left wondering what that difference might be. Another homoerotically charged scene has hockey player Duckerman nude in the locker room, his ass in half profile. The American VP, who is paying the team a visit, remarks, "Nice outfit, Duckerman." As a public man the VP gets the reinforcement of his masculinity by entering the male space and in turn recodes it as a place empowered by the visit of a high-ranking public authority. Van Damme follows the same code and enacts his role of introducing a young male into the social space of masculinity. He once belonged in that same arena, which he exchanged for that of firefighters and the security force, symbols loaded with male power significance and thus overcharged with homoerotic value.

However ridden with homoerotic allusions Van Damme's movies are, his refusal to accept them reasserts his masculinity against the sexually and racially other. If we consider the narrative in these movies, we will see them for what they are – versions of Westerns that substitute martial arts for fistfights and pistol duels at sundown. As expected, Far Easterns share with Westerns many intertextual elements: the white guys are the good ones out to defeat the Asians, the latest incarnation of Native Americans. Foreign masculinity is marked as negative, whereas white masculinity organizes and directs the construction of possible meanings. Van Damme's body centers our gaze, orders the narrative, and drives the signification process.

Other movies besides Van Damme's also depict this encoding of white masculinity. In *Showdown in Little Tokyo*, for example, Scandinavian Dolph Lundgreen plays against American-Asian Brandon Lee, recentering white male identity according to gender, race, and sexual codes. Lee takes the passive, feminine, and acculturated role as opposed to Lundgreen's active and masculine whiteness. Homoerotic references swarm (Nakayama 1994). One will serve to exemplify the signifying process at work: Brandon Lee confesses to Lundgreen: "Kenner, just in case we get killed, I wanted to tell you . . . you have the biggest dick I've ever seen on a man." To which Kenner/Lundgreen replies, "Thanks, I don't know what to say." Is there anything else to say? Hardly. Yet, audiences (not to mention Hollywood moral codes) do not seem to have any problem with such exchanges.

THE BIOLOGICAL HYPOTHESIS

Homoerotic references seem to go unnoticed in action movies, partly because homoeroticism could be a fundamental component of

both genders, and men and women would prefer the company of their own sex. They mate only because they cannot escape the sexual imperative. *Homo sapiens*, like any other animal species, can hardly refuse to answer this instinctual call. Males and females serve a reproductive function, the purpose of which is to perpetuate the species. Bodies, then, serve as indices of better reproductive chances. The male has to be strong and beautiful to attract as many females as possible, or at least to ensure that the female he happens upon will not refuse his sexual advances. The male body has at the same time to be attractive to females and threatening to other males. In terms of ecological economy, males are expendable, because one male can impregnate hundreds of females. This explains why males fight each other to death, contrary to female behavior. When chances for survival get thin, that alone makes males redundant and turns females into assets, since they can guarantee the continuation of the species.

Procreation aside, social bonding happens more often than not among individuals of the same sex. People from one sex are alien to the mind set of people from the other sex. They sometimes see the other group as coming from different planets; *Women are from Venus, Men Are from Mars* is the title of a recent book. Men enjoy other men's company better; witness what happens in sports, bars, business, and politics: women are not exactly welcome to these social places. Men tend to keep company to themselves, like a pack of wolves, and as such, they perceive women as prey. Like predators, they are playful among themselves and their favorite sport – by a metonymical dislocation – is war.

This biological imperative would account for the identity attributed to men and women in action movies. Men display their muscular, masculine bodies and fight each other to the death to guarantee the

preservation of the species, if only at a biological level. Such a level of animal signification founded and can still legitimize the power relations between and within the sexes that inform various cultures. Our society, however, does not approve of such animal behavior and curbs our basic instincts by force of moral and ethical codes. As Freud was keen on telling us, instincts can be repressed but not destroyed, so we need to act them out, if not for our private satisfaction, for the good of social institutions. That may explain why large audiences pay to see movies that have been summarized by the formula F&F – fight and fuck. In such movies women are wimps, mere prizes for brutal men to do with as they please, an object of desire but never the subject of their own desire. Homosexual behavior is not recognized as such in this context (or from this biological perspective) but as a correlation of forces in a game of male, “male,” and “malest.” Since there is no political space for women, neither is there for any socially deviant sexual behavior. Homoerotic references, thus, become an index of natural weakness to be purged.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCT HYPOTHESIS

Another hypothesis for why homoeroticism passes unnoticed by homophobic audiences may be that images of gay men are constructs (Bad-Object Choices 1991, D’Emilio 1992, Plummer 1992, Pronger 1990, Sedgwick 1985, 1990) and as such can be absorbed or “naturalized” in the social context. Bronski (1984: 190) proposes that “At the end of the 19th century, a distinct homosexual identity emerged in Western culture, and along with that identity, a distinct culture and sensibility.” The historical contextualizing explanation emphasizes the construction of a cultural identity and contradicts the “natural” or fundamental features hypothesis.

This identity was established enough in culture to ensure its visibility and survival and, thus, provoke homophobic forces to acknowledge it. The strategy of trying to ignore homosexuality can therefore be defeated. Such strategy relies on ignorance, feigned or not, of that phenomenon. Ignorance is as potent and as multiple a weapon as knowledge, warns Eve Sedgwick (1990: 4-5): "it is the interlocutor who has or pretends to have the less broadly knowledgeable understanding of interpretive practice who will define the terms of the exchange." For instance, because heterosexual men, with superior extralinguistic resources and privileged discourse positions, are often less likely to treat perspectives different from their own as mutually available for communication, their attitudes are more likely to leave a lasting imprint on the social fabric than those of homosexual men.

Audiences would be strategically blind to what they do not want to see, the existence of different sexual behavior that refuses to be recentered within the strict limits of cultural codes. By staging that deviance in a hypermasculine space – distant countries at war, the Foreign Legion, sports arenas, police forces, postcataclysmic worlds – action movies disguise any homoerotic references as male bonding, also known as "buddy syndrome." Same-sex desire gets recoded as male camaraderie, friendship between soldiers at war, and thus becomes "naturalized", invisible to less critical moviegoers.

RECENTERED MASCULINITY, DECENTERED HOMOEROTICISM

Jean-Claude Van Damme's identity in films has so far been that of the white male as constructed by American society and spread by the media. Gender, race, and sexual orientation are some codes that can

determine such an identity. In Van Damme's movies he is the good guy with the white hat, as in the formula for Westerns. He does not need to wear the hat, because his "whiteness" already marks him as the good guy opposing those of a different skin color. As he refuses to accept the homosexual innuendoes and invitations offered him, he claims his masculine identity in contrast to the sexually other. In his movies, as in other action movies, sexual signs overflow, weaving a web of homosocial relations, against the background of established heterosexuality.

The formula, "F and F," characterizes a reading that encodes sexual behavior in action movies as essentially heterosexual: men fight men and fuck women. The substitution of the disjunctive "or" for the connective "and" in Van Damme's movie announces a revolutionary possibility that is never actualized: whether to fight or fuck the opponent. Imagine if men fighting in the streets of soldiers at war chose the second alternative. That would subvert the establishment further than the hippie movement of the 60s intended. This, however, is a false possibility. Fucking only confirms our deeply embedded cultural expectations: the one fucked is the weaker, and another metonymical dislocation equates fight and fuck, an equation widely reproduced in the linguistic expression of various social codes.

Social images, as propagated by the media, are constructed in contrast to the other, the different from the accepted in diverse cultural codes. Binary oppositions such as male/female, white/nonwhite, native/foreigner, and homosexual/heterosexual, however, no longer seem to account for human identities. We need pluralistic perspectives that can account for differences if we want to understand as many social phenomena as possible.

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Images of Britain in *Bhaji on the Beach*: Difference and Sameness in Late-capitalism

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I

Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) seems, at first glance, like few other European films produced over the past years, to provide us with a textbook example of the post-modern "variety of different subject positions" as well as of the so-called erosion of "master identities" and the consequent death of "grand narratives". Just like modern societies, one might argue, the film seems to have no centre, no single articulating or organizing principle and, therefore, does not develop according to the unfolding of a single "cause" or "law". Indeed, this compendium of the troubles faced by Asian women in today's Britain raises a number of immigrant-related issues that are said to be part of the diasporic experience of Indian women living the UK: the shock between old values brought over from "home" (a fictive past of "common" traditions and beliefs) and the new "English" ones, racism from white English, interracial marriage, divorce, sexism from men, an unwanted pregnancy and so on. What allows these problems to be squeezed in together is a simple narrative convention: as the film opens,

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a busload of female characters set off from the “Saheli Asian Women’s Group” in Birmingham for a day on the beach in Blackpool. Victims of, but themselves divided by, prejudice, this seems to be a group of people who have nothing in common. We are here far from what Stuart Hall, talking about black communities in Britain, calls the “innocent notion” of the essential immigrant or “minority” subject¹, as each of these characters seem to relate to the experience of racism and marginalization in very different ways. In fact, what the film seems to address is, to use Stuart Hall’s terms, not a politics of class or racial identity but a politics of difference².

Indeed, as the early introduction of each character makes clear, despite minor differences this group of women is not divided by class interests, their “differences” having more to do with “cultural” and “moral” values. What allows the film to focus on these “differences” is another narrative convention: the bus takes the characters away from the confusion and heterogeneity of the big city and frees them from the world of work, politics and other everyday worries so that they can concentrate on “what really matters”. This well-known narrative tradition in English fiction, which seeks to build a “selective geography”, as Raymond Williams shows, is as old as the emergence and growth of the urban metropolis as the centre of national life. The English countryside in Jane Austen, the ship in Joseph Conrad, the country house in Henry James and E.M. Forster are all instances of strategies which aim to produce an impression of closure and totality based on a “knowable community”³. Therefore, the abstraction and dissolution which come

¹ See Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities” in *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London & New York, Routledge, 1996.

² See Stuart Hall, *Formations of Modernity*, London, Open University, 1992.

³ See Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Hardy*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1992 and *The Country and the City*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973.

to characterize the open urban spaces can be re-contained and the narrative – the film being an example of this – can be pushed forward by chance meetings and coincidences which would be unavailable otherwise. In this way, it is possible to evade an excessive “weight of empirical being” and build a narrative space where “alternative histories” which can solve unbearable “real-life” problems can be envisioned or at least imagined.

But in *Bhaji on the Beach*, even before the characters arrive in Blackpool, “alternative narratives” are imagined right at the outset: the first shots take us to dreary Birmingham and the greyness of “real life” but the next sequence plunges the spectator into a very different filmic paradigm. Instead of the “neutral”, “style-free”, “close-to-life”, “documentary” images of the beginning, what we see now is a dream, or rather, the first of a series of daydreams in which Asha, a middle-aged housewife, lives out her fantasies. This juxtaposition, in fact, reminds us of the contrast between two literary and filmic modes of representation : the naturalistic style of high realism being ripped open by the high art of Flaubert, Proust and the modernists, the “transparent”, “copy-of-life” narrative of the brothers Lumière’s early films and of the later classical Hollywood style being challenged by the “tricks” of Méliès, the distortions of expressionist and surrealist film, and the montage theory of Eisenstein. In different ways the increasing aestheticism of these instances of (pre-)modernist art can be seen to point to a repression of unresolved social and political problems and an attempt to transform “art” and “culture” into an idealized “solution” which can, therefore, be looked at, as Jameson shows, as a “Utopian compensation for everything lost in the process of the development of capitalism – the place of quality in an increasingly quantified world, the place of the archaic and of feeling amid the desacralization of the market system, the place of sheer color and intensity within the grayness of measurable

extension”⁴. However, while this is certainly true about Asha’s daydreams – her visions being the place of intensity, colour, feeling, religion and emotion in the midst of dullness, patriarchy and a terrifying “modernity” – the world of post-modern aestheticism is very different from that of modernism. Indeed, this is not the universe of Adornian difference or of difference as negation⁵, where the value of the cultural and the aesthetic lies in a difference and a negation which, always threatened by the commodification of culture, needs to detach itself from the commodified mass of capitalist “affirmative” culture. Adorno’s point is that, as the planned and formulaic rationality of the Enlightenment and of the world of mass culture is increasingly marked by the familiar, the conventional and by “sameness”, it is only the “irrationality” of the avant-garde aesthetics that can function as negation at the core of the commercial rationality of capitalist production and bourgeois ideology. This rather intellectualized view also had an impact on “classical” film theory, where difference comes to be identified with the *auteur* whose signature separates the *oeuvre* from the indifference of mass production.

However, as we see Asha running in the middle of Coca-Cola cans and Cadbury chocolate in the first dream sequence in *Bhaji on the Beach*, what is made clear is that the world of “aesthetics” here can no longer be seen as a “solution”, “utopian compensation” or negation of a life lived at the margins. In a globalized world which is being increasingly swamped with images and where aesthetic production has become

⁴ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, London, Routledge, 1981, p.236-7.

⁵ For a discussion on the relationships between Adorno’s theory and the questions of genre in film and television production see John Caughie, “Adorno’s reproach: repetition, difference and television genre” in *Screen* 32:2 Summer 1991.

integrated into commodity production⁶(as the daydream, resembling a TV commercial, shows clearly), it is more and more difficult to see an increased aestheticism as the producer of new political and social ideas. That is one of the reasons why at this stage of the film the world of aesthetics enters the universe of psychology as a “daydream”: unable to function in a far-reaching social and political context, aesthetics are “reduced” to a psychological mechanism which allows an unhappy housewife-immigrant to live through her neurosis and her “difference” inside her own closed monad. This has to do, of course, not only with a choice of styles or with a discursive category but mainly with a historical question that looks at the possibilities of filmic and television insertion into society and the failure in an increasingly divided world to see the mere possibility of bridging the gap between high art and mass culture, in an operation where aesthetics would play a crucial role as a social “cement” and where individual “differences” would be lived as a social reality.

However, any politics of resistance which looks at the lived experience of groups or communities that, despite their differences, have been placed at the margins of society and of representation, needs to look at common meanings and the complex, often contradictory ways

⁶ In his discussion on the commodification of aesthetics, Jameson argues: “...the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes) , at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation. Such economic necessities then find recognition in the varied kinds of institutional support available for the newer art, from foundations and grants to museums and other forms of patronage.”

See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London & New York, Verso, 1995, p. 4-5.

in which those interact with hegemonic views if it does not want to foster a narcissistic fascination with and celebration of differences. Nor can the realm of aesthetics, which is at the heart of any politics of artistic representation, be evaded unless one wants to run the risk of either naively trying not to “take sides” by presenting a “balanced” and “neutral” account of reality or of producing what Adorno calls “regressive art”, repeating old forms which, in turn, keeps on emitting old meanings. In *Bhaji on the Beach*, the choice of Blackpool is the main solution to these problems: it provides the narrative mechanism with both the economy it needs and the common “aesthetic” scenery against which the character’s problems can be acted out, with its dazzling and extravagant, “post-modern” visual heterogeneity, in which fake film and television characters – sharks, super-heroes, princesses, Arabian sheiks – sell and advertise their products. It is in this “second-rate”, reified and decayed “aesthetic” universe that the characters will have to gain access to the rights of a representation which can “challenge, resist and, where possible, [...] transform the dominant regimes of representation”⁷.

II

A summary of the plot of *Bhaji on the Beach* is enough to make one suspicious of the film’s attempt to “transform the dominant regimes of representation”. I will here borrow a short passage from the summary written by the The Washington Post film reviewer:

Ginder has left her abusive husband Ranjit, taking their 5-year-old son with her. Ranjit, outraged at losing face, searches for his wife all over

⁷ Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities”, p. 442.

town. [...] Hashida, a promising medical student, has just discovered she's pregnant. Oliver, the boyfriend responsible, happens to be black. Oliver, who has hidden his identity from Hashida's racially purist parents, isn't enthusiastic about taking paternal responsibility.⁸

The reviewer then goes on to describe the teenage characters who are on the lookout for boys, the conservative old ladies who criticise Ginder and Hashida, and so on. This is enough to reveal one of the film's most conspicuous dramatic traits, namely, its reliance on stock-characters from melodrama: if names were changed, any of these sub-plots could be – as indeed they have been – expanded on and made into a mainstream Hollywood film. However, if one did not want to be selective, one could in fact weave all of those sub-plots together and turn them into a soap-opera. In this sense, *Bhaji on the Beach* is characteristic of an increasingly common system of film production in local cinema industries, mainly outside the USA in countries such as France, India, Italy and even Brazil, which are sponsored by television channels (in this case British Channel Four), many times for distribution both for TV and cinema audiences (Stephen Frears' *My Beautiful Laundrette* is now a famous example, especially after its success amongst cinema audiences in many parts of the globe). The impact of this operation is indeed visible in the narrative structure of *Bhaji on the Beach*, which combines the use of the bus and of Blackpool as an attempt at narrative "closure" with a structure which is constantly split open by a rotation of character centres that deprives each of them of the privileged status of "main character". The film, therefore, seeks a balance between, on the one hand, the rules of "classical" melodrama – its well-defined actions, spaces and characters, and a time structure which is cut to the

⁸ Desson Howe, "Bhaji on the Beach", The Washington Post, July 08 1994.

economy of narrative causation and motivation⁹ – and, on the other hand, a segmented narrative which is characteristic of highly populated narrative communities of television productions. According to Caughie, this segmentation is related to the fact that we can see the foundational element of television in an interruptable time¹⁰. This expectation of the break is produced and helps to produce the specific forms of attention which audiences give to television, leading to a mutation within the narrative of classical cinema towards segmented action as well as an extended rather than a condensed form of the novelistic in which attention is dispersed rather than concentrated so as to accommodate it into the rhythms of everyday reception.

These successive levels of narrative simplification – first that of melodrama and then that of the even stricter categorisation of television narrative – provide us with an easy-to-follow, predictable storyline as well as a group of easy-to-recognise characters. The latter may carry the markers of otherness (looks, accents, clothes, habits, religious practices) but the sense of familiarity never leaves us during the film: we have all seen other characters facing similar problems, other adolescents and other wives rebelling against a tyrannical order: these are in fact people like us, the “inner”, truly “human” qualities placed in their right places. These simplifications, which focus on repetition and acceptable “difference”, seeking to introduce what is “foreign” through a familiar landscape, represent a political reduction which leaves a lot outside so as to be able to include what it does include. However, this attempt to

⁹ For a discussion of classical filmic narrative see David Bordwell, “Classical Hollywood Cinema: Narrational Principles and Procedures” in Philip Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 17-34.

¹⁰ See John Caughie, “Adorno’s reproach: repetition, difference and television genre”.

be “beyond” History can also be seen as historically determined. For one of the main practical problems faced by the so-called minority groups is the fact that the celebration of cultural differences, promoted initially by an anthropological culturalism which was “orientated towards the recognition of the diversity and equality of cultures”¹¹ (important figures such as Claude Lévi-Strauss claiming that the “ ‘mixing of cultures’ and the suppression of ‘cultural distances’ would correspond to the intellectual death of humanity”¹²), has come to trigger further racism. This new historical upsurge of racist movements can in many cases be seen as a “neo-racism” or a “racism without races”, which, according to Balibar, is motivated not by the belief in the difference between people’s blood or genes, but is the result of their belonging to historically diverse cultures, “culture” here functioning like a nature:

...a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but ‘only’ the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions [...] [a racism that is] uniformly conservative, arguing for the fixity of all cultures [...] on the pretext of protecting European cultures and the European way of life from ‘Third Worldization’...

The question – a political, social and aesthetic one – that one needs to address then is what to give emphasis to, either to differences or to similarities between cultures and, if one wants to strike a balance, where in social life and in the realm of aesthetics this is to be found. The choice made in *Bhaji on the Beach* is clear: caught between the two

¹¹ See Etienne Balibar, “Is there a neo-racism?”, in Balibar, E. & Wallerstein, I., *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London & New York, Verso, 1991, p. 21

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

extremes, the film, unable to rely on an old aesthetics, is also unable to create an “alternative history” as this is not as yet available in social life. Here the reductions of melodrama may be seen to function as a utopic will to steer clear of the decayed, reified and commercial universe of postmodern aesthetics and at the same time a desire to live difference not as suppression or aesthetic negation but as repetition and recognition so as to decompose the barriers built between the various communities formed by racism.

But of course the artistic representation of this “solution”, which relies on an existing aesthetics and which, to use Bakhtin’s terms, forces the excluded to speak through the voice of their Other, is not expressing a new articulation of social practices in which the question of exclusion is also solved and, therefore, must be lived as “false consciousness”. As this contradiction surfaces, what we see developing in the film is an increasing paradoxical stance towards its aesthetics, a hybrid between a nostalgic and an ironic mode. This is nowhere clearer in the film as in three moments at the end: the stroll in the park, in the theatre and, in a very different way, the museum sequence. The scenes in which we see Asha and her English admirer in the park and then in the theatre are amongst the best examples of the film’s “polyglossia”, their glossy quality – these are in fact the most “beautifully” photographed sequences in the entire film – reminding one (and especially the “film-buff”) of similar moments in Fellini (Asha as a Cabeiri in awe of the “magic” of the stage) or in a number of Merchant-Ivory productions in which the romanticized and nostalgic images of rural England takes us to a time before something was lost, while, at the same time, the intention is obviously ironic, the superficiality of those moments made explicit as Asha recovers from those reveries. However, what these instances of aesthetic production reveal is an uncomfortable position in which one is reduced to the status of a consumer, in this case of images previously

produced by hegemonic discourse, the postmodern valorization of recombination, refunctioning, pastiche and parody limiting one's repertoire of aesthetic choice by focusing on "repetition with difference", or, if one wants to be cynical, "more of the same". In the "flow" of television programming, in which bits of film are cut by commercials and trailers¹³, those familiar images are offered to us like items in the supermarket, creating the possibility of a "shared identity" as we become "customers for the same goods, clients for the same services, audiences for the same messages and images"¹⁴. Indeed, this is the condition in which the characters of the film themselves are reduced to: like the audience, they must consume goods (food, shoes, souvenirs) and images (photographs and the whole "attractive" and extravagant visual richness of *Blackpool*). This takes us to the beginning of the film, as we realise that what allows these characters to live their differences is the very fact that they can afford to do so by leaving Birmingham, class, work, politics and other concerns behind (and as the "benefits" of globalization are very unevenly distributed around the globe, a similar film in a country like Brazil would probably be ludicrous).

But of course the satisfactions offered by the degraded world of commerce are only illusory and temporary, as the sequence at the women's club shows: this utopia in which togetherness and female freedom can be bought cannot last. However, the film can still offer another type of solution. Hashida, the pregnant girl, is an artist and it is their love for art that enables Oliver to find and make up with her in the "temple of art", the museum. In fact, Hashida's drawings are the only

¹³ Raymond Williams introduces and develops the concept the concept of "flow" in his *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, Hanover & London, Wesleyan University Press, 1992.

¹⁴ Stuart Hall, *Formations of Modernity*, p. 58.

example in the film of an “alternative” aesthetics, different from the intellectual “high art” of modernism and of the decayed visual universe of postmodernism. Yet, as this new aesthetics is unable to find its correspondence in lived experience, it cannot articulate itself fully and can only be glimpsed at, rather furtively, sideways, while it is still a promise. Outside the bus at the end of the film, Hashida and Oliver, an Indian girl and a black boy, represent the possible future of an “alternative” Britain in the making. It is without doubt a far-fetched “solution” (the very fact that the museum itself is not free from the “taints” of commercial culture indicates the difficulty) but it is the solution the logic of late capitalism can offer.

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A Clockwork Orange - Poetry, Violence, Art

André Luiz Glaser

Then, brothers, it came. Oh, bliss, bliss, and heaven. I lay all nagoy to the ceiling, my gulliver on my rookers on the pillow, glazzie closed, rot open in bliss, slooshing the sluice of lovely sounds. Oh, it was gorgeousness and gorgeosity made flesh. The trombones crunched redgold under my bed, and behind my gulliver the trumpets three-wise silverflamed, and there by the door the timps rolling through my guts and out again crunched like candy thunder. Oh, it was wonder of wonders. And then, a bird of like rarest spun heavenmetal, or like silvery wine flowing in a spaceship, gravity all nonsense now, came the violin solo above all the other strings, and those strings were like a cage of silk round my bed. Then flute and oboe bored, like worms of like platinum, into the thick thick toffee gold and silver.

This passage, extracted from the end of the third chapter of *A Clockwork Orange*, a novel by Anthony Burgess first published in 1962, shows a different tone from the narrative style that came before. More poetry than prose, a centripetal movement gives this passage a more independent life. We can easily detect three parallel structures, each one starting with the interjection 'Oh'. A short sentence follows, bringing a

* Quem é o autor??

repetition of the same word or of two words closely related ('bliss / bliss, gorgeousness / gorgeosity, wonder / wonders'). Then, a long period comes. Assonance and alliteration draw words together, producing sounding effects like 'slooshing the sluice of lovely sounds', where sibilants, liquids and the vowel /oo/ bring the sensation of the flow of the sounds, or 'crunched like candy thunder', with the recurrence of the sounds /k/ and /u/.

Alex, in his bedroom, listens to a violin concerto by a certain Odysseus Choerilos. As the narrative goes, there is a movement of immersion in which the narrator, more and more enraptured by the piece, dives into its atmosphere. The three-fold division of the text suggested above gives us a good example of how it happens. In the first part, 'I' (the narrator) is the subject ('I lay'), and all the concrete nouns but the last refer to his body and room ('ceiling / gulliver / hookers / pillow / glazzies / rot / sound'); in the second, the action is performed by the trombones ('The trombones crunched'), and there is a stronger connection between Alex and the music ('trombones-bed / gulliver-trumpets / timps-guts / trombones-thunder'); finally, the violin takes over the center of the action and, except from 'bed', every noun is associated with the concerto.

The irruption of a poetic language is related to Alex's refined musical taste. Throughout the whole book, classical music makes him thrill. 'Some great bird has flown into the milkbar', he says after he hears someone singing some bars from an opera. But he does not just appreciate music; he is a connoisseur, interested not only in the pieces themselves, but also in their different recordings (he went to a 'disc-bootick' to see about a recording of Beethoven's Choral Symphony 'by the Esh Sham Sinfonia under L. Muhaiwir'). As we saw in the extract, all this knowledge leads him to a conscientious listening (he is apt to

recognize instruments, counterpoints, and complex harmony), stirring up his imagination and enhancing his capacity for metaphorical associations.

Let us now take an extract from chapter 4:

There it was then, the bass strings like goverreeting away from under my bed at the rest of the orchestra, and then the male human goloss coming in and telling them all to be joyful, and then the lovely blissful tune all about Joy being a glorious spark like of heaven, and then I felt the old tigers leap in me and then I leapt on these two young pitsas.

The sequence 'the orquestra / male human goloss / Joy / the old tiger / I leapt', made of parallel structures initiated by 'and them', shows the process of creation of a metaphor. The tiger, first external to Alex, becomes part of him. Unleashed by the music, the image comes as support for the act of violence that he is going to carry out. As we can see, almost every time music appears in the narrative, Alex develops passion for violence. Music and violence together make him feel 'like old Bog himself', he giving himself the epithet 'Alexander the Large'. And here, another side of Alex's personality emerges - his complete egocentricity.

From what was said, the book shows us an adolescent (Alex is 15) of undeniable artistic nature. However, this is directly linked to his passion for violence and power. His egocentric personality makes him a megalomaniac in constant search for occasions of exerting his force. Thus, he hurts people badly, kills, and rapes women. However, in no moment in the book he seems to be a sexual maniac. Rape is part of the feast, not its direct cause. His passion for blood (when the 'old krovvy' flows red, he always thinks it 'lovely and joyful') never seems less stronger than his passion for the 'old in out in out'. And here lies one of the



major differences in the characterization of Alex in the book and in Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, a film released in 1971 and based on Burgess's novel.

The film starts, like the book, in the Korova Milkbar. In the setting, everything is related to sex (the tables, for example, are made of mannequins of naked women). Also, the masks used when Alex and his gang go into the writer's house, that in the book represent famous personalities, are here the same for the four boys, and have a cylindrical long nose, a clear allusion to the penis. When Alex breaks into the old woman's house (not so old in the film), a sculpture of the penis assumes great importance (a montage 'tells' us of Alex's sexual instincts and intentions), and the protection the members of the gang use for their sexual organ has in fact the format of a bigger one. But it is in the first scenes discussed above that the contrast is more efficient.

Oh bliss, bliss and haven. Oh it was gorgeousness and gorgeosity made flesh. It was like a bird of rarest spun heavenmetal, or like silvery wine flowing in a spaceship gravity all nonsense now as I slooshied I knew such pretty pictures.

That is what Alex says, in the film. An evident selection of words from the original. One of the pictures mentioned ('I knew such pretty pictures') is Alex's snake (another Kubrick's creation) crawling towards the picture of a naked woman. Another, a vampire. Of course sex is present in Alex's images in the book, but not in the main level. The first image is of him kicking violently some girls and boys. Now, concerning the scene of the 'tiger', book and film differ in the fact that in the former Alex, when listens to Beethoven, starts beating the girls heavily, so that they end up 'all bruised and pouty'. Such violence does not happen in the latter.

But, despite such differences, Alex's appreciation of high art is part of both works. If he expresses it through poetry in the book, his narration in the film is only possible through the lenses of a camera. Working like a vicarious organ, it creates some movements of pure art. Sometimes it even 'dances' (in the scenes of the gang fight and of the old woman), other times remains still, almost describing all the violence Alex feels so pleased to accomplish. The main point of contact between these two different characters (created by two different minds) is this paradox that fascinates – the highest aesthetic value sharing the same room as the lowest of the human soul.

The question raised by Alex's treatment, as we know, is the right or not of choice. Although our narrator fascinates, in no moment we can deny the perversity of his acts. The supposition of Alex being a creation of a repressive society seems at least superficial. He is not just an outsider - he is sadistic. He does things for pleasure, not for ideological principles. Self enjoyment is his ideology. For him, persons are solely toys that make his play possible. When he, during the treatment, accuses the doctor of committing a sin, the sacrilege is not the use of Beethoven in a violent scene, but the fact that he is feeling pain out of it. When he says 'Using Ludwig van like that. He did no harm to anyone. Beethoven just wrote music', he is not being sincere with himself. The problem is that he is hurt in his selfcenteredness, for now he is not the source and center of the violence.

Has a person owner of such violent instincts the right to make choices? The priest and the writer would say 'yes'. 'He ceases to be a wrongdoer. He ceases also to be a creature capable of moral choice', said the former when Alex was undergoing his final test. The discourse of the writer, in its turn, is about imposition of conditions appropriate to a mechanical creation upon creatures capable of sweetness. The juice of an orange made useless, when it becomes a piece in a clockwork.

But abstract ideologies always work better in the realm of ideas. When Alex asks for help in the writer's house, what comes to his mind is to use the boy as a political tool to oppose the Government. 'You have been sent here by Providence', he says. And further, 'You have no power of choice any longer...a little machine capable only of good...A man who cannot choose ceases to be a man'. But Alex's carelessness ends up offering the writer hints about his identity. He was the hoodlum who raped and caused the death of his wife. Vengeance is carried out - Alex is impelled to commit suicide, tortured by one of his greatest passions: music. In other words, F. Alexander, the writer, makes use of Alex's treatment (to which he is completely opposed) as an instrument of revenge. For choice is good, unless you are the victim. The unfairness lies on the fact that Alex had no choice but jump through the window. The writer shows us that his good intentions do not go further than personal relations. Torture is on both sides, namely the Government and the opposition.

The relation between Alex and the writer is not so easy to interpret. In some sense, they can be seen as two selves of the same personality, being HOME the crucial spot where they meet. One impelling the other towards a destruction not fully accomplished (in the first scene in which they are together it is Alex that takes the action, in the second it is the writer), they are as opposed as complementary. In both artistic and violent impulses are present. They share their names and the title of their work. The letters that follow the numbers of Alex's house and jail are A and F, the initials of the writer's name. But in the former, the instinct predominates, whereas in the latter, what prevails is the creation of art. This distinction, however, tends to disappear, mainly on account of their encounters, since the writer attempts to kill, and the boy becomes a real artist - either writes a book (Burgess) or narrates a film (Kubrick). Of course it is much easier to see Alex as the writer of *A Clockwork*

Orange than as the responsible for the artistic effects of the film. The camera is not Alex's eyes. It is indeed contaminated by his way of apprehending the world. In this sense, the book offers a much better solution, which does not mean artistic superiority. The book is the original. All the solutions were first intended to fit a solely linguistic narrative.

The poetry of the book is transformed, in the film, mainly in camera effects. The 'baroque' style of the narrative (the 'nagsat' talk), in its turn, is represented in the excessive ornamentation of the setting. In either case, it is Alex's apprehension of reality that is represented. Besides the view of Alex as a sexual maniac, subject already discussed above, another difference in his characterization is clear. Throughout the book, he listens to a wide range of pieces from different composers. In the film, it is just the Choral Symphony by Beethoven. Kubrick's choice, certainly on account of economy (an 140 minute film may cover a whole book), has the side effect of limiting our narrator, inasmuch as it makes Alex an obsessive admirer of just one piece, and not a great connoisseur of the art of the sounds. As a consequence, his artistic impulses are certainly restricted, diminishing the richness of Burgess's creation. Also, the Alex of the book cannot be seen as feeling any pleasure in singing 'Singing in the Rain'. Although it stands for a criticism of the old times, I do think that Kubrick exaggerated.

The film was based on the incomplete version of the book (without the last chapter). In fact, many editions do not have it. According to this, Alex ends up cured from the treatment, but unchanged in relation to his passion for violence. His trajectory presents a certain circularity, only broken by his now passing from marginality to social acceptance. He gets a job (political, but still a job) and is even applauded, in the film, by the highest members of society, in a scene that shows him as a



participant in a kind of orgy. In other words, he has been put away in a convenient place by the Government, proving that in his society the real problem is not violence itself, but the side it may take.

The other end, highly controversial, shows Alex 'getting older'. He changes a bit his musical taste, preferring the intimacy of a 'Lieder' to the aggressiveness of more dense compositions. He now thinks of marrying and having children, and is a little bored by the excess of 'ultra-violence'. However, he wants us to 'remember sometimes thy little Alex that was'. What surprises most is that he supposedly wrote the book after reaching this certain 'maturity'. How to explain those long and detailed descriptions of violence, only expressing the pleasure of the writer who, in most of the cases, lived them? One thing is clear: Alex is getting more interested in art as form. Instead of the streets, the pencil and paper. If this is true, the book is the debut of a promising writer. Alex is still violent. What happens is that his impulses seem to be taking a more artistic direction.

Be as it may, both Alexes present themselves to us as artists, in either ending. In a formal aspect, the latter is less effective, for it seems disconnected from what came before. The art, however, book or film, is accomplished. F. Alexander would certainly claim that the essence has, above all, survived - the orange remains no part of a clockwork, being still 'capable of sweetness, to ooze juicily at the last round the bearded lips of God'. Yet, a question can be raised: Is Alex's artistic achievement really outside the clockwork, in other words, how much of his narrative can be seen as an aesthetic masterpiece that has no connection with Alex's real choices? For in both endings our narrator is unquestionably incorporated into the other side of his society, the one he has so fiercely opposed while playing his role as a street-gang boy.

Alex's *The Clockwork Orange* may be seen as juice, but in my view one squeezed throughout his experience with violence and art. Its 'essence' is its quality as a formal materialization of our talented narrator's experiences. It is an aggressive art, but of a different kind from the violence practised on the streets. Yet, the latter is there, crude, sanguinary, unmerciful. Explicitly told by a complex character, whose creativity has molded and re-molded the imaginary borders that separate violence from art.

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The Construction of a (Post-) colonial Self: The Elusive Narrator in Doris Lessing's African Short Stories

*Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira**

The construction of identity, the concern with self as structured around vital personal and social issues, proves crucial to fiction, from its most obvious and concrete illustration in the *Bildungsroman* to all but the loosest fictional forms. Doris Lessing's work hardly belongs among the latter and thus proves no exception to the overwhelming rule. The protagonist of the first novel in her sequence *Children of Violence* is significantly named *Martha Quest* (1952), an unequivocal clue to the character's pursuit of an independent self, against a background of world catastrophe. Martha, as Robert Taubman rightly puts it in his introduction to Lessing's and Nadine Gordimer's work, is the typical Doris Lessing character – “self-absorbed (...), preserving her sense of herself at all costs” – “not unlike other human beings in that; but peculiarly dependent on her problems and their inevitability in order to reach any definition of herself” (Taubman, 1986, p. 233). In her quest, Martha is particularly obsessed with her own discontinuous states of being. Her concern with self – or rather, with

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its disintegration – recurs in the protagonists of *The Golden Notebook*, Lessing's most famous novel (1962). Here Anna and Molly, two talented professional women sharing a flat in the London of 1957, work over the notion of feminine identity, as freely and responsibly sought amid the options available to Western mid-century woman. The theme goes on haunting the writer in her short stories, reaching a negative climax in *To Room Nineteen*, an analysis of self-destruction, the ultimate expression of despair over the impossibility to reach integration. Owing, perhaps, to this nihilist conclusion, Elaine Showalter has accused Lessing (together with Virginia Woolf) of radically undermining the notion of the unitary self, and of merging the 'feminine ego' into a greater collective consciousness in her later books. This dislocation of interest from individual to collective identities shows a change of emphasis from the inner life of characters to the violent world around them. The shift in focus falls in well with another facet of Lessing's varied output: her involvement with colonialism and the plethora of unresolved questions persisting in a postcolonial (or neo-colonial) world.

Born in Iran in 1919, brought up in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) Lessing had a more than nodding acquaintance with the colonial experience before settling in England in her thirtieth year. Her interest in the subject has never failed her, and shows even in her science fiction. Colonialism is still the subject of *The Sirian Experience* (1981), just as it has been central to her African short stories. Together with her exquisite descriptions of an Africa all her own, the stories provide evidence for the author's growing interest in the theme of collective rather than individual identities under colonialism. One wonders whether, giving up the ideal of the integrated individual personality, the authorial voice has substituted a no less intensive absorption in cultural identities.

This new interest stands out most obviously in the two volumes of her *Collected African Stories*. They prove an inviting field for cultural and literary studies, highlighting questions of the utmost interest for postcolonial theory. The short stories abound in ironically stereotyped representations of alterity playing point counterpoint with voices struggling to project difference not hierarchized into inferiority. The repressive role of language as a tool for colonial oppression is also thematized, together with the almost insurmountable barrier between colonizers and colonized. In many of the stories, a realization of these facts of colonial life slowly dawns upon the characters, and brings about the change they undergo in their development. Not seldom, this growing realization goes hand in hand with the narrative technique. The shift from third to first-person narrator in *The Old Chief Mslanga*, for instance, coincides with the protagonist's radically changing attitude toward the natives near her farm. Conversely, the reader's almost complete ignorance of the identity indicated by the *I* who narrates the short story named *The Nuisance* seems connected with the character's converging insensitivities toward oppressed individuals, classically "colonized" through categories of gender and race. The interest in the problem of integration for the individual self is thus replaced by the construction of a slippery narrative consciousness.

In this connection, I would like to analyse the appearance and/or disappearance of the pronoun *I*, used to indicate the character/narrator in each story. The hide- and- seek game played by this *I* turns out a central stylistical device, critically geared to other structural elements in the texts. I would like to devote special attention to the change of third into first-person narrative in one story, and the almost total effacement of the narrating *I*, in the other. As I see them, these are stylistically marked elements. In *The Old Chief Mschlanga*, the use of *she* and its subsequent replacement by *I* signals the evolvement of the

protagonist/narrator's initial emotional detachment into sympathetic involvement with native Africans and their cause. As her sympathy awakens, black Africans and their surroundings become visible, in their newly discovered subjectivity and beauty. On the other hand, the virtual invisibility of the narrative *I* in *The Nuisance* corresponds with an intended effect of fake objectivity, achieved in bad faith, since the events are told from a totally personal – and biased – point of view. This becomes obscured by the fact that the revealing character/narrator's *I* is hardly ever allowed to surface in the text – a sleight of hand that is not lost upon the careful reader. These devices of course reveal the implied author's intended effect: a sense of the injustice committed against Africans as metonymical projections of all colonized, exploited people.

In *The Nuisance*, the unidentified *I* remains in fact a hidden eye, whose intriguing anonymity may be connected with the narrator's – and the narrator's father – complete lack of human involvement with their African servants. As white landowners, they fail to see the natives as anything but work implements. The narrator's father hardly realizes his skillful black driver is a man. He only becomes aware of that on account of the man's extreme competence at his job. Hence the sardonically critical judgement "He's a man, that native", solemnly pronounced by the father – as if humanity and the condition of a native African could not be easily associated. This is taken by the other white characters as an objective, perfectly natural way of looking at Africans, a fact which I associate with the almost total obliteration of the first-person pronoun, suggesting the narrator's claim to total objectivity in the reporting of events. The reader never gets to know if the narrating voice is a woman's or a man's. The character /narrator's *I* so to speak remains underground. The reader knows it is there, but it creeps into view just one single time. Grammatically, the *I* can only be implied, usually from the phrase *my*

father. Itself sparingly used, the phrase refers to a farmer vastly amused by the histrionic gifts of the servant he calls The Long One, not troubling to find out his real name. The farmer shows a similar unwillingness to listen to the man's problems – specifically, his inability to cope with an old ugly wife, whose nagging and jealousy of the driver's younger women makes life difficult for him. The master's irresponsible refusal to help solve the question eventually leads to the old woman's drowning. The husband and presumed murderer tries to present her death as suicide. The hypothesis is discarded by the farmer and his child, who have by then merged in the dual narrative voice indicated by *we*: "Later, we talked about the thing, saying how odd it was that natives should commit suicide; it sounded almost like an impertinence, as if they were claiming to have the same delicate feelings as ours." (Lessing, 1979, p. 70). This alarmingly candid statement ends the story. Its incongruity with the reader's point of view arouses an amused perception of the ironic effect unnoticed by the character /narrator but clearly meant by the implied author. At this stage, the reader has realized the significance of the almost total absence of the narrative *I*. If present, it would have denounced a personal, prejudiced viewpoint. Its absence aims at the impression of a blatantly false objectivity. The contemptuously racist stance towards Africans is thus presented not as personal and objectionable but as a perfectly "natural", objective attitude. The assumption of naturalness and inevitability, as so often is the case, proves extremely loaded, from an ideological point of view. It is a commonplace of the theory of culture that the construction of the world corresponding to the interests of the dominant social group is invariably presented by ideology as an objective expression of the "natural" order of things.

Another stylistic device – a play on the substitution of first for third – person narrative and the corresponding change of *she* into *I* – stands out in *The Old Chief Mshlanga*. It roughly corresponds to the

hide- and seek game played with the almost invisible narrator's *I* in *The Nuisance*. The theme of the invisibility of Africa and Africans, as well as their condition as subjectivities to be respected in their own right, comes out again. Now, however, the invisibility is gradually overcome. On the other hand, the slow process which makes possible the visibility of the Other coincides with the narrator/protagonist's gradual awakening to her own subjectivity, at least partly shaped by the fact that she has been born to a colonist's family in the middle of Africa. The notion of the dependence between colonizer and colonized comes out as an underlying theme, recalling Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, where the deadly effect of colonialism on oppressors and oppressed alike becomes an overriding theme. Or, again, the reader is reminded of such archetypal characters as Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: Kurtz represents the colonial exploiter both as the agent and the victim of predatory imperialism. His famous cry -- *Exterminate the brutes!* -- after all announces his own death.

In *English Language Fiction from South Africa*, John F. Covey reports that, in her introduction to a recent paperback reprint of Olive Schreiner's 1883 *Story of an African Farm*, Doris Lessing states that this work was central to the awakening of her own national cultural awareness. According to Covey, the "novel powerfully conveys the awesome violence that the South African veld inflicts on the white farmer. Ironically, the text ignores the African inhabitants, seeming to find them only one aspect of the landscape" (Schreiner, 1883, p. 86).

If, as Lessing declares, she suffered such influence from a literary work where native inhabitants prove invisible, it is nothing to wonder at that the first story in the **Collected African Stories** should start by thematizing this invisibility. This is precisely what *The Old Chief Mshlanga*

docs. The nameless protagonist, a girl born in South Africa to a white farmer's family, and initially referred to simply as *she*, is presented as totally alienated from her actual surroundings. The storybooks given her by her parents carry her imagination to the European hegemonic centres where the family mentally seems to go on living. Fantastic places and fairy characters, a child's first imaginary acquaintances, all evoke European surroundings. So even native African plants submit to an alienating apprehension by the child's displaced sensibility. The leaves of the mealie stalks "arch like cathedrals" before her. They summon up characters from an alien folklore: "a black bent figure croaking premonitions: the Northern witch, bred of cold Northern forests". The flora and climate the girl first learns about are also foreign and simply seem to erase her immediate surroundings. So "it was the mealie fields that faded and fled, leaving [her] among the gnarled roots of an oak, snow falling thick and soft and white" (Lessing, 1979, p. 13). Africa, the girl's native country – as often happens to conquered lands – looks like a blank space, a kind of *tabula rasa*, not written upon by the conqueror's history. As another example of the role played by narrative in the construction of the colonizer's and the colonized's subjectivity, it is to outlandish characters from foreign fairytales, the fruit of European cultural tradition, that the protagonist first opens her eyes and ears. She remains estranged from her own land and its people, blind to its sights, dumb and deaf to its language, which she anyway considers "an uncouth language which was by itself ridiculous." (Lessing, 1979, p. 14)

This child could not see a masasa tree, or the thorn, for what they were. Her books held tales of alien fairies, her rivers ran slow and peaceful, and she knew the shape of the leaves of an ash or an oak, the names of the little creatures that lived in English streams, when the words 'the veld' meant strangeness, though she could remember nothing else.

Because of this, for many years, it was the veld that seemed unreal; the sun was a foreign sun, and the wind spoke a strange language. (LESSING, 1979, p. 13)

A similar sense of remoteness and invisibility is associated with the people of the land.

The black people on the farm were as remote as the trees and the rocks. They were an amorphous black mass, mingling and thinning and massing like tadpoles, faceless, who existed merely to serve, to say 'Yes, Baas', take their (...) few shillings a month and the double handful of mealie meal twice a day which they earned in that part of Africa. (Lessing, 1979, p. 14)

Realizing the gulf set by race and oppression between them, even black children of her own age group call the white African girl 'Nkosikaas' – Chieftainess – an unearned title she takes for granted, as she goes about carrying a gun and letting her dog chase black adults up the trees as if they were strange animals.

This, however, begins to change, in a process that makes up the real backbone of the plot. The first change in the protagonist's metamorphosis is linguistic. More and more native words – *vlei*, *kopje* – begin to impinge upon the characters' consciousness, leaving their mark upon the text, as native scratches on the face of the conqueror's English. Other changes are marked by events, especially after the girl – now an adolescent – meets with Mshlanga, the old Chief, who teaches her her first lesson on the dignity of his people. For the first time, situations are reversed. The white girl is placed in a situation where people speak a language she cannot understand. To talk to the Chief she is forced to depend on one of his follower's translation, a reversal she had hardly expected. The natives are travelling on purposes of their own, not to seek work with the whites. This is another reason to make the girl see

the old Chief as an equal – “more than an equal, for he showed courtesy, and I showed none ” (Lessing, 1979, p. 15). In this passage, the protagonist, formerly referred to as *she*, for the first time becomes *I*. She thus takes responsibility, not only for the narrative, but for the colonial role she had so carelessly played before. The effect of the character’s approximation to the events narrated – rather than the distance implied by the earlier *she* – is coupled with her awareness of her ambiguous self both as an intruder and as a native in a country still entangled in the knots of colonialism. Africa, after all, is the alien girl’s motherland as well as the land invaded by her forebears.

Other textual metamorphoses get into gear with the symbolic placing of the so far unknown narrator, who is finally identified as the protagonist. The description of far away places and characters gives way to that of local people and surroundings. For the first time, the white girl gets to see an African village, depicted in precise, colourful detail. It is seen as a permanent dwelling place, signalling, in its solidity, the identity of the original owners of the land:

As I came close I saw the huts were lovingly decorated with patterns of yellow and red and ochre mud on the walls, and the thatch was tied in place with plaits of straw.

This was not at all like our farm compound, a dirty and neglected place, a temporary home for migrants who had no roots in it. (Lessing, 1979, p. 20-21).

So also native people become visible, not as tools to be handled at will, but as independent subjectivities, beautiful in their alterity, the old Chief in his “regally draped blanket” (p.23), the women “draped in bright cloths with brass glinting in their ears and on their arms”, “their faces (the passivity of servants gone) “alert with curiosity and interest”

(p. 21), as they gaze upon the embarrassed girl. For a while, the colonizer, not the colonized, submits to the gaze of the Other.

Again, the young girl feels uncomfortable because she cannot understand what is being spoken. This time the African language no longer sounds ridiculous and uncouth. It only brings home the idea of the oppressive role language can play – the way Europeans have long used it in Africa. As she realizes that, the protagonist changes her vocabulary. She no longer uses expressions like “black boy”. They are too close to the colonizer’s use of the nouns “boy” and “girl”, irrespective of age, simply as synonyms of “servant”. According to this colonial usage, typical of the infantilization of natives by white people, “boy” and “girl” were once used even of adult men and women, with the implication of ignorance and helplessness generally attributed to them. After the meeting with the old Chief, the unambiguous word *child* is substituted for *boy* and *girl* by the young “Chieftainess”. She cannot, however, immediately grasp the new code of manners and courtesy that plainly operates the Chief’s village, a new territory for her. For a while, the assymetric conditions invariably prevailing against native Africans seems to get redressed. Colonizer and colonized exchange places. The white -faced girl is led to wonder what it would feel like to wear this new mask of black dignity.

Sobered down by her new experience, the young girl seems to become adult. Her former, almost anthropological curiosity, yields to a new “urgent helpless desire to get to know these men and women as people, to be accepted by them as a friend” (p. 22). But she also experiences the impossibility to easily bridge the gap between them. She feels “a queer hostility in the landscape”, which, for a moment, gets back its African voice, and seems to say “You walk here like a destroyer.”

The gliding locus of narration becomes increasingly problematic, as one tries to place the voices in the short stories, from white colonizer to black object of domination and destruction. The (im)possibility of an harmonious fusion of such voices is likewise suggested. The incongruous mixture of voices – which, in Said’s apt metaphor, may well have to do with atonal rather than with polyphonic composition – can be seen as one of the hallmarks of Doris Lessing’s fiction, pointing to the singularity of her plight: a white writer grappling with the realities of early twentieth-century conditions in Africa.

Can it be that in some of the lines quoted above the Other is being minimally able to speak in the discourse that constructs it? One can at least realize that the formerly alienated girl, who has exchanged the remote *she* for a clearly more engaged *I* can now hear the old Chief’s voice, as translated by his son: “All this land, this land you call yours, is [my father’s] land, and belongs to our people”. (p. 24)

At this stage, the changes stylistically indicated by the alteration in the narrative stance – the narrator’s voice merging with the protagonist’s *I* – indicates the awakening of an adult consciousness, maybe even a postcolonial one, if by that we mean a dawning realization of respectfully acknowledged racial, ethnic and linguistic diversities. A consciousness, as Jerry Philips puts it, that faces, each and every day, cultural struggles for what counts as an index of citizenship and of political struggles for the construction of national identities.

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Newman by Himself; New Man, by O'Faolain

*Munira H. Mutran**

A man, I believe, meets with many
difficulties in playing even his own character.

Daniel O'Connell

We are here in the presence of a man
whose mind was a perfect onion of worlds
within worlds.

Sean O'Faolain on Daniel O'Connell

As a “matter of history” John Henry Newman (1801-1890) was born in London, studied at Trinity College, Oxford, where he was ordained in the Anglican ministry. He became the leader of the Tractarian Movement with his *Tracts for the Times*. By 1842, however, his doubts on what had been his religious certainties grew stronger. He withdrew from the Anglican Church, leading a life of austerity, reflexion and prayer. In 1845 he was received into the Roman Catholic Church and ordained priest in Rome. As Cardinal Newman he influenced hundreds of young clergymen in England. Among his

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writings, *Grammar of Assent* (1870), his most philosophical work, *An Idea of a University*, and his autobiography *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1869) were read in Europe and in America.

A brief survey of the most significant autobiographical documents in different literatures will indicate attempts at self-definition, self-celebration (*Vive Moi!*, by O'Faolain is an example), self-justification, self-discovery, and so on. Besides this primary concern, and closely linked with it, an autobiography may mirror a cultural moment which moulds the self, or against which it resists; or it may reflect the relationship of the self with the Other. For the last two centuries the notion of self has become central, not only in the autobiographical genre, but in every literary manifestation.

Fiction, again and again, examines the formation of the self, its divisions or multiple aspects, discussing ideas of alienation and reaching even extremes of pathological condition, with or without, the device of fantasy. A recurrence of doubts, shadows, twins, apparitions, change of gender, prove how the fragmentation of the self has become an important motif in the literature of the period (And afterwards: James Joyce, in his autobiographical *A Portrait of the Artist* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* illustrate the tendency in the 20th century).

A concern with the self can also be noticed in painting with the successful development of the portrait, a record of certain aspects of a particular human being as seen by another. The sitter may be flattered, deified or satirized by the painter.

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The self portrait, believed to be invented when mirrors were invented, is a portrait of a person by herself, mainly concentrating on face, eyes (mirrors of the soul) and hands. If we look at the self-portraits Picasso's eyes seem to be directed towards an internal search, and Tarsila's impassible face, heavily made-up, seems to be "floating", bodiless; it is a veil or a mask with enigmatic eyes, which, instead of revealing, hide what lies beneath them. The other self-portraits belong to different periods and different schools. Environment is generally not present; in the one exception, Rubens' self-portrait with Isabel Brant, the self is seen in relation with the Other; their attitudes (the way they hold hands), jewels and clothes they wear allow us a glimpse of their world. As to scenes with many people as Renoir's *Le Moulin de la Galette*, they would be closer to what a novel does, depicting a larger canvas.

The complexity of the modern autobiography can be compared to the "triple self-portrait" (1960) by Rockwell, seen and discussed in Lejeune's *Moi Aussi* (p. 77): an artist paints his image reflected in a mirror and also looks at reproductions of famous self-portraits (Durer, Rembrandt, Picasso, Van Gogh) pinned on the canvas: tradition, the intertext. In the process of gazing from the mirror to the unfinished canvas, "unreadings" occur: the painted image is without glasses, the pipe is in a different position and so on. And what about the painter? Lejeune explains (1986: p. 77):

Le peintre et son image dans le miroir se correspondent parfaitement: même taille (le peintre de dos en entier, l'image de face et seulement en plan américain) mêmes lunettes (qui nous cachent le regard). L'autoportrait sur la toile est, lui, beaucoup plus grand que "nature", sans lunettes, agréablement stylisé. La pipe qu'il fume est horizontale, et non pas tombante comme dans la "réalité". En même temps qu'il oppose la "réalité" (fictive) à la fiction, le *Triple Autoportrait* articule les trois "degrés" possibles de l'autoportrait.

If Lejeune stresses the idea of the triple degree (quadruple), since there was a real painter, Rockwell, who produced this scene, I think that in this example the most significant aspects are the deviations throughout the process. They constitute an important issue for both the autobiography and the biography because of the gaze, the mirror and the lenses. Does the mirror show an ameliorated version to the eyes which stare at it? A proof that this may be the case is that we generally try to look our best in the mirror, and at times, unaware of a mirror, we are shocked at our own image, taking some time to recognize it.

Those reflections lead us to accept the fact that “truth” is difficult to achieve in documents of the self, since self-deception is one of the characteristics of the writer of an autobiography or of the painter of a self-portrait. As André Maurois has remarked (MCMXXVIII: p 79):

Certains journaux sont destinés à la postérité; l'auteur y adopte une attitude et se représente avec complaisance l'effet que fera cette attitude sur le lecteur. Même quand le journal est authentiquement destiné à ne pas être lu, il est très fréquent que l'écrivain pose devant lui même... Tout mémorialiste est un auteur, qu'il le veuille ou non; le *moi* qu'il a fixé sur le papier se détache de lui; il le contemple à la distance...

So, it seems, “truth” is problematic in the biography as well.

Although the biographer likes to believe that he is like a historian, basing the study of a life on *facts*, there are aspects of selection, omissions, emphasis, treatment, attitude, the period in which he writes, which “colour” his narrative. Citing again André Maurois (MCMXXVIII: p. 22)

Il serait absurde d'imaginer le biographe moderne comme un être parfaitement impartial.

Back to Newman. The bare facts about him, related in the beginning show a self torn between two approaches to religion, conflict which is central to his *Apologia*, whose subtitle, "Being a History of His Religious Opinions" stress both the focus of interest in this search of the self and an unusual use of *he*, instead of *I*, normally the point of view adopted in an autobiography. Nevertheless, a quick glance through the table of contents reveals a shift in point of view. So we have, "History of My Religious Opinions, Position of My Mind Since 1845, etc". This is a history of his soul and intellect, a spiritual autobiography in the tradition of *Grace Abounding* by John Bunyan, the description of a split self between two opposing forces. In being restricted to the religious battle it omits other important aspects of the multiple self mainly due to the belief in the wholeness of being which can be reached with the help of Divine Being. So Newman thinks of his autobiography as a duty, a contribution he owes to posterity (1947: 1):

It may easily be conceived how great a trial it is to me to write the following history of myself; but I must not shrink from the task. The words "Secretum meum mihi" keep ringing in my ears; but as men draw towards the end, they care less for disclosure.

This is not generally the case with most autobiographies since the writers, as they get older, do want to disclose their secrets, not to keep them for themselves.

Far from being a history of himself, *Apologia* is just a history of a spiritual struggle, leaving all other aspects of human life untouched. We read in the introduction (1947: XI):

Though Newman's *Apologia* has been acclaimed as one of the masterpieces of English autobiography, many readers are nonplused or disappointed on first opening its pages. The reason is not hard to

ascertain. Newman's book, like many great masterpieces, is difficult reading.

Besides being difficult reading, what makes *Apologia* less significant in the twentieth century are Newman's statements that from the time he became a Catholic he has had no anxiety of heart whatever, he has been in perfect peace and contentment, he never has had one doubt. The modern reader loses interest in this self which is not multiple, fragmented, and therefore in his certainties, offers no challenge.



Look at the picture O'Faolain chose from his book's cover. What is there behind this young face? By concentrating on a picture of his mind at work Newman gives us only a partial view of his self (of his self-portrait). One would wish to know more. An attempt to define this New Man, quite different from the one in the *Apologia* is O'Faolain's *Newman's Way* (1952), a biography among others he wrote. His four historical biographies, *Constance Markiewicz* (1934), *King of the Beggars* (1938), *De Valera* (1939), *The Great O'Neill* (1942) are complemented by *The Irish* (1947) in his endeavour to understand and describe the Irish national character. In the words of Maurice Harmon (Sean O'Faolain, 1984: p. 3):

This method of concentrating on a particular person as a way of illuminating a time of history is an attempt at understanding how a great figure emerges from his background and calculating to what degree his is the personification of the people's instincts or explicit needs, and at determining the extent and nature of the heritage he created for subsequent Irishmen.

Before discussing *Newman's Way*, which does not fall into the pattern of his historical biographies, let us mention the development of O'Faolain's ideas on biography with the help of *King of the Beggars*, his most successful study of a life. The inclusion of acknowledgements and debts to friends, scholars, the National Gallery of Ireland, and biographers of O'Connell; tables of contents and illustrations; a historical note and an index signal to the author's wish to establish links with history, depending heavily on written record and sometimes on oral tradition in his search of facts which will, hopefully, reveal the "truth". In his *The Great O'Neill*, O'Faolain's concern with the historical documents could almost be called obsessive and excessive. However, biography and history have differences of approach. According to Sir Sidney Lee (1911: p. 28):

The historian looks at mankind through a field-glass.

The biographer puts individual men under a magnifying glass.

In *King of the Beggars* O'Faolain invokes the assistance of innumerable sources: the first and most important of them are O'Connell's *Diary*, his collected letters and speeches.

If the documents left by O'Connell are a rich source in O'Faolain's attempt at achieving the "truth", the memoirs, letters, travel books, histories, biographies, drawings, pamphlets, and articles in the newspapers, by his contemporaries, may contribute to enhance the picture of Ireland, its people and the rôle O'Connell played in its history.

What about tradition and folk memory? Can history rely on them? O'Faolain's answer is *no*, because they are "filtered" by partisans on both sides. This word could well be applied to the biographer because all the information received will be filtered through his own mind, which belongs to a different period and environment.

So many sources to consult: the difficulty is to select and interpret. One can sense much doubt in O'Faolain's belief in the documents' power to reveal facts. Some, it is true, he says, are "a matter of history", while others, like some biographies, read already like legend.

Besides portraying the national character in *King of the Beggars*, O'Faolain's main interest lies in O'Connell's complex self, in his incoherence and ambiguity, in his religious and political beliefs, and his relationships with family, friends and enemies, he being "as open as a shellfish".

O'Faolain reminds us that in one of his letters, O'Connell had written that a "man meets with many difficulties in playing even his

own character” (1970: p. 67) showing his awareness of the different rôles or masks expected of him. The biographer will be concerned with this multiple self, and his difficulties will also be many “in the presence of a man whose mind was a perfect onion of worlds within worlds” (O’Faolain, 1970: p. 204). The quotations above, part of which I have chosen for epigraphs of this paper, describe the problems the writer of his autobiography and the biographer have to face.

It is, then, on this labyrinthine personality, a Chameleon or Sphinx that the biographer will focus. From different sources and angles, O’Faolain will expose, but not decipher, this “tortuous mind”. For so complicated a man, he says, “we can look at him from the outside, state the problem, and utter an opinion and not a shred more” (1970: p. 73). In his attempts to penetrate the enigma, the biographer asks and answers: “what position have we arrived at? Probably as many positions as there are types of readers” (1970: p. 86) giving his biography, not a kind of definitive interpretation of his hero, but an open ending, typical of modern fiction.

Is it possible, after all, to get inside the “minds and hearts of these people” through imagination? Is the biographer tied up, and the novelist free, as Virginia Woolf stated?

One should remember that when *King of the Beggars* was written, O’Faolain had already published *Midsummer Night Madness*, (1932) *A Nest of Simple Folk* (1934), *Bird Alone* (1936) and *A Purse of Coppers* (1937); in all those, the complexity of the human heart and mind was one of the main themes, and the building of characters showed his skill and creative power as a short-story writer, mainly. If O’Connell “had all the joy of the creative artist in his life and work” and “had moulded an Irish Atlas carrying a world in its back” (O’Faolain, 1970: p. 232), the

biographer will mould his character from infancy to the grave, and after, nor stopping in the years of glory, in order to show how Time (a favourite theme!), old age and illness destroyed the “Old Giant”, the homeless Lear, the Minotaur in his labyrinth, a Lion in his cage, his claws cut, the Irish Atlas whose “living muscles [had] held the strain and cracked beneath it” (O’Faolain, 1970: p. 232).

Not even Hercules can murder Time, and not even an O’Connell can evade or circumvent it...

(O’Faolain, 1970: p. 266)

While the letters and speeches are used as documents to reveal facts, they are also used as literary devices “disclosing unconsciously” the personality who wrote them.

King of the Beggars is a biography where art has seeped gradually. Although based on facts selected and coloured by his own mind and time, O’Faolain by asking himself how intimately can we know the other’s self (and what a self!) drifted towards literature. His treatment is realistic, avoiding what Stevenson expected of his biographer, “to blush and to draw the veil”. However, his realism, as in his fiction, is mixed with compassion for human frailty, and he also gives his hero the benefit of doubt.

Having briefly discussed O’Faolain’s blurring of the frontier between history and fiction, let us now turn to the last biography he wrote, the one about Newman. It has very little to do with the Irish national mind as in the historical biographies. The aim, not an analogy between a person and a nation, is the individual struggles that may clarify the biographer’s experience. O’Faolain had also many religious doubts throughout his life. He admired and wanted to understand Newman inside the context of his family and 19th century England. With a

distancing (and external point of view) and help of other biographies and documents, he allows us to meet a completely new man.

But the documents in *Newman's Way* are not used as explicitly as in O'Faolain's other biographical books. It is true that countless letters by Newman to his parents, brothers, sisters and friends; his Tracts, diaries, sermons, essays; diaries of friends and relatives (his brother Frank wrote a bitter book about him); registers in Churches and legal documents, all these become the foundation and structure on which the biographer builds the half-real, half-fictional house of Newman's life. The bridge between facts and imagination is crossed over with the help of expressions such as: "we can guess, one may imagine, one can see, it must have been, leading us to wonder, we may speculate wildly", introducing passages where imagination predominates. The inclusion of acknowledgements, sources, detailed notes, and a genealogical table of Newman's family may lead us to consider the biography close to a historical approach; it may be, however, a novelist's device, as the letters in Richardson's *Pamela*.

As soon as the story begins, we realize that the emphasis is in a fluent narrative. The biographer "reconstructs" his sources, and thus enlarges the distance between himself and a historian. As a matter of fact, frequent allusions and analogies with famous novelists and their work remind the reader that real life can be like fiction, and that fiction may portray real life. Titles of chapters as "Hard Times" or "The Quest For Things Past" are certainly echoes of fictional works; a character is described as a Bunyan – type or Newman's father, "our Péric Goriot".

A few examples:

John II got a wife with a tidy dowry of £ 5000, and we may remember that Elizabeth Bennet, as Jane Austen carefully records, had only £ 2000. (p. 5)

Or:

How did he keep going? We may recall Thackeray's *The Newcomes*. (p. 9)

Or still:

Sometimes, nowadays, as when we read Thackeray or Dickens and find them sentimental, we cannot believe that so much continued happiness and pleasure ever existed in the world. (p. 13)

Or another illustration:

If we were fixing the Newman children in place, like the Brontës at Haworth, or the Barretts in Wimpole Street, we would speak most aptly of the Newmans of Norwood. (p. 20)

And better still:

Dickens would have done the scene beautifully. (p. 50)

As in Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*, *Newman's Way* describes three generations in a changing world, a typical world of a 19th century novel with its history (1815, Waterloo, the Coronation of a King, the death of a Queen) its thoughts and ideas (in politics, religion, science, art), even its fashion, Finishing Schools for Young Ladies, movements of Emancipation of Women, etc.— a rich background to Newman's story, intermingled with the story of the family. Vivid portraits of father, mother and each child (they were 6) "humanize the whole Newman

legend". (IX) We can see him as a boy at home (a fanatically evangelical family) and at school, where he was considered a very strange child:

His sense of reality became weak. ...At times the world hardly existed for him. "I thought life might be a dream, or I an angel, and all this world a deception" (p. 24-25)

His narratives about himself, "schizophrenically third-person" show how he was detached from a "self".

He became so fanatically evangelical that O'Faolain mentions he had irreverently played with the idea of titling his biography "A Genius in the Family", with a subtitle "Or a Blessed Nuisance". As the story unravels, the tragic falls of both the family and Newman, become "real", when this comment is made:

What enormous differences can be produced within a family of identical background and like temperament by the slightest alteration of emphasis!

This wealthy family of the young banker, with a big house in London, and two country-houses, goes down low in the world, the father becoming a tavern-keeper in one of the most sordid streets of the city.

Newman's dreams of wisdom and knowledge, to become an Oriel Fellow in Oxford (they come true, but have to be given up) are changed utterly by the end of his life (so full of conflicts). The allusions to Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* can be detected in many passages, like the following:

Oh, the pleasure of hearing them. It leads my mind to a longing after something, I know not what... Such is my feeling at this minute as I hear the evening bells of Oxford.

And:

He would live, for ever, among those golden stones and gleaming lawns,...
Still, Oxford did not fall into his lap. He had to slave for it. (p. 63)

When he was forty “a bad age for any man to have to begin again” he had been “more alone than he had ever been before, a bad thing for any man in an hour of trial... his friends “creeping away from him in his fall”. (p. 301)

The conflict between his previous beliefs and his conversion to Catholicism tears his soul in two.

What in the world am I doing this for except that I think I am called to do so?... I have a good name with many; I am deliberately sacrificing it. I have a bad name with more; I am fulfilling all their worst wishes, and giving them their most coveted triumph. I am distressing all I love, unsettling all I have instructed or aided. I am going to choose whom I do not know, and of whom I expect very little. I am making myself an outcast, and that at my age! Oh, what can it be but stern necessity which causes this?

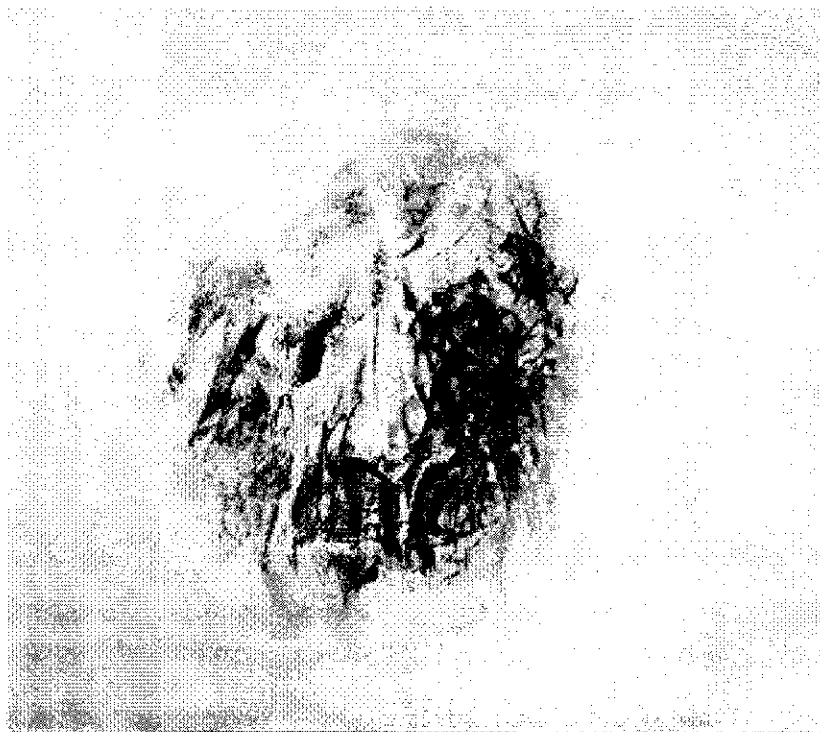
A lonely old man, without friends, his family circle broken up by death and strong different religious conviction of brothers and sisters, his life's struggle reaching its end is thus described:

He did not see Oxford again – apart from such glimpses of its spires as one may have from a passing train – until he was an old man of seventy-seven, from whom, by then, the world had taken away almost every desire except the longing to leave it – an old Tithonus – a gray grasshopper, the evaporating mist of a forgotten morning. (p. 315)

With these reflections, which could include so much more about

Newman's Way the differences between biography, history and autobiography were touched upon. *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* and *Newman's Way*, two books on the same person, both about the complexity of one's and other's self, become different because Newman could only see his spiritual development, and O'Faolain, on his attempt at penetrating in the forest of his mind ("the forest is deeper and the paths more puzzling" than he had anticipated == IX), wrote a wonderful biographical novel with the lonely hero, like Jude, facing conflicts of soul and spirit against the everyday difficult life about him. He wants to be left alone, but what he gets is utter loneliness. If we were to draw his portrait now, it would look like Joyce's or Picasso's portraits by Louis Le Brocqy.





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“Women and the Wilderness: The Tradition of Canadian Women’s Writing

*Sandra Regina Goulart Almeida**

Whether the wilderness is
real or not
depends on who lives there.

Margaret Atwood, *The Journals of
Susanna Moodie*

This is the place
you would rather not know about
this is the place that will inhabit you,
this is the place you cannot imagine,

Margaret Atwood, “Notes towards a
Poem that Can Never Be Written”.

Here is a map of our country:
here is the Sea of Indifference

...

I promised to show you a map you say but this is a mural
then yes let it be these are small distinctions
where do we see it from is the question

Adrienne Rich, *An Atlas of the Difficult World*

* Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais.

When considering Canadian literature the question commonly raised is, to quote Northrop Frye's famous formulation and to address the issue implicitly alluded to in the above quotes: "Where is here?" – that is, what place am I speaking from?, what position do I occupy? (1971: 223). In Canadian literature – or CanLit, as it is often referred to – , Frye argues, the question "who am I?", frequently asked in countries where the "here" is already defined, has to be replaced by "where is here?", which openly conveys the notion of indeterminacy and provisionality in regard to one's location. To borrow Margaret Atwood's elaboration on Frye's theory: "Where is this place in relation to other places? How do I find my way around in it?" (1972b: 17). And I would add: what is the positionality of the speaking subject in relation to the locus from which he or she speaks?

In the case of Canadian women writers such a questioning becomes even more relevant as the parallel between the historical situation of women and that of Canada as a nation is taken into consideration. As several feminist critics have pointed out, women's position regarding patriarchal traditions of authority and their investigation of the politics of gender relate to Canada's situation *vis-à-vis* the cultural American imperialism and the ambivalence towards its English/French background and heritage. Margaret Atwood, the most prominent and internationally renowned Canadian woman writer, implies that cultural colonization and sexual subordination are parallel situations. For her, Canadians have viewed themselves as victims of English and American imperialism in the same way that women have perceived themselves as victims of masculine privilege (1972b: 20-25). The argument becomes noteworthy when one considers the expressive number of women writers in Canada nowadays, regardless of their lack of representation in the canon until recently. It is Coral Ann Howells' belief that the answers to commonly asked questions about why there are so many Canadian writers may eventually "reveal interesting

similarities between the search for visibility and identity so characteristic of women's fiction and the Canadian search for a distinctive cultural self-image" (1987: 2).

Although it cannot be denied that the politics of imperialism and of gender have much in common, especially in the Canadian case, I would, however, caution against such a simplistic equation of a deeply complex and highly controversial issue. First of all, women's positionality in relation to the Canadian landscape needs to be reconsidered since one cannot ignore, for example, women's double-edged situation that renders their connection with the traditional Canadian wilderness troublesome. Northrop Frye's proposed question about the definition of "canadianness", i.e. "where is here?," can be transposed, or better still, *translated* to the realm of women's situation in the sense that this questioning may, in a different light, address the problematic concern about the current positionality of Canadian women writers. As Adrienne Rich hints in the above quote, a perception of the locus specified by the adverb "here" depends on "where we see it from", especially because a definition of what Rich terms "the politics of location" encompasses the direction from which the gaze comes and the location on which it rests.

A questioning of the spatial politics in terms of gender difference has often emphasized the duality of such a notion in that it may often relate "both to masculinist power and to feminist resistance" (Blunt and Rose, 1994: 1). As opposed to man's space, which is "a space of domination, hierarchy and conquest, a sprawling, showy space, a *full* space", women have traditionally been relegated to an empty space, a void, absent and vacant position (Herrman, 1980: 169). Therefore, the question to be asked is: how can women speak from the space of otherness, a marginal place, the locus of the exiled which is also emblematic of the absence of a place? How can they position themselves in a space which is traditionally identified as a marginal non-place?

For some feminist theoreticians and women writers, this non-locus of the other and the marginal is not, however, the empty, absent, bare and sterile place reserved for women in a patriarchal system, but rather a fertile, productive, and transgressive site. It becomes then an alternative space from which women can "repossess as a field of inquiry all the space of the other, the gaps, silences, and absences of discourse and representation, to which the feminine has traditionally been relegated" (Showalter, 1984: 36). Therefore, writing about, from, and through "spaces of otherness" becomes a highly transgressive strategy. These spaces of otherness are not simply, as Ruth Salvaggio states, "spaces that certain feminist theorists are writing *about*, but those that they are writing *through* as they speak and write dispersive space itself" (1988: 272).

Nevertheless, writing from spaces of otherness becomes an enormous challenge in the sense that women writers have to struggle against an inherent double-bind: the desire to subvert an imposed order and the inevitability of their being culturally and socially inscribed in this same order, and the need to represent that which is intrinsically unrepresentable in traditional Western forms of representation. As Elaine Showalter puts it, "all language is the language of the dominant order, and women, if they speak at all, must speak through it. . . . There can be no writing or criticism totally outside of the dominant structure" (1982: 30-31).

Against the odds, women writers have to face the challenge of writing about and from that place which is either misrepresented or escapes representation, which prefigures an impossibility in logical and objective parameters. However, writing from the place of the other is neither logical nor objective; it deals precisely with the (im)possible: that which a patriarchal society deems impossible but which women

writers defy as a possibility and a potential for expression and liberation. This writing from women's spaces of otherness resists definition precisely because it inhabits a subversive locus that is disregarded by an authoritarian system. It is through this practice of writing which is seemingly impossible and unrepresentable, but which becomes productive and redemptive, that women manage to establish a locus (or an ambiguous "non-locus") of transgression, one that "will allow them to re-vision, rather than be viewed in, the dominant discourse" (Salvaggio, 1988: 273). This new space of discourse is, according to Teresa de Lauretis, a "space-off," "a view from elsewhere," from the margin, from women's transgressive "non-locus" in society (1987: 25-26).

Some Canadian women writers, however, strive to deconstruct a conventional and negative space to which women have been compared – i.e. the wilderness –, and in the process they destabilize traditional binary oppositions that reinforce women's oppression – i.e. the dichotomy between nature/culture. The feminine notion of wilderness as explored in the works of several contemporary women writers – e.g. Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, Emily Carr's *Klee Wyck*, Marian Engel's *Bear* – helps to create a new space of discourse, one that transgresses, re-visions, rewrites, and parodies male notions of a so-called "feminine" space.

Generally speaking, the myth of wilderness, a landscape with vast areas of dark forests, prairies and snow with historical value for the country's colonial past, has pervaded Canadian literature as an emblem of national identity and canadianness. Yet, this literary tradition, while inherently related to a masculine domain, has often been associated with women as object owing to their identification with the myth of wilderness. Ironically, women writers remained excluded from a literary and canonical tradition derived from a distinctive national literature of

the wilderness, or better still, of "male wilderness." As object, women were identified with the wild colonial landscape that needed to be tamed and controlled by the colonizer, thus, providing the basis for the feminization of a colonized landscape. As Blunt and Rose put it:

The association of indigenous women with colonized land legitimated perceptions of both women and land as object of colonization. Imperialistic literature often incorporated sexual imagery to create and sustain the heroic stature of male colonizers who conquered and penetrated dangerous, unknown continents, often characterized by the fertility of both indigenous vegetation and women. (1994: 10).

As a metaphor for the land, women become representative of nature in an evocation of the long sustained traditional dichotomy between nature and culture. However, although women are portrayed as being closer to nature than men, they still have to compromise with their social position, that is, they are still required to perform their social duties according to patriarchal standards. The positionality of women in such society, then, acquires a *mediating* function in the sense that they shift location in view of the performance of the several roles that are required of them. As Heather Murray points out, "this notion of the symbolic ambiguity of the middle ground helps us to see how representation of women is always double: for while women is viewed as an element of nature, so too is she seen as an element of culture, an object, a 'good' in sexual economy" (1986: 82).

Women writers, on the other hand, by being excluded from a literary tradition that was deemed masculine because of its subject matter and representability, were also metaphorically denied access to the colonial landscape and consequently from the formation of the Canadian canon. Concerning women's double positionality, Murray claims that "the situation of the woman author in English-Canada is paradigmatic

of woman's place – both within, and without, the symbolic order” (1986: 75). Women writers are, therefore, caught in the double-bind of patriarchal spatial politics: on the one hand, they are identified with the wilderness in their position as others and as wild elements to be tamed, while, on the other, they are barred from it as a means of literary achievement.

Contemporary women writers, however, refuse to be excluded from such tradition and address the myth of the Canadian wilderness precisely from their position of alterity: an ambivalent and often, as Linda Hutcheon claims, complicitous locus of enunciation. Complicitous because of the inherent double-bind that they have to face: the challenge to speak from a space in which they inhabit but from which they remain excluded. Blunt and Rose seem to point to a way out of this double-bind by arguing that a subversive “politics of location” would reject the transparency connected with notions of power, knowledge and control that essentializes and universalizes women to focus on a space that is fluid, fragmented, pluralized, multidimensional, contradictory, and provisional. Such a politics of location enacts a locus in which “Contradictions are nurtured; the margin is not simply valorized but its fundamental relationship to the center is emphasized” (1994: 7-16). For such, they argue, there is the need to “ground the subject positionality in historical and geographical research” (1994: 14) and, as Homi Bhabha suggests, to search for a third space (1990: 18). Or to use Elaine Showalter's theory developed in her essay suitably entitled “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness”, there is the need to create a “wild zone”, a “female space” which, similarly to Bhabha's third space, would provide a locus for the development of authentic revolutionary and transgressive strategies, theories that would try to resist the duplicity of a discourse from the margins (1982: 31). In terms of Canadian literature it would be a way of signaling women's *appropriation* of the masculine myth of

the wilderness as a feminized space instead of being victimized by such a disempowering myth.

In Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972) the concept of the native wilderness is re-written in terms of the experience of a nameless female narrator whose positionality in relation to the landscape shifts as the narrative develops. At the same time, the narrative redefines a traditional male domain that excludes women as a possible site for female growth, transgression, and regeneration. As a city woman who rejects her historical and personal past in the Canadian wilderness, the narrator gradually becomes associated with the land in its most primitive and feminized state. As her historical and geographic position changes, so does her perception of the wilderness around her: "My heart bumped, I held still, translating the noises on the other side of the canvas wall. Squeaks, shuffling in the dry leave, grunting nocturnal animals; no danger" (146). "Translating" is precisely the term to define the process she undergoes as she decodes the signs of the wilderness in a process of, not only understanding it, but also *becoming* it. As a woman artist, in fact, "an imitator," as she puts it, she becomes unable to reproduce the ideological values of the society she comes from once she begins to connect to the wilderness. Her visionary experience, the ending of her parodic narrative quest, as Hutcheon calls it, culminates with her surfacing from the water, after having a kind of vision, a new person completely identified with the wilderness and rejecting impositions from the "colonizer", the white "Americanized" male that does not belong there (144). She refuses to be victimized, to become a woman/land victim of the oppressor colonizer by, for instance, strongly opposing her boyfriend's attempts to possess her since he views her simply as an extension of the wilderness to be tamed and possessed: "I didn't want him in me, sacrilege, he was one of the killers, the clay victims damaged and strewn behind him . . . 'Don't,' I said, he was lowering himself down on me, 'I don't want you to'" (172).

Unlike the men that exploit the wild landscape, the narrator becomes united with it through a learning experience, and unlike most male writers of Canadian literature that see themselves as victims of English and American imperialism (in Atwood's terms), the narrator in *Surfacing* concludes that there is a potentiality in her acceptance of the wilderness and her positionality in it as a colonized woman, but not as a silent victim. Her contact with nature provides her with the basis for subverting the societal expectations and creating a transgressive discourse that resists dichotomies such as nature/culture. As she states towards the end: "This above all, to refuse to be a victim. Unless I can do that I can do nothing. I have to recant, give up the old belief that I am powerless" (229).

Atwood's *Surfacing* exemplifies the politics of location of the contemporary woman writer in relation to one of the most prominent myths in Canadian literature: the myth of wilderness. Instead of complying with the traditional position attributed to women and women writers in the wilderness, Atwood's heroine takes a stand and from her historical and geographic positionality she subverts and transgresses pre-established assumptions. Aware of the double-bind in which she is caught, she refuses to view her site of transgression as a transparent place, but rather establishes it as a potential multidimensional and pluralized space of otherness – the place "where she sees it from", to go back to Adrienne Rich's poem. If the question to be asked about Canadian women writers is "where is here?" or "where does she see it from?", the answer might be: it is the space of otherness, a space-off, women's politics of location.

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O Centro em Crise: John Updike e as Estórias à Margem

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Os contos de John Updike “The Christian Room Mates” (Colegas de Quarto) (1966) e “More Stately Mansions” (Mansões Mais construção histórica frequentemente encontrada na obra do autor como um todo. Trata-se de uma forma de apropriação da história que filtra os eventos através da mente de personagens masculinos, de cor branca, originários de pequenas cidades interioranas e que são conservadores, religiosos, nacionalistas, anticomunistas e beligerantes. Como a apropriação é controlada por este tipo de moldura intelectual, os protagonistas de Updike tendem a abordar a história de uma perspectiva que funciona primeiramente como um sistema discursivo de centro. A história, portanto, é entramada segundo uma perspectiva que denomino de centrista.

Apesar desta perspectiva centrista, no entanto, Updike ocupa-se de protagonistas que de alguma forma vivem seduzidos e fascinados pelas forças históricas à margem. E o seu propósito, como consequência, nunca é a mera eliminação destas margens, mas um processo muito

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mais sutil cujo objetivo é trazer as forças marginais para o santuário seguro da medianidade. Em outras palavras, os protagonistas alimentam-se do marginal sempre determinados a se reenergizarem como centro, buscando através do contraste ideológico uma definição, pragmática e inambígua, do que deve ser considerado central e o que deve ser considerado marginal, o que deve ser defendido como essencial para a preservação do sistema e o que deve ser entendido como ameaça à ordem e à estabilidade.

Ao construir os discursos marginais como verdadeiros baluartes de subversão política e social, Updike faz de suas estórias bem mais do que uma mera exposição da medianidade americana através de uma voz de consenso nacional. Ao contrário, suas estórias constantemente revisionam a história americana do ponto de vista do que Linda Hutcheon denomina de “ex-centrics” (Hutcheon 17). A interpretação histórica oferecida ao leitor desempenha, portanto, duas funções: (1) ela revitaliza a noção de uma história progressiva ou progressista ao dar de fato voz às forças marginais e insinuando uma intenção de “de-doxificar” ou desnaturalizar o discurso hegemônico e (2), ela busca reforçar e habilitar o centro e sua forma de construir mundos.

O que ocorre com as personagens de Updike é que, apesar de suas afirmações ao contrário, elas não parecem aprender grandes coisas com a sua exposição à marginalidade. As forças ex-cêntricas que, via de regra, movimentam a roda da história e põem fim à imobilidade ideológica, são no caso de Updike sempre postas a serviço da medianidade. As personagens nas duas estórias que pretendo discutir brevemente (e na sua obra como um todo) são na verdade movidas pela história, provocadas pela história. No entanto, a mais complexa combinação de eventos e circunstâncias parece não ensinar-lhes nada de significativamente novo. Os heróis de Updike invariavelmente trazem consigo uma certa

velhice positivista e, em conseqüência, estão fadados a permanecerem inalterados, independente do que acontece à sua volta ou no país como um todo.

Updike, como sabemos, nunca se sentiu culpado por criar protagonistas tão escancaradamente incorretos politicamente. Sua declaração a um de seus entrevistadores “Eu não sou responsável pelo mundo moderno, apenas o seu retratista” (*Conversations* 184) tenta, sem sucesso penso eu, fazer uma distinção entre si próprio e as suas personagens.¹ Nos anos 60, quando o divisionismo social ameaçava dilacerar o país, Updike foi um dos poucos escritores que, como os seus protagonistas, se manifestou a favor da Guerra do Vietnã. Embora tenha tentado exorcizar este fantasma em sua longa discussão sobre a matéria em *Self-Consciousness* (1989) – a sua autobiografia – alguns críticos insinuem que este ato de olhar de volta para o pecado, ao invés de enfatizar a sua humanidade, apenas o transformou, como a mulher de Lot, num pilar de sal. A verdade, porém, é que Updike acreditava sinceramente que a sua forma de ativismo político era à época justificável, e ele tem feito questão de manifestar-se sobre o assunto de forma clara, aberta, e categórica – o que me leva a crer que a sua preferência por uma forma neo-realista de representação, numa época de auto-reflexão pós-modernista e de “fabulações experimentais” (Scholes, *Fabulation and Metafiction* B 4) possa também ser tomada como resultado de uma atitude geral semelhante e subjacente que torna inseparáveis Updike, o escritor, de Updike, o homem. Refiro-me a uma profunda convicção pessoal do homem que insiste em ressurgir em sua obra – a convicção de que é no

¹ Em entrevista a José Geraldo Couto (Folha de São Paulo, 9/3/92) Updike, perguntado sobre o papel da *political correctness* na produção do escritor, declara: “Chega um momento em que você tem que mergulhar em suas próprias energias, em seus próprios preconceitos; a arte não é politicamente correta: a arte é energia.”

centro que está a força que impede a desagregação do sistema e de que, portanto, vale a pena retratá-lo e protegê-lo.

Com seus protagonistas não é diferente, exceto que eles muitas vezes surgem vitimados pela ignorância, insensibilidade e hipocrisia. Entretanto, apesar de sua óbvia identificação com os representantes da medianidade, é preciso enfatizar que Updike sempre permite que as forças marginais se expressem com bastante liberdade e com tal ímpeto que alguns leitores acreditam honestamente que as suas estórias são progressistas.

Meu argumento, no entanto, é que as estórias de Updike são mesmo conservadoras, mas, diferente de muitos leitores, isto não me causa problemas com a apreciação de sua obra. Os dois textos que pretendo discutir a seguir ganham vida exatamente porque permitem que o “ex-cêntrico” se expresse sem restrições. O “ex-cêntrico” não se encontra abafado pela medianidade mas apenas justaposto a ela – e justaposto de tal forma que o leitor está sempre sendo tentado a reavaliar o centro a partir de suas margens. Poderíamos argumentar, portanto, que a ficção Updikeana, embora pareça reforçar e habilitar o centro, continuamente revisiona o seu modelo de construção da realidade ao estorificar tramas alternativas a partir das margens.

Deixem-me ilustrar o que quero dizer. O protagonista de “The Christian Room Mates” é Orson Ziegler, um calouro, candidato ao curso de medicina de Harvard, branco e, como sugere o título, cristão. No seu caso, cristão protestante. Orson é originário de uma pequena cidade do estado de South Dakota. Ele é o filho do médico da cidade e a primeira pessoa da cidade a ir a Harvard. O que mais impressiona a respeito de Orson é que aos 18 anos de idade ele já tenha decidido todos os passos de sua vida: “Seu futuro estava firme em sua mente, o

curso de medicina ou aqui em Harvard, ou em Penn, ou Yale, e em seguida o retorno a South Dakota, onde a sua esposa já estava escolhida e à sua espera” (99).

Já aos 18 anos de idade, Orson está pronto para uma vida sem novidades. Suas atitudes demonstram que ele está em Harvard não para descobrir como o mundo funciona, para entender as complexidades das relações humanas, ou para confrontar diferentes perspectivas e modos de vida, mas tão somente para aprender as habilidades necessárias para um desempenho competente de sua profissão já há muito escolhida. Sua escolha profissional e sua ideologia de pequena cidade foram tão completamente absorvidas por ele que pouco espaço existe para explorações de natureza social ou política. Orson está unicamente preparado para perpetuar o mundo da medianidade.

Em Harvard, entretanto, o modelo de Orson de construção do mundo entra em confronto com outras alternativas. Ele rapidamente percebe que seus colegas não são todos, como ele, brancos, oriundos de pequena cidade e candidatos à escola de medicina. Seus colegas são também judeus nova iorquinos, afro-americanos, intelectuais, ateus, e neuróticos de toda a espécie – homens e mulheres com histórias que são totalmente estranhas à sua.

Entre todos os tipos que Orson passa a conhecer, nenhum consegue irritá-lo mais do que o seu colega de quarto, Henry (Hub) Palamontin. Hub é em tudo o seu oposto, “sem qualquer elo entre os dois, exceto a convivência forçada” (108). Na verdade, os dois não concordam com coisa alguma exceto o fato de que discordam. Como tudo o que Orson busca é a habilidade necessária para a sua futura profissão, ele passa os seus anos em Harvard estudando e se preocupando com as suas notas. Hub, por outro lado, é um desbravador, em especial de áreas

marginais: ele pratica yoga, fica durante horas, como se fosse Ghandi, sentado junto à sua máquina de tecer, assiste a palestras e a saraus literários quase todas as noites e dá atendimento a meninos de rua duas tardes por semana, entre outras atividades.

A diferença entre os dois, entretanto, é de natureza ideológica e, portanto, mais profunda. Suas maneiras distintas de encarar e fazer uso das oportunidades oferecidas por Harvard são apenas uma expressão de suas maneiras distintas de ver a vida como um todo. Ao colocar num mesmo quarto um aluno de pequena cidade, estudioso e bom filho, e um pacifista, opositor consciente, vegetariano, que diz odiar a ciência e que se auto-define como “Platonista, anglo-cristão fortemente influenciado por Ghandi”(103), Updike cria um ambiente ideal para uma apropriação dos antagonismos da história. Estes antagonismos são trazidos à tona através das forças históricas de um tempo e de um espaço específicos.

Embora “The Christian Room Mates” seja uma estória que narra eventos que cobrem vários anos, ela se refere mais diretamente a incidentes ocorridos durante o ano acadêmico de 1950, num momento em que o movimento pacifista e de desobediência civil de Mahatma Ghandi já havia levado à debacle do colonialismo britânico na Índia e quando o assim-chamado “século americano”, com suas guerras anticomunistas na Coréia e mais tarde no Vietnã, estava apenas começando. Estas duas forças – a descolonização e o imperialismo da Guerra Fria – estão no cerne dos diferentes modelos de construção de mundo que, na estória, se enfrentam entre as paredes de um quarto.

Vários detalhes mostram que a presença da Índia de Ghandi é sentida a partir do momento em que Orson chega ao campus e encontra pela primeira vez o colega com quem terá de dividir os aposentos.

Hub está vestindo um “foulard de seda” em volta do pescoço e um quepe branco – o que lembra Orson do líder indiano Pandit Nehru. A saudação de Hub, por sua vez, é feita de forma altamente teatral, juntando “as palmas das mãos, inclinando a cabeça e murmurando algo [em Hindi?] que Orson não conseguiu captar” (100). E, como já ressaltai, Hub pratica Yoga e passa várias horas do dia testando as suas habilidades de tecelão junto à engenhoca que mandou vir diretamente de Calcutá – isto em uma época em que esta máquina simbolizava o próprio movimento de desobediência civil de Ghandi e a luta da Índia pela sua independência.

Estes sinais externos indicam a determinação de Hub de resistir às versões “consensuais” da história – versões estas que a cultura dominante já mapcou e que se expressa de forma icônica também em Harvard. Seus atos de resistência estão abertamente voltados contra o patrimônio cultural da medianidade americana, seus ritos e valores. Conseqüentemente, ele rejeita, por exemplo, os hábitos gastronômicos nacionais e a forma tradicional de celebrar o natal (Hub celebra o natal jejuando); ele reclama do pouco cuidado que o estado dedica aos pobres, e fica profundamente irritado com o que considera o desrespeito americano pela consciência dos indivíduos.

A indignação de Orson, por outro lado, tem a ver com o pacifismo de Hub e com as suas atitudes com relação ao alistamento militar. Com a guerra da Coréia tendo recém começado, Orson não consegue se desfazer da idéia de que o seu dever é alistar-se. Para sua estupefação, Hub rasga uma a uma as cartas que lhe chegam e que exigem o seu alistamento. Ele sequer as abre. Rasga-as em mil pedaços e espalha-os no parapeito da janela. Orson, o garoto da pequena cidade, que sacraliza a autoridade do estado, da igreja, dos professores, da ciência, etc., vê as atitudes de Hub como “excêntricas”, desrespeitosas e falsas – uma rejeição egoísta aos modos “naturais” de comportamento.

Conforme ressaltai anteriormente, os construtos ficcionais de Updike permitem que visões conflitivas da história se manifestem com tal intensidade que as preferências ideológicas ficam mascaradas por uma ilusão de ambivalência narratorial e de distanciamento que Updike consegue criar. No entanto, o narrador se desloca com tamanha liberdade pela mente de Orson que temos poucas dúvidas de que há efetivamente um privilegiamento de uma das perspectivas, e que “The Christian Room Mates” pretende ser, antes de qualquer outra coisa, a estória de Orson e não de Hub. O que o leitor conhece sobre Hub é, na verdade, ação filtrada pela mente de Orson, uma percepção, é preciso que se diga, sem qualquer “crise de representação”. Trata-se da percepção de alguém que reconhece e até tolera diferenças, mas que, ao mesmo tempo, permanece ideologicamente estático e que se recusa a permitir que o novo e o desconhecido mexam com as fundações de sua vida. Como conseqüência, na visão de Orson, o amor que Hub dedica a Ghandi é esdrúxulo, o seu zombar da ciência, uma atitude infantil que se recusa a reconhecer “as milhares de vidas salvas pela ciência médica”(103), a sua fuga do alistamento militar, uma recusa impatriótica de cumprir com o seu dever, e os seus múltiplos interesses, uma falta de concentração e de objetivos claros. O fato de Orson perder o cartão postal que Hub lhe envia de algum lugar na África, onde mais tarde atua como um misto de técnico de futebol e missionário, não é, portanto, acidental, mas um desejo inconsciente de evitar contato mais profundo. A apropriação que seu colega de quarto faz da história marginal pode ser atraente, excitante e sedutora, mas ela esconde uma qualidade destabilizadora que Orson não consegue endossar.

“More Srately Mansions” (Mansões Mais Majestosas), escrito vinte anos mais tarde e publicado como uma espécie de manifesto político pela Mississippi Civil Liberties Union (comitê regional da União Nacional Pela Defesa das Liberdades do Cidadão) não é muito diferen-

te quando observamos a sua percepção da história. Aqui também os eventos aparecem selecionados e estruturados de forma a, em última análise, naturalizar a perspectiva centrada. A máscara da ambivalência, no entanto, permanece presente.

A estória é contada por Frank, um professor de ciências, filho de imigrantes italianos que trabalhou nas fábricas de tecido da agora decadente cidade interiorana de Mather, Massachusetts. Frank é o único membro de sua família a conseguir chegar a universidade e obter o grau de Mestre. A imaginação histórica se desenvolve principalmente na mente de Frank e é acionada por um de seus alunos que, ao voltar de férias do Havaí, lhe traz uma concha partida ao meio de lembrança. A concha faz com que ele se recorde do caso que teve no final dos anos sessenta com a professora substituta Karen Owens. O caso de Frank e Karen sustenta-se nas suas concordâncias sexuais e não em concordância ideológica. Como Orson e Hub, Frank e Karen discordam de todas as grandes questões da época – Vietnã, Direitos Civis, feminismo, ecologia – e embora Frank diga gostar das “roupas caras que Karen veste”, ele odeia a sua presunçosa posição política (6). Já que Karen é uma pacifista que fala sem rodeios contra a presença americana no Vietnã, enquanto Frank, um representante da sabedoria convencional, fica furioso com o que ele considera a sua “certeza condescendente” (5) sobre todas as coisas. Embora argumentando que ele não é a favor da guerra, como ela quer torná-lo, ele acredita sinceramente que “às vezes a guerra é o menor dos males” (5). Seu sentimento é de que Karen não entende a comunidade na qual passou a viver – uma comunidade de pessoas simples como ele, “felizes por estarem [vivendo em Mather] e que, quando o seu país lhes pede para lutar, eles vão à luta” (6). Karen, é bom lembrar, é originária da Califórnia, o outro extremo do país.

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autoridade dos presidentes. Em seu esforço para compartilhar do drama de seu presidente, Frank constrói analogias pessoais entre o presidente Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) e ele próprio. “LBJ tinha sido professor de escola, como eu era agora, e a mim parecia, no final dos anos sessenta, que a turma toda, de costa a costa, simplesmente não estava prestando atenção” (7). A reconstrução histórica que Frank faz dos anos sessenta eclipsa quaisquer possíveis deficiências que LBJ possa ter tido, pois a sua reconstrução se faz com base na personalidade dos grandes homens que trouxeram ordem, disciplina e sentido à nação americana. Por causa de seu caso amoroso e do enfatuamento de sua mulher pelo Movimento Pacifista, Frank é levado a participar das reuniões da esquerda. Nestas reuniões, Vietnã, Direitos Civis, feminismo, ecologia, e as políticas e jogos das grandes corporações faziam sempre parte da pauta. Para a sua estupefação, sua mulher começa a fumar, a beber e a denunciar com um azedume nunca antes visto a igreja católica e a opressão masculina. “De certo modo”, lembra Frank, “eu havia me tornado o elemento opressor do sistema” (9).

Apesar de suas freqüentes rusgas a respeito de LBJ, Vietnã, e as formas de governar a nação, o caso de Karen e Frank se estende durante todo o ano letivo. Entretanto, à medida que mais e mais cadáveres começam a vir do Vietnã, o Movimento Pacifista começa a ganhar força até mesmo na pequena cidade de Mather e, como lembra Frank, “nossos jovens poloneses e portugueses não estavam mais preparados para serem levados à guerra sem questionamentos, e as aulas de história e organização social e política, e mesmo as de ciências, tornaram-se verdadeiros campos de batalha” (14). Pela primeira vez Frank começa a perceber que as suas premissas estão sendo questionadas, mas o seu orgulho por estar associado à Karen faz com que desconsidere a possibilidade de que as suas crenças pessoais possam ser um impedimento na relação dos dois. Karen, no entanto, começa a evitar ser vista em

público com Frank, demonstrando os primeiros sinais de seu desconforto com relação ao fosso ideológico que existe entre ambos. Ela percebe que estava dormindo com o inimigo e admite a uma colega que “Frank agora quer bombardear o sul da China” (16). Em outras palavras, para Karen, Frank e o establishment tornaram-se sinônimos. As formas divergentes e conflitantes de construir o mundo tornam-se pois a principal causa do desconforto de Karen e de sua determinação de cortar relações.

É quando o leitor avalia a trajetória do narrador nos últimos vinte anos que percebe que nada ou quase nada mudou. É verdade que Frank mora numa casa maior, foi promovido a um cargo de direção, e tornou-se, apesar de sua origem operária, um líder na sua escola. De certo modo, ele de fato mudou-se para mansões mais majestosas. Essencialmente, entretanto, a sua trajetória é estática. A sua avaliação do que viu e ouviu nos anos sessenta, por exemplo, permanece a mesma. A sua observação quase ao final da estória – “se você observa as memórias das celebridades radicais daquela época, a maior parte era sexo. Os liberais bebiam e fumavam, os radicais puxavam fumo e faziam sexo” (24) – mostra que ele continua a pensar que os movimentos pacifistas e dos direitos civis eram movidos não por causas nobres mas por adolescentes sexualmente reprimidos e que ameaçavam a estabilidade do sistema ao colocarem as suas egoístas satisfações pessoais acima dos interesses da sociedade. A sua narrativa não consegue mais disfarçar os valores fundamentais pré-concebidos com os quais aborda a história e a realidade.

Como acontece tantas vezes na ficção de John Updike, os protagonistas não superam a sua forma centrista de montar a trama do passado. A experiência à qual estão expostos apenas funciona como uma forma de refinar a definição de modelos de construção de mundo.

Este é também o caso de Harry Angstrom, o Coelho, da tetralogia mais famosa do autor. Através dos quatro longos romances, Harry Angstrom permanece ideologicamente o mesmo desde os anos cinqüenta, tão petrificado pela ideologia da Guerra Fria que em 1989, após a era Reagan-Gorbachev é mais fácil fazê-lo descansar do que mudar.

Como as duas estórias que escolhi discutir demonstram, este tipo de rigidez ideológica é marca registrada dos protagonistas de Updike. Da mesma forma como as histórias marginais (o pacifismo, o biocentrismo, o vegetarianismo e o movimento de desobediência civil de Ghandi) não afetaram em nada a mente de Orson nos anos cinqüenta, os protestos anti-guerra do Vietnã, o movimento dos direitos civis, a luta de Martin Luther King, as manifestações hippies dos anos sessenta também chegaram, partiram e ecoaram na mente de Frank como meras excentricidades. Conseqüentemente, elas têm pouca importância para o protagonista, pois este concebe a história como um grande drama no qual a medianidade americana precisa prevalecer e permanecer, quase que puritanamente, como o seu primeiro e último refúgio. Por mais estranhas que estas estórias possam parecer, elas mostram que Updike não está tão preocupado com linhas partidárias ou distinções religiosas como com a transcrição dos caminhos da “medianidade com todas as suas pedras, lombadas e desvios” (*Assorted Prose* 185). A medianidade deve ser buscada não dentro mas através das fronteiras históricas montadas para naturalizar a versão hegemônica. O sucesso de Updike encontra a sua sustentação precisamente na sua elaborada representação e expressão desta ambivalência e desta crise no centro – da medianidade em conflito com as forças da história. A postura conservadora dos protagonistas de Updike só se atenua pela sugestão do narrador de que há uma diminuição comparativa dos protagonistas quanto à sua plena realização como seres humanos e, é claro, pela capacidade de Updike de permitir que as forças antagônicas da história surjam com notável poder questionador.

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Queer Studies: Some Ideas and an Analysis

*Eliane Borges Berutti**

In the introduction to *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Sedgwick defends the relevance of the study of sexuality:

The book will argue that an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition; and it will assume that the appropriate place for that critical analysis to begin is from the relatively decentered perspective of modern gay and antihomophobic theory¹.

My primary concern in this article centers on discussing the conflicting concepts of queer theory and its connection with queer studies. In addition, I will analyze David Leavitt's "A Place I've Never Been", a short story which helps experience these concepts.

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¹ SEDGWICK, Eve Kosofsky. "Introduction: Axiomatic". In: —. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. p.1-63.

“Queer theory is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of sexuality, making significant contributions to literary criticism, film and video criticism, philosophy, cultural studies, psychoanalysis and legal scholarship.”² This entry found in *The Oxford Companion to Women’s Writing in the United States* may lead one to consider this definition simple and definitive. However, this theory does present multiple concepts which point out to its complexity.

To some people, queer theory represents simply another nebulous, abstract form of academic discourse, understood only through the signifier “queer”: a complex term which itself allows for many, sometimes contradictory, interpretations. Thus, depending on one’s position and knowledge, queer theory lends itself to a variety of definitions, including: a theoretical perspective from which to challenge the normative; another term for lesbian and gay studies; another term for queer studies; a theory about queerness and queers (intentionally vague); another way that queer academics waste their time and taxpayers’ money ...³

Not only feminism but also gay and lesbian studies provide groundwork for queer theory. Nevertheless, it is important to note that as a body of antihomophobic writing about sexuality, queer theory began to be framed in academic conferences, anthologies, and books in the late 80s. Since the Stonewall riots of 1969, gays and lesbians have become

² DAVIDSON, Cathy N. & WAGNER-MARTIN, Linda, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Women’s Writing in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. p.729-730.

³ GOLDMAN, Ruth. “Who Is That Queer Queer? Exploring Norms around Sexuality, Race, and Class in Queer Theory.” In: BEEMYN, Brett & ELIASON, Mickey, ed. *Queer Studies: a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*. New York: New York University Press, 1996. p. 169-182

socially and politically active in America. But the 80s saw bitter criticism against these minorities, highly provoked by the AIDS epidemic. Both government and media have launched serious attacks on the so-called “perverts”. Just to mention two legislative measures taken against “queers” in this period, I may cite the support of antisodomy laws by the Supreme Court in the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision (1986) and the prohibition of federal funding for art that dealt with homosexuality (1989).

In order to discuss some ideas defended by queer theory, it seems appropriate to examine the two words that form this label. Beginning with the first word, its choice is a clear defence against homophobia. The very use of a derogatory word by which same-sex oriented persons have been accused of being odd, different and abnormal reminds one of the legacy of the nineteenth century medical term “homosexual”. The “normal” sexual behavior has been restricted to heterosexuals. One may ask why the words “gay” and “lesbian” were not chosen instead of “queer” since the latter is thorny with prejudice? The answer partly lies in prejudice itself. The terms “gay” and “lesbian” have already become part of academic circles which creates the need for a sharper word. “Queer” has then turned into the adjective of “a theory that challenges dominant heterosexist paradigms”.⁴ What used to be a derogatory word to stigmatize sexual outsiders is now present both in the academy and the press. This is, in my opinion, the most important political challenge and achievement after Stonewall.

⁴ BEEMYN, Brett & ELIASON, Mickey. “Queer Theory in Practice.” In: _____, ed. *Queer Studies: a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*. New York: New York University Press, 1996. p. 163-168

The other part of the answer lies in the limitation of the words “gay” and “lesbian”, which calls for exclusivity of these identities. What used to shock American society in the late 60s has ironically been one way or the other assimilated in the late 80s. In other words, gays and lesbians have somehow been incorporated into society – by this I neither mean the end of prejudice against them, nor that these two sexual minorities have reached the same social acceptance. Other sexual categories namely bisexuals, and transgenders also needed to be explored in order to achieve legitimate social identity. Bisexual scholars have argued that to discuss only gays and lesbians is rather restrictive. Moreover, they affirm that these minorities paradoxically encourage the dichotomy of homo/heterosexuality while they stress that there are “truly” gays and lesbians. According to Christopher James, this is “compulsory monosexuality”⁵, an expression derived from the famous essay by Adrienne Rich on compulsory heterosexuality. Consequently, by dismissing bisexuality gays and lesbians are in fact “denying complexity” in relation to sexuality. Concerning transgendered people, one will also find the limitations provided by gay and lesbian exclusive identities. Among transgenders’ several claims, there is the one that drag queens, for instance, are admitted only on stage, in performative acts – they do drag; they are not allowed to be.

Taking these sexual complexities into consideration, the word “queer” would, therefore, work as an umbrella term under which different sexual minorities could be studied and discussed. The conclusion that one may arrive at is that queer theory means both to oppose and challenge the “norm”.

⁵ JAMES, Christopher. “Denying Complexity: The Dismissal and Appropriation of Bisexuality in Queer, Lesbian, and Gay Theory.” In: BEEMYN, Brett & ELIASON, Mickey, ed. *Queer Studies: a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*. New York: New York University Press, 1996. p. 217-240

The insistence on “queer”— a term defined against “normal” and generated precisely in the context of terror — has the effect of pointing out a wide field of normalization, rather than simple intolerance, as the site of violence. Its brilliance as a naming strategy lies in combining resistance on the terrains of phobia and queer-bashing, on one hand, or of pleasure on the other.⁶

An assumption underlying the limitation of “gay” and “lesbian” is that the complex term “queer” also opens the possibility of straight participation. In the article “Straight with a Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality”, Calvin Thomas raises the following questions: “What problems and possibilities are opened up by questions of straight engagement with or participation in queer theory? ... What can antihomophobic straights do to help ‘make the world queerer than ever?’”⁷ Although Thomas quoting many scholars so as to defend his claim, in my opinion, the best arguments come from a Village Voice writer and a Queer Nation activist. The first, L. A. Kauffman, refers to “a new kind of politics, a post-identity politics of sorts. Queerness, in this view, [is] more a posture of opposition than a simple statement about sexuality. It [is] about principles, not particularities.” The latter, Karl Knapper, states that “queerness is about acknowledging and celebrating difference, embracing what sets you apart. A straight person can’t be gay, but a straight person can be queer.”

⁶ WARNER, Michael. “Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet”. In: —, ed. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. pp. VII-XXI

⁷ THOMAS, Calvin. “Straight with a Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality”. In: FORSTER, T. et al., ed. *The Gay '90s: Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Formations in Queer Studies*. New York: New York University Press, 1997. p. 83-115.

Accordingly, one may infer that queer theory is not restricted only to sexuality. This theory aims also at problematizing identity. For Ruth Goldman, “queer” “represent(s) any number of intersecting anti-normative identities”.⁹ Likewise, race, gender, ethnicity, and class provide material for these intersections. Queer theory implies, then, multiplicity of identities. Nonetheless, the multiple representations of these categories tend to blur or even erase the boundaries. As Gloria Anzaldúa warns: “Queer is used as a false unifying umbrella which all ‘queers’ of all races, ethnicities and classes are shoved under ... But even when we seek shelter under it we must not forget that it homogenizes, erases our differences.”¹⁰ Michael Warner suggests that this pluralism might turn queer theory into a “Rainbow Theory”. Among the several resulting dangers of this theory, he calls special attention to “a reification of identity”.¹¹ In order to affirm and fight for a queer world, the erasure of differences would prove to be fatal since people are not evenly queer. I may also use here Eve Sedgwick’s axiom 1: “People are different from each other”.¹²

Another important conflicting issue related to queer theory lies precisely in the word “theory”. Many articles that have this label in the title cannot be considered theoretical but rather articles on queerness, culture and politics. There are actually few theorists and many scholars discussing literary criticism, cultural studies, film criticism, activism. I would like to make clear, though, that there are few seminal articles about theory; not to mention that not all material bearing this title could be strictly considered theoretical.

⁸ Ibid, p. 84-85

⁹ GOLDMAN op. cit. p. 169

¹⁰ Apud GOLDMAN op. cit. p. 171

¹¹ WARNER, op. cit. p. XIX

¹² SEDGWICK op. cit, p. 22

Teresa de Lauretis was one of the first theorists to use the term “queer theory” in the introduction entitled “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities” to *differences* 3(1991). She claims that her use of the term comes from the title of the book *How do I Look? Queer Film and Video*, the publication of a 1989 conference. Some years later the same theorist judges that queer theory “has quickly become a conceptually vacuous creature of the publishing industry”.¹³ Perhaps the proliferation of the term as title of articles that actually are not theoretical is just a marketing ploy.

It has already been stated here that queer theory is another term for queer studies. What is then the difference between queer theory and studies, one may ask? I have already observed that scholars use the two terms interchangeably. I have also discovered that in the same anthology, for instance, different scholars do not share the same opinion about this issue. According to the editors of *Queer Studies: a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*: “... There are no clear boundaries between queer theory, queer studies, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual studies.”¹⁴ Still, for the bisexual theorist Ruth Goldman these boundaries are crystal clear: queer theory is not an abbreviation for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender studies, since it is “theoretically structured around the concept of intersecting identities”.¹⁵ Due to what has been argued above, I prefer to use the term queer studies to queer theory.

After discussing some ideas related to queer studies, let us proceed then to “queer” a text. David Leavitt’s “A Place I’ve Never Been” is a short story about unrequited love. It is worth noting that this love is not

¹³ Apud THOMAS op. cit. p. 87

¹⁴ BLEEMYN & ELIASON op, cit. p. 163

¹⁵ GOLDMAN op. cit. p. 173

between same-sex oriented individuals but rather the love of a heterosexual woman for a gay man. As narrator of the story, Celia tells the reader about this relationship from her point of view. I want to argue here that in order to propose a queer reading of this story I will highlight precisely Celia's vision not only because she is a heterosexual dealing with issues related to homoeroticism but also and, mainly, because of her slantwise or queer angle of vision.

Celia met Nathan in college around ten years before. Ever since she has been in love with him – she admires him, she envies his money and sophisticated manners, she both understands and cherishes his “boyshish hungers – for food, for sex”.¹⁶ Even knowing that her ex-college friend is gay she cannot help lusting after him, therefore, creating embarrassing situations whenever she has acted so crazy, as Nathan sees it. She is unable to love him “in a more maternal kind of affection”, the way he wanted, tending to him “without expecting anything in return”. Still, the reader can realize maternal undertones in her love – when she first saw Nathan she acknowledged: “I wanted to feed him, to fill him up; I wanted to give him everything.” (p.571) In the ten years that have separated that moment from the present situation in the story, she has actually given him everything she could.

However, her complete dedication has not proved enough to make Nathan happy. Having had several affairs with gays, he discovered that his ex-lover Martin was infected. Desperate, he decided that New York

¹⁶ LEAVITT, David. “A Place I’ve Never Been”. In: LEAVITT, David & MITCHELL, Mark, ed. *The Penguin Book of Gay Short Stories*. New York: Penguin, 1994. p. 557-571

Subsequent quotations from this short story refer to this edition and are indicated parenthetically in the text.

had nothing to offer so he went to Europe instead, searching for peace of mind. The way Celia sees this trip and its motive is quite interesting:

I believe he really thought back then that by running away to somewhere where it was less well known, he might be able to escape the disease. This is something I've noticed: The men act as if they think the power of infection exists in direct proportion to its publicity, that in places far from New York City it can, in effect, be outrun. And who's to say they are wrong, with all this talk about stress and the immune system? In Italy, in the countryside, Nathan seemed to feel he'd feel safer ... Over there, away from the American cityscape with its streets full of gaunt sufferers, you're able to forget the last ten years, you can remember how old the world is and how there was a time when sex wasn't something likely to kill you." (p. 561)

Whereas her friend was in Europe trying to escape from the disease, Celia's attitude reveals her slantwise detachment from the AIDS epidemic: "I slipped back into a kind of women's-magazine attitude toward the whole thing: for the moment, at least, I was safe ... that place where Nathan had been exiled was a place I'd never been."(p. 562)

A queer reading of this story should not be limited to the narrator's point of view. Celia's queerness must be examined as well, which will reveal her problem with identity. Fat, ugly, unable to get a boyfriend, deeply in love with a gay who rejects her sexually, Celia seems to fit the slang "fag hag". Nevertheless, when Nathan traveled she realized that she had somehow to survive although he was her best friend and her "ever-present source of consolation and conversation". Besides managing to lose weight, she discovered that she was beautiful when she got a makeover at Bloomingdale's. A man at her job demonstrated interest in her; she decided, then, it was about time to have a boyfriend. The point I want to show here is that Celia's queerness is not restricted to her love for and lust after Nathan. As a matter of fact, Nathan is not

the first gay she has been involved with. Moreover, she is able to realize the queerness of her object of desire: “I have a pattern of falling in love with men who at some point or other have fallen in love with other men.” (p. 562) Having difficulty in relating with heterosexual men, Celie acknowledges her own problematic sexuality. Her loneliness and differentness turn her into a queer herself. “... the years I had hardly slept with anyone, for which I had been taught to feel ashamed and freakish, I now wanted to rub in someone’s face: I was right and you were wrong! I wanted to say.” (p. 563) With these words she definitely celebrates her difference. I would like to go even further and suggest that the core of her queerness lies in her lack of adaptation to society, which has taught her that as straight she must have a boyfriend who obviously must also be straight. From my point of view, Celia embodies both as narrator and character two key issues in queer theory – sexuality and identity.

I would like to end this paper quoting Edmund White, one of the most relevant voices in gay post-Stonewall fiction:

“Neither Marxist nor Freudian nor deconstructionist arguments have persuaded me to abandon the romantic creed that art is an expression of human freedom at its highest, virtually the only arena not subject to compromise, fear, contingency, and accommodation. Fiction is based on human feelings, including those of hate, lust, greed, and self-pity, and no one has the right to deny another person’s emotions or to correct her or his account of them.”¹⁷

¹⁷ WHITE, Edmund. “The Personal Is Political: Queer Fiction and Criticism.” In: DUBERMAN, Martin, ed. *Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures*. New York: New York University Press, 1997. p. 378-383.

Criticism of America in *Great Jones Street*

Giséle Manganelli Fernandes

Great *Jones Street* (1973) deals with several of Don DeLillo's concerns of America. He concentrates his story in the 60s and 70s and discusses themes such as alienation, the power of the media and consumerism.

The first-person narrator and main character Bucky Wunderlick is a “*hero of rock’n’roll*”¹, who abandons his band during a tour, and looks for isolation on Great Jones Street, in New York, as it is shown in the following passage:

In Houston I left the group, saying nothing, and boarded a plane for New York City, that contaminated shrine, place of my birth. I knew Azarian would assume leadership of the band, his body being prettiest. As to the rest, I left them to their respective uproars – news media, promotion people, agents, accountants, various members of the managerial peagee. The public would come closer to understanding my disappearance than anyone else. It was not quite as total as the act they needed and nobody could be sure whether I was gone for good. For my closest followers, all it foreshadowed was a period of waiting.

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¹ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973, p. 1

Either I'd return with a new language for them to speak or they'd seek a divine silence attendant to my own.²

Globke, their manager, comes to talk to Bucky and says that there is a rumor that Bucky is dead. Thus, when he leaves the group, he makes people speculate about him, which is a great way of getting the market's attention. If he was, this way, looking for isolation (a sign of alienation), what he gets is to increase the interest of his fans in him. Bucky is, after all, a product and, as such, has to sell his image to please the culture of consumerism. Globke does not let him forget his obligations with the market:

“Contractual matters. Studio dates. Record commitments. Road arrangements. We go when you say go. Until then we sit with our legs crossed. What the hell, an artist is an artist. Bookings. Interviews. Press parties. Release dates”³

An artist is supposed to fulfill people's expectations and the power of the media is one of the main characteristics of this postmodern world. Not only in this book does DeLillo mention it, but also in *Libra* (1988), in which he shows President John Kennedy as a product of the media. Frank Lentricchia states the importance of the media in our world: “TV advertising taps into and manipulates the American dream”.⁴

ABC wants to interview him. It would be a ten-minute television interview and the person who invites him (whose identification is only ABC) says:

² DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 2-3.

³ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 7.

⁴ LENTRICCHIA, F. (Ed.) *Introducing Don DeLillo*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994. p. 194.

“Your power is growing, Bucky. The more time you spend in isolation, the more demands are made on the various media to communicate some relevant words and pictures. We make demands on you not because we’re media leeches of whatever media but frankly because proportionate demands are being made on us. People want words and pictures. They want images. Your power grows. The less you say, the more you are. But this is an obvious truism of the industry and I didn’t come down here to present my credentials as some kind of theorist or moneychanger in ideas. I’m an on-camera entity.”⁵

It is possible to conclude that the worker for the TV broadcast lost his identity, representing only the organization he works for, and has to obey the public’s demands.

Hanes, “the fairest of Globke’s assistants”⁶, says: “The press is still having the dry heaves over your disappearance. The underground press. The radical press. The trade press. The straight press. The revolutionary press.”⁷

We know that the same event can be interpreted in several different ways. And “speculation” is a form of trying to give a version of what “might” have really happened. This way, the media is not an instrument of awareness but can be one of deceit and the “real” reality will never be discovered. Whatever is presented to the viewer/reader leads him to a conclusion or decision. And this process of decision-making can be powerfully influenced by the media, which transforms a hero into a villain and vice-versa in a very short period of time. Those who control the media know that they can make a candidate win an election, can make people buy things with such a voracity that lots of those products

⁵ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 128.

⁶ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 14.

⁷ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 131.

can disappear in few hours. The media can be seen as a way to alienation and, therefore, we can argue the “freedom” of the consumer to choose. Bertens reminds us of Baudrillard’s ideas on mass media in our postmodern society:

Building upon his earlier “Requiem for the media” (1972) (in Baudrillard 1981: 164-184), which had argued that the mass media actually prevent communication because of their very form, Baudrillard now sees that form as actively contributing the ‘hyperreal’ that has replaced the real. ... It is especially, but by no means exclusively, the electronic media through which the hyperreal has managed to replace the real: ‘we must think of the media as if they were, in outer orbit, a sort of genetic code which controls the mutation of the real into hyperreal’ (55). ... Information turns into non-information because of the media’s binary structure of question and answer which programmes all responses.⁸

At the end of the book, Bucky shows his intention of coming back when time is appropriated to do so, and in the meantime, he will let the rumors flow. People will continue trying to imagine what “might” have happened to him:

When the season is right I’ll return to whatever is out there. It’s just a question of what sound to make or fake. Meanwhile the rumors accumulate. Kidnap, exile, torture, self-mutilation and death. The most beguiling of the rumors has me living among beggars and syphilitics, performing good works, patron saint of all those men who hear the river-whistles sing the mysteries and who return to sleep in wine by the south wheel of the city.⁹

⁸ BERTENS, H. *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995. p. 150-1.

⁹ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 265.

While he looks for isolation, more and more news will come up about him. That is the world we live in and it all happens because of consumerism and the rules of the market.

A character who will allow DeLillo to express his ideas about the market is an unknown writer called Ed Fenig. When he talks to Bucky, he gives the following opinion:

“Nobody knows me from shit,” he said. “But I’m a two-time Laszlo Piatakoff Murder Mystery Award nominee. ... The market is a strange thing, almost a living organism. It changes, it palpitates, it grows, it excretes. It sucks things in and then spews them up. It’s a living wheel that turns and crackles. The market accepts and rejects. It loves and kills. ...

One thing I do know. It’s all a question of being in the right place at the right time. Knowing the market. Spotting its fluctuations. Measuring its temperament.”¹⁰

Fenig shows how cruel the rules of the market are, to reach its economic goals. Things should be made in order to be sold in large quantities and the media will certainly play its part in making this come true. Anthony DeCurtis, in the article on *Great Jones Street*, comes to the conclusion that the society DeLillo wants us to see is the one in which “*Everything is consumed*”¹¹ and this is the result of the success of capitalism. It is not a matter of having been “Born in the USA”, as the rock star Bruce Springsteen sings, but of being born in this postmodern world, at the top of the capitalist system, in which everybody wants to reach success and those who do are “consumed”, they need the media to be famous and rich, they are public people who, in a contradictory

¹⁰ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 26-7;29.

¹¹ LENTRICCHIA, F. (Ed.) *Introducing Don DeLillo*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994. p. 140.

attitude, ask for privacy. This contradiction exemplifies the kind of postmodern society we live in.

In order to clarify the idea of consumerism and business, he quotes Axl Rose, the leader of the popular rock band *Guns n' Roses*:

"I was figuring it out, and I'm like the president of a company that is worth between \$125 million and a quarter billion dollars. If you add up record sales based on the low figure and a certain price for T-shirts and royalties and publishing, you come up with at least \$125 million, which I get less than two percent of. ... What I'd tell any kid in high school is 'Take business classes.' I don't care what else you're gonna do, if you're gonna do art or anything, take business classes."¹²

It is clear that business is the word. It controls our lives and obliges us to have this "capitalist spirit", that is, to make money to buy anything that the market and the media persuade us to have. A good example is the following passage of *Great Jones Street*: when Bucky is asked about the origin of the phrase "pee-pee-maw-maw" in one of his songs, he says that it is "childhood incantation"¹³ (he seems not to know much about his own work). But what is important here is the comment made by Mr. Bradley:

I know it's traceable to you and it seems to be sweeping the country at the moment. Everywhere I go, and I do extensive traveling, I see people wearing shirts and trousers with those little syllables on them, not to mention seeing pee-pee-maw-maw on shopping bags, buttons, decals, bumper stickers, and even hearing dolls say it over and over, five-dollar talking dolls that say that phrase over and over.¹⁴

¹² LENTRICCHIA, F. (Ed.) *Introducing Don DeLillo*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994. p. 141.

¹³ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 106.

¹⁴ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 106.

The idea is to buy anything, to buy all the time. Bertens quotes Baudrillard in this connection: “*You want us to consume—O.K., let’s consume always more, and anything whatsoever; for any useless and absurd purpose.*”¹⁵ Don Slater, discussing consumer culture, states the need to consume as the social order: “*consumer culture ... enslaves people to a vicious circle of unceasing need feeding off perpetual dissatisfaction.*”¹⁶ Still talking about consumerism, Frank Lentricchia quotes DeLillo: “[*t*]o consume in America is not to buy: it is to dream”, and adds:

To buy is merely an effect, but to dream is a cause – the motor principle, in fact, of consumer capitalism. ... Advertising “discovered” and exploited the economic value of the person we all want to be, but the pilgrim-consumer dreaming on the original Mayflower, or on the new Mayflower in front of the television, “invented” that person.¹⁷

A passage which corroborates Lentricchia’s idea is when Fenig says: “*I pour a glass of Budweiser, the king of beers*”.¹⁸ We even have in our minds the slogan of the advertisement and we are moved by it to consume that product, and Don Slater debates the dynamics of consumerism:

we encounter objects (and services, experiences and activities that have become objectified as commodities) increasingly in the form of representations: in advertising, in portrayals of lifestyle in films, TV, magazines, in mediated encounters with celebrities and stars and so on. It is part of the paradox of alienation, one could say, that things become

¹⁵ BERTENS, H. *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995. p. 155.

¹⁶ SLATER, D. *Consumer Culture & Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1997. p. 77.

¹⁷ LENTRICCHIA, F. (Ed.) *Introducing Don DeLillo*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994. p. 194.

¹⁸ DELILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 221.

more objective and less material at the same time. This is certainly one implication of both the 'society of the spectacle' and Baudrillard's 'hyper-reality'. The phantasmagoria of signs becomes more substantial as the reality it once represented evaporates.¹⁹

DeLillo's idea of America comes allied to the consumerism of drugs. Globke says that "*It's America. The whole big thing. Popcorn and killer drugs.*"²⁰ There is an "*ultimate drug*" that makes people unable to speak and was created, at first, by the government to silence dissidents. The drug does not provoke the effect he expected, the "experience" he wants to have; thus, it is possible to conclude that being authentic or not, you must have it. Therefore, buying and selling is the central idea of this novel. As the drug, Bucky is also a product to be consumed.

After the Vietnam War, after the times of rebellion, came alienation, drug-addiction. Bucky's songs go from political matters to "childhood incantation" (nonsense). As Bucky states: "*I want to reach extremes. It's like a passage from suicide to murder*"²¹ And the 60s and 70s were periods of extremes. We know well what the 60s and 70s meant to us in Brazil. After the "students' riot" in 1968 the dictatorship became even stronger, and dark times would come.

Postmodernism revisits History critically and questions its veracity. It is stated in *Great Jones Street* in the words of a "*Professor of Latent History*":

"It's axiomatic that history is a record of events. But what of latent history? We all think we know what happened. But did it really happen? Or did something else happen? Or did nothing happen? ...

¹⁹ SLATER, D. *Consumer Culture & Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1997. p. 194.

²⁰ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 144.

²¹ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 86.

Potential events are often more important than real events. Real events that go unrecorded are often more important than recorded events, whether real or potential. ...

History is never clean. In some cases less happened than we suspect. In other cases we merely suspect that less happened.”²²

Another point which should be mentioned is the one related to DeLillo’s use of language. DeLillo mixes texts with lyrics of Bucky’s songs, of interviews, a feature story reprinted from *Celebrity Teen*, radio announcers, always to give the tone of reality to a fictional story.

DeLillo is also worried about where power really is in our capitalist world and in a dialogue between Bucky and Watney (a former pop star), the latter says:

“The true underground is the place where power flows. ... The presidents and prime ministers are the ones who make the underground deals and speak the true underground idiom. The corporations. The military. The banks. This is the underground network. This is where it happens. Power flows under the surface, far beneath the level you and I live on. This is where the laws are broken”²³

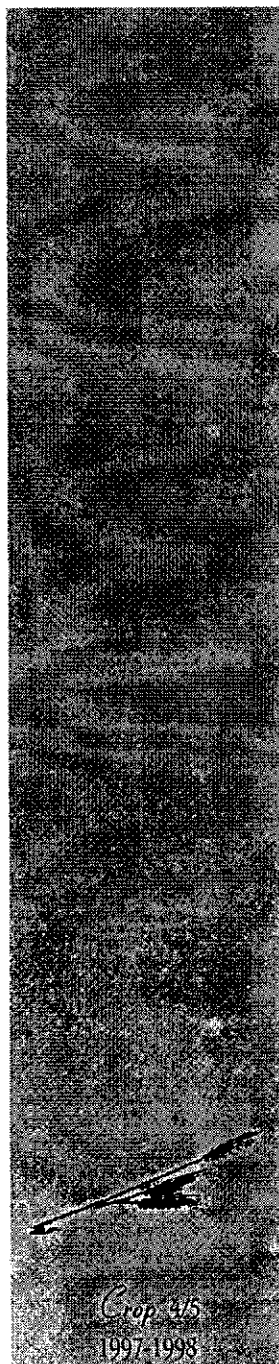
In this book Don DeLillo shows how interested he is in the problems of American society. His cultural criticism is made by the main character, a rock star, who symbolizes a time “between murder and suicide”.

In our present world, where consumerism is the word, Don DeLillo shows the social values in America and, we can say, all over the world, that is, the new reality imposed by the market that we have to face.

²² DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 74-6.

²³ DeLILLO, D. *Great Jones Street*. New York: Vintage, 1973. p. 231-2.

*Drama/
Teatro*



Crop 3/5
1997-1998

The Hairy Ape: Um Recorte Expressionista na Dramaturgia de Eugene O'Neill

Rosalie Rabal Haddad*

Man's loneliness is but his fear of life

Eugene O'Neill

Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) durante uma etapa da sua carreira de dramaturgo absorveu influências do teatro expressionista alemão. Nesta fase escreveu a peça *The Hairy Ape* em 1921, que além de ter sido muito importante no seu repertório teatral, introduziu o movimento expressionista no teatro americano.

É interessante verificar que um dos principais dramaturgos americanos não teve suas raízes calcadas em outro escritor de língua inglesa. Os mentores intelectuais de Eugene O'Neill foram Strindberg, Ibsen, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche e Freud. Uma explicação a nível cultural é que O'Neill seguiu a tradição irlandesa, optando por influências que não estivessem ligadas à tradição britânica. O'Neill tornou-se um dos principais expoentes do "Provincetown Group" que representava a crescente revolta dos intelectuais americanos contra a sociedade capitalista.

* Doutoranda na área de LII.INA-USP.

Foi um dos dramaturgos mais traduzidos e encenados, suas peças tendo sido quase tão prestigiadas quanto as de Shakespeare e as de Bernard Shaw.

O motivo da introdução do expressionismo nos Estados Unidos tem razões psicológicas e econômicas. O período entre guerras caracterizava-se pela desilusão intelectual e pela desintegração do chamado “american dream”. Em geral os intelectuais não aprovavam o sistema capitalista, que consideravam responsável pela degradação econômica e moral na sociedade. O expressionismo, que era um movimento de vanguarda na Europa, chegou aos Estados Unidos como protesto ao drama melodramático. Esta modalidade dramática, a peça-bem-feita ou “well-made play”, teve suas origens calcadas na França através de Eugène Scribe e Victorien Sardou no período de 1840 a 1860, e na Inglaterra, através de Arthur W. Pinero e Henry Arthur Jones nas últimas décadas do século XIX. Esta técnica resumia-se em uma padronização dramática que correspondia a uma seqüência de exposição, intriga e clímax que obedecia a padrões superficiais de bom comportamento social cheios de clichês e fórmulas preestabelecidas. Produzia-se então um drama maniqueísta e convencional no qual os atores tinham um papel fixo, isto é, os mesmos atores interpretavam o vilão, outros o herói, a donzela, a prostituta, mudando-se apenas o nome das personagens. Os dramaturgos nem se davam ao trabalho de mudar a fórmula das peças, temendo um fracasso de bilheteria.

Na Europa, Ibsen e Shaw, no final do século XIX mudaram o rumo do teatro encaminhando-o para o realismo-naturalismo. Propuseram então um teatro de idéias que rompesse com o padrão do melodrama. Ibsen, anterior a Shaw, levou à cena *A Doll's House* em 1879 que mudou o perfil do teatro conservador. Shaw, tanto como crítico quanto como dramaturgo, tentou convencer o público a ver no teatro um tem-

plo de ensino e não apenas divertimento. Para isso ele teve que mudar o rumo do drama e criar peças que levassem o espectador a pensar nos problemas sociais e morais, que eram ignorados pelo drama vitoriano conservador.

Nos Estados Unidos, o primeiro dramaturgo a tentar mudar o *status quo* do drama foi Eugene O'Neill. Em 1911 O'Neill teve contato com os "Irish Players", atores do Abbey Theatre, e ficou fascinado com a nova modalidade de teatro naturalista encenado por eles. No programa constavam peças de William B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory e John M. Synge. A ideologia do Abbey Theatre, em Dublin, era romper definitivamente com a tradição da dramaturgia inglesa e criar um teatro irlandês próprio, sem os estereótipos impostos à cultura irlandesa pelo colonizador britânico. O'Neill sempre esteve profundamente ligado às suas raízes irlandesas. Quando Yeats e Shaw fundaram a Academia de Letras Irlandesa, convidaram O'Neill para sócio embora ele fosse americano. O expressionismo proporcionou a O'Neill, no período entre guerras, um meio para que ele pudesse manifestar sua revolta contra as condições econômicas e sociais. Não é exagero dizer que um descendente de irlandeses nascido na Nova Inglaterra no final do século XIX ou no início do século XX não era exatamente americano, mas sim irlandês. O contexto da Nova Inglaterra, caracterizado pela intolerância racial e religiosa, dificultava tremendamente o processo de assimilação do irlandês por ele não pertencer ao núcleo WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant).¹ Pode-se também dizer que O'Neill identificou-se com o expressionismo, que espelhava tanto a sua insatisfação pessoal, como o desejo de romper com um *status quo* conservador na dramaturgia.

¹ Raleigh, John Henry. "O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night" in Gassner, John (ed.) *O'Neill, A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964, p. 126-27.

O expressionismo manifestou-se tanto nas artes plásticas quanto no cinema e no teatro. A pintura “O Grito” do norueguês Edvard Munch, em 1893, pode ser considerada a primeira encenação expressionista apesar de não se tratar de uma montagem teatral. A inspiração atormentada e perseguida das suas obras de 1890 a 1900 é bem próxima de Strindberg, um dos precursores do expressionismo no teatro. No domínio da temática, este novo estilo explora a herança convencional da arte acadêmica do século XIX porém despoja os seus modelos da nobreza alegórica, mitológica ou histórica, dando a eles interpretações quase caricaturais. O desejo de chocar ou mesmo de escandalizar faz com que sejam retratados temas grosseiros para a época, atitudes desclegantes ou vulgares, a paisagem urbana miserável e a vista de montanhas atormentadas em vez da natureza paradisíaca do impressionismo. É principalmente o rosto humano que interessa a esses pintores devido às infinitas possibilidades expressivas da representação. O expressionismo representa um movimento de fermentação social e traz ao artista uma liberação completa em relação aos meios de criação tradicionais. Este torna-se consciente de seu direito de alterar sistematicamente a realidade e de transformar em uma expressão subjetiva e pessoal sensações recebidas, espiritualizando-as à sua maneira. Assim sendo, os artistas expressionistas insurgiram-se contra o academicismo, o impressionismo e o naturalismo.

Com relação ao cinema, na Alemanha, dois jovens desconhecidos, Carl Meyr e Hans Janowitz apresentaram em 1919 o primeiro cenário expressionista no cinema, *O Gabinete do Dr Caligari*, dirigido por Robert Wiene. Radical na concepção visual e dramática e profundo na visão crítica da natureza humana, o filme foi uma influência decisiva para a criação cinematográfica, principalmente em sua noção de que cenários e figurinos podem ser usados para sublinhar a psicologia das personagens e da trama. Crítica feroz ao autoritarismo prussiano, o en-

redo conta a trágica experiência do jovem Franz que descobre que o maligno ilusionista Caligari usa um sonâmbulo para cometer crimes. A imagem dos filmes alemães do início dos anos vinte está indelevelmente associada ao movimento expressionista.

Quanto ao teatro, a proposta da cenografia expressionista, assim como nas artes plásticas, recusa o naturalismo e o impressionismo. Os cenógrafos expressionistas rejeitam tudo o que é supérfluo. Tocar a alma do espectador é o seu objetivo. Vemos então que os cenários tendem para a expressão simbólica e não para o mundo objetivo, mas para um outro povoado pelos sentidos. As linhas são distorcidas, pois não existe linearidade no mundo das emoções. Os cenários não são lugares mas visões sugeridas pelas peças e personagens, porque refletem o estado de espírito destas, valorizando a relação interior.

A dramaturgia expressionista desenvolveu-se em Berlim entre 1910 e 1920. O espaço do drama expressionista não constitui um ambiente real, não tendo um enquadramento definido, e muito menos um meio social, sendo uma superfície de projeção para o *eu* das personagens. A acentuada subjetivação do expressionismo contradiz regras fundamentais da dramaturgia tradicional. O herói da peça é solitário, revoltado, tem a ilusão que vai criar um mundo novo, no qual repudiaria o *status quo* que havia danificado o ser humano com suas distorções sociais e morais causadas pela guerra e pobreza. Embora os expressionistas não tendessem a nenhum tipo de realismo histórico, exaltando a idéia universal, o arquétipo, é preciso situá-lo historicamente diante do pano de fundo da primeira guerra mundial. Ideologicamente, o expressionismo no teatro alemão era, inicialmente, um drama de protesto, reagindo contra a autoridade, bem como contra as linhas rígidas da ordem social e, eventualmente, contra a industrialização e a mecanização da sociedade.

Eugene O'Neill foi fortemente influenciado pelo expressionismo alemão quando escreveu a peça *The Hairy Ape*. A gênese da peça foi um conto que O'Neill escreveu em 1917, mas não chegou a publicar, a respeito dos foguistas ou homens que alimentavam as fornalhas das máquinas a vapor dos navios. O'Neill que havia passado algum tempo no mar teve um companheiro chamado Driscoll que havia se suicidado. Tal fato o perturbou muito, especialmente por Driscoll ser uma pessoa bastante resistente, enérgica, carismática e que genuinamente gostava da sua vida de marinheiro. A única explicação de O'Neill para o suicídio de Driscoll foi que ele de uma hora para outra descobriu que não pertencia à vida no mar, desencantando-se com tudo que o cercava e entrando em profunda depressão. O'Neill que sempre teve esse sentimento de "não pertencer" ao mundo materialista e a um *status quo* que ele condenava, pôde reconhecer no companheiro a sensação de não se enquadrar. Daí a sua idéia de criar a personagem principal da peça, Yank, que sublimou todas essas sensações de alienação sentidas por O'Neill a vida inteira.

A peça *The Hairy Ape* é a mais expressionista do repertório teatral de O'Neill. Trata do problema de alienação cultural, social e econômica. O navio, que pode ser considerado como uma metáfora da sociedade, viaja sem rumo, com o único objetivo de dar prazer aos ricos e poderosos que no entanto não sentem muito prazer nessa viagem. Uma das leituras possíveis seria interpretar essa imagem como uma sátira social do mundo vazio dos privilegiados, os passageiros, em contraste com a existência sem perspectiva dos foguistas que trabalhavam no porão do navio. A peça é composta de oito atos. Elementos expressionistas são facilmente identificados na peça. O'Neill claramente faz uso deles logo na rubrica do primeiro ato:

The treatment of this scene, or of any other scene in the play, should by no means be naturalistic. The effect sought after is a cramped space in

the bowels of a ship, imprisoned by white steel. The lines of bunks, the uprights supporting them, cross each other like the steel framework of a cage. The ceiling crushes down upon the men's heads. They cannot stand upright. This accentuates the natural stooping posture which shovelling coal and the resultant over-development of back and shoulder muscles have given them. The men themselves should resemble those pictures in which the appearance of the Neanderthal man is guessed at...²

Nessa cena, o intuito do dramaturgo é claro. Em vez de figuras descritivas têm-se imagens, expressões indicativas de feras furiosas, aprisionadas, à imagem e semelhança do Homem de Neandertal. A estrutura de aço dos catres dá a impressão de jaulas e cria o efeito de uma espaço exíguo cercado de aço. O resultado da descrição da cena através da rubrica, somado ao título da peça, é sugestivo de um contraste dramático entre bestas furiosas encurraladas, capturadas e possuidoras de uma energia aprisionada, comprimida e contida. Desde o primeiro ato o verbo “pertencer” traz uma importância fundamental à peça. Seu significado semântico de estar enraizado, ter uma característica, um *habitat*, funciona como um *leitmotif* através da peça. Yank no primeiro ato “pertence”. Ele gosta do que faz, seu carisma e força física contagiam os companheiros e o torna, por assim dizer, o líder do porão. Quando a peça começa, Yank não se importa com a sujeira, nem com o mecânico-chefe que atormenta os marinheiros com um apito, símbolo de autoridade. Nem mesmo os passageiros da primeira classe o perturbam porque no universo mental de Yank eles não pertencem ao navio, enquanto que ele, Yank, sim. Mesmo o carvão que poderia ser insuportável a um ser humano para Yank já opera como uma fotossíntese. Sua pele se mescla ao carvão naturalmente da mesma forma que sua alma absorve o porão como se fosse o seu meio ambiente.

² *Nine Plays by Eugene O'Neill, Selected by the Author*. New York, The Modern Library, 1993, p. 35

Gradativamente, o significado “pertencer” começa a se transformar ao longo da peça. No segundo ato, temos um mundo completamente diferente. Estamos agora na antítese do porão, no convés da primeira classe onde Mildred, filha do presidente da companhia Nazareth Steel, dona do navio onde se passa a peça se sente como um produto decadente, fim de linha da fortuna do pai “sired by gold and damned by it...in more ways than one...”³ Essa declaração espelha o pensamento de O’Neill sobre a revolução industrial e mecanização do homem ocorridas no século XIX e primeiras décadas do século XX. A semelhança com o expressionismo alemão é relevante com relação ao aspectos políticos e sócio econômicos. Ao fim deste ato Mildred, que é estudante de sociologia e faz trabalhos comunitários em regiões pobres, resolve descer ao porão para aprender como os marinheiros vivem e trabalham lá.

O terceiro ato pode ser descrito, cenograficamente falando, como uma pintura expressionista. A iluminação é fraca, sendo feita através de uma única lâmpada, que dá a impressão de acumular massas de sombra na atmosfera coberta de carvão. As fornalhas são parcamente delineadas nos bastidores da cena. A figura do gorila transporta a imagem do macaco (*ape*), título da peça, como um *leitmotif*. Outra imagem constante é a de correntes, imaginárias ou não, que ecoam a idéia de jaula e prisão. A pintura é logo animada com o ritmo dos trabalhadores do porão do navio que manuseiam as pás como se fizessem parte dos seus corpos. Esse movimento dá estilo e forma à dinâmica dos homens de uma forma expressionista: realça o intuito de mostrar a mecanização do indivíduo e justifica a observação do velho Paddy que diz que o trabalho em um navio a vapor faz com que a carne e o sangue dos marinheiros funcionem como as próprias asas das máquinas. A cor, a luz, os movi-

³ Ibidem, p. 47.

mentos e barulho combinam em descrever o ambiente e alimentam as fornalhas. Yank lidera os colegas com o seu entusiasmo pelo que faz. Pode-se dizer que a relação de Yank com a fornalha que alimenta tem um conteúdo sexual. Tem-se a impressão que o eixo da sua masculinidade foi deslocado e está agora a serviço da fornalha que se torna um substituto da mulher. A linguagem que O'Neill emprega é deliberadamente agressiva sexualmente:

Dat's de stuff! Let her have it! All togedder now! Sling it into her! Let her ride! Shoot de piece now! Call de toin on her. Drive her into it! Feel her move! Dere she go-o-cs.⁴

Essa imagem de sexualidade deslocada pode ser vista em O'Neill como símbolo do mundo moderno do qual o indivíduo está sempre alienado, mesmo quando a serviço da tecnologia. Desse modo, o dramaturgo retrata o homem como se fosse máquina. A integração entre Yank e a máquina é tão completa que o prazer prevalece no ato da criação. O mundo fica humanizado pelo trabalho. O apito do mecânico-chefe não interfere mais com o seu prazer, com a sensação de “pertencer”. Porém, quando ele finalmente vê Mildred temos um contraste expressionista de luz e sombra, representada pela negrura de Yank e o aspecto fantasmagórico de Mildred, causado pelo seu vestido e acessórios totalmente brancos. Ela grita, assustada pelo físico de Yank bem como pelo seu linguajar ofensivo em reação à autoridade do apito: “Take me away! Oh, the filthy beast!”⁵ e desmaia. Ele se sente insultado, especialmente por ter sido invadido no seu porão. Daí em diante, a idéia de “pertencer” começa a ser questionada, dissipando-se gradualmente até o final da peça.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

No quinto ato, três semanas após o episódio no porão, Long, o socialista teórico da peça leva Yank para Nova York para mostrar ao companheiro que a experiência que ele teve com Mildred no navio faz parte do padrão de comportamento da classe dominante. Yank, entretanto, não concorda com o comportamento pacífico de Long. Ao ver os habitantes da Quinta Avenida, simbólica do capitalismo americano, onde se encontram joalherias e lojas de pele que vendem até o que Yank acha ser pelo de macaco por dois mil dólares, ele os agride fisicamente. O antagonismo social é enfatizado pelo contraste e distorções expressionistas. As roupas de Yank são sujas, ele está com a barba por fazer e tem o rosto manchado de carvão. Os habitantes da Quinta Avenida que acabavam de sair da igreja, onde haviam ouvido um sermão contra as falsas doutrinas apregoadas pelos radicais militantes, estavam extravagantemente vestidos, as mulheres exageradamente maquiladas. “*The women are rouged, calcimined, dyed, spats, canes, etc*”, diz a rubrica. A multidão elegante forma “*a procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of frankensteins in their detached, mechanical unawareness*”. Yank grita: “*Yuh don’t belong, get me!...I belong, dat’s me,*”⁶ enfatizando o pensamento já familiar em O’Neill. Entretanto, a sua violência é recebida indiferentemente como se as pessoas usassem máscaras que escondessem as emoções. Esse último dado não é apenas figurativo, porém literal. Embora nas rubricas O’Neill não especifique o seu desejo de as personagens usarem máscaras, quando a figurinista Blanche Hays veio com a sugestão de que os habitantes da Quinta Avenida as deveriam usar, a fim de destacar as suas expressões vazias, O’Neill imediatamente concordou com a idéia.⁷ Fazendo-se um parêntese, é importante lembrar que o uso de máscaras foi largamente empregado no expressionismo alemão e O’Neill em várias de suas peças fez uso delas. A oposição

⁶ Ibidem, pp. 63,65.

⁷ Styan, J.L. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice*, p. 105.

entre o genuíno e o artificial torna-se assim muito clara para Yank, o macaco peludo, que ao ver os casacos de pele vendidos nas lojas fica revoltado. Ao se examinar então o contexto da idéia de “pertencer” relacionada a Yank vê-se que sua ótica havia se transformado. Ele não mais sabe definir a sua identidade.

Nos atos subsequentes, Yank é preso e após ser libertado procura o secretário dos “Industrial Workers of the World” (WOBBLIERS) que ele, por engano, pensa ter ouvido “Industrial Wreckers of the World”. O’Neill ao chamar *The Hairy Ape* “A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life in Eight Scenes” estava fazendo uso do humor. Este humor, pode-se dizer, ria da própria história que se repetia através da incongruência de instituições injustas que aniquilavam o homem no seu direito mais básico: saber ler, conhecer as suas reivindicações, poder enfim defender-se da própria sociedade caso esta se virasse contra ele. Ao pensar que a organização era clandestina, Yank garante que pode quebrar, arrebentar tudo que for necessário. O secretário dos WOBBLIERS fala a Yank que eles não eram clandestinos e dá para ele ler panfletos informativos. Yank que era analfabeto, porém ansioso para pertencer a alguma causa afirma: “*Can’t you see I belong? Sure! I’m regular. I’ll stick, get me....I belong,*”⁸ ele enfaticamente propõe. O secretário da organização suspeita que Yank é um agente provocador, expulsa-o do escritório e o chama de “*brainless ape*”. Esta cena tem uma mensagem múltipla na peça. Ela se reporta a um problema crônico no movimento trabalhista americano da época de O’Neill: a distância entre a teoria e a prática, da leitura de panfletos à ação revolucionária, da oposição entre a filosofia e a militância.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 74.

De acordo com Arthur e Barbara Gelb⁹, O'Neill considerou três alternativas para a conclusão da peça. A primeira foi a de fazer com que Yank voltasse para os seus companheiros fogueiros, com a sua atitude complacente anterior anulada e sem a autoconfiança do início do primeiro ato. Entretanto, tal solução teria sido muito naturalista com o predomínio de elementos deterministas do meio físico e social de Yank. Por este motivo O'Neill descartou esta hipótese. A segunda alternativa seria seguir a linha do conto homônimo que ele havia escrito em 1917 quando então fez com que Yank se integrasse com os WOBBLIES. Em 1921, porém, O'Neill não mais se satisfaz com essa conclusão. Assim, apenas uma terceira alternativa permaneceu aberta para o dramaturgo: encontrar uma solução cuja complexidade climática poderia se igualar às cenas anteriores. Dessa forma, Yank visita a jaula dos macacos no zoológico. Ele se identifica com um gorila, conversa com ele, solta-o da jaula, dá a sua mão ao animal e quer levá-lo para a Quinta Avenida a fim de derrubar os ricos. Como esta cena pertence a uma dramaturgia expressionista, pode-se dizer que houve um diálogo e não apenas um monólogo. Tal afirmação baseia-se no fato de que O'Neill deixa transparecer nas rubricas as reações do gorila que vão desde a aparente compreensão com as palavras de Yank até o estágio final de fúria. O gorila abraça Yank, quebra-lhe os ossos, atira-o na jaula e fecha a porta. Ao ser esmagado pelo gorila Yank é forçado a entender que "*Even him (o gorila) didn't think I belonged.*"¹⁰

Pode-se então considerar, através da conclusão, que no cruel mundo moderno o homem fica inerte e muitas vezes sem opção entre ser um animal ou alguém com valores espirituais. O aspecto expressio-

⁹ Gelb, Arthur e Barbara. *O'Neill*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1960, p. 489.

¹⁰ *Nine Plays*, p. 80.

nista da peça é congruente com a idéia de que quando o homem se afasta da sua natureza íntegra ele se torna um pária, tanto socialmente quanto consigo mesmo. Sua esfera de ação se reduz, seu mundo fica dilacerado e suas aspirações são limitadas pelo ambiente em que vive. Esse aprisionamento pode ser visto claramente na mensagem de O'Neill, através do aspecto circular da peça que começa no porão do navio, expressionisticamente descrito como se fosse uma jaula, e termina literalmente dentro de uma jaula. Vê-se em *The Hairy Ape*, a preocupação do dramaturgo em testar a validade dos valores humanos em confronto com a realidade social que, segundo ele, mutila o que o indivíduo tem de mais precioso: a dignidade.

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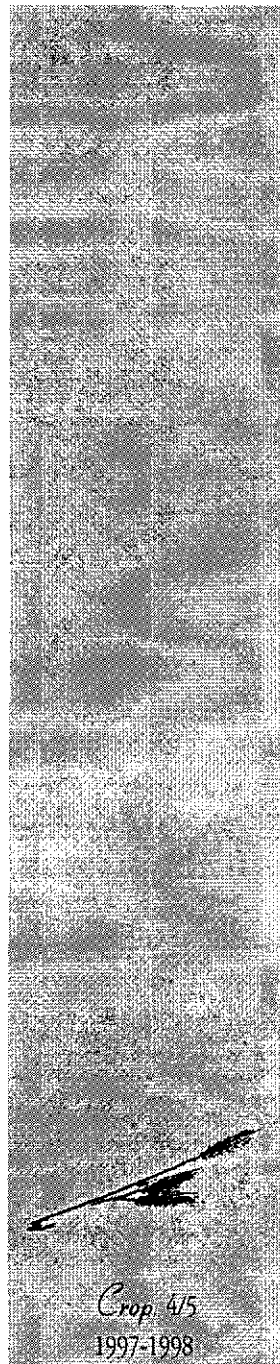
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*Language/
Linguagem*



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Linguistics and the Question of Ethics

*Kanavillil Rajagopalan**

Mitson Ronat: [...] Do you see a link between your scientific activities – the study of language – and your political activities? For example, in the methods of analysis?

Noam Chomsky: If there is a connection, it is on a rather abstract level. I don't have access to any unusual methods of analysis, and what special knowledge I have concerning language has no immediate bearing on social and political issues. Everything I have written on these topics could have been written by someone else.[...]

– Chomsky (1977: 3)

1. INTRODUCTION

In his 1989 opening address to the celebratory Georgetown University Round Table (commemorating, among other things,

* Universidade de Campinas.

the 200th anniversary of the university and 40th anniversary of the university's School of Languages and Linguistics), John Lyons called the attention of the members of the audience to some home truths in respect of the common vocation that had brought them together: Linguistics¹. As it happens, the belated recognition of home truths usually involves some amount of painful soul searching as well as the embarrassment of having to admit that one had been, all along, fighting shy of fully facing up to the consequences of one's own convictions and claims. And one of the home-truths Lyons pointed to was what he referred to as *neoprescriptivism* which he went on to define as "a prescriptivism which, whilst avoiding what I have elsewhere called 'the classical fallacy', recognises that there are some senses in which not all languages and dialects are equal" (Lyons, 1989: 34).

2. A BRIEF EXCURSUS INTO THE LONG TRADITION OF ANTI-PRESCRIPTIVISM IN LINGUISTICS

Surely, talk of *neoprescriptivism* was no small revolution in a science that had for long prided itself on being descriptive through and through. As most introductory textbooks on linguistics will easily testify, the very

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Science of Language in its modern sense came into being by rigorously espousing the claim of descriptivism. Descriptivism, it was claimed, is the proper scientific attitude that can serve as an antidote to the traditional grammarian's preference for writing as opposed to speech, and within the spoken language, her unconcealed preference for *certain* forms of speech to the detriment of others. In so doing, the traditional grammarian, it was further held, was giving a free reign to judgements of value. Milroy and Milroy (1985) – writing barely a few years before Lyons' address to the Georgetown Round Table – had gone so far as to condemn what they called the “standard language ideology.” In other words, the old grammarians were crypto-ideologues but they would not wear their hearts on their sleeves. Genuine science, on the other hand, begins where ideology ends. Furthermore, a science has no place for *values*; it is solely interested in the *facts* of the matter. And the facts of the matter do not lend any support to the traditional grammarian's implicit credo that some forms of speech are ‘superior’ to others. As recently as 1994, Lippi-Green (1994) has written as follows, summing up the professional linguist's firm conviction on the issue:

Linguists proceed on the assumption that all naturally occurring languages, whether or not they have a literate tradition, are equally functional and have the same potential to develop further functions as necessary; there has been no evidence in the many years of inquiry to disprove this basic thesis.

Sapir (1921: 219) had made the same point in respect of the formal aspects of language nearly three quarters of a century earlier when he wrote:

When it comes to linguistic form, Plato walks with the Macedonian swineherd, Confucius with the head-hunting savage of Assam.

This is how Lyons himself had made that point in his 1968 introductory book: “The linguist’s first task is to *describe* the way people actually speak (and write) their language, not to *prescribe* how they ought to speak and write.” (Lyons, 1968: 43). Or, as Cattell (1966: 6-7) had said some two years earlier, “Whereas the older grammarian tried to lay down what sort of language *ought* to be used, the modern ones are more concerned with trying to describe what language *is* used.”

By 1981, however, we find Lyons almost recommending that we give up the use of the distinction ‘descriptive vs. prescriptive’ in favour of a more illuminating one viz., ‘immanent vs. transcendent’ (cf. Lyons, 1981). Lyons’ argument in favour of the new distinction turns on the fact that the term *rule* is ambiguous between something that is imposed from the outside and something that a natural phenomenon may, in virtue of its mere existence, be said to follow (whereof the expression ‘the rules of Nature’). This means a grammatical rule may refer either to one ‘imposed’ *on* the language (in the prescriptive spirit) or ‘observed’ *in* the language (in the descriptive spirit). The new distinction would thus shift the focus of attention from the *spirit* of the one who formulates the rule to the *locus standi* of that person. Immanent rules are formulated by an *insider*; transcendent rules, by an *outsider*.

Independently of the developments in theoretical linguistics as ably recounted in Lyons’ writings, we come across a similar discussion in John Searle’s *Speech Acts* (Searle, 1969: 33ff). In that book, Searle argues for a distinction between a *constitutive rule* and a *regulative rule*. Here is how he goes about setting up the distinction:

As a start, we might say that regulative rules regulate antecedently or independently existing forms of behaviour; for example, many rules of etiquette regulate inter-personal relationships which exist

independently of the rules. But constitutive rules do not merely regulate, they create or define new forms of behaviour. The rules of football or chess, for example, do not merely regulate playing football or chess, but as it were they create the very possibility of playing such games. (Searle, 1969: 33).

Searle's point is that linguistic rules are rather like the rules of a game than the rules of, say, etiquette. The key to the distinction between the two is the possibility of violation. Regulative rules can be, and indeed often are, violated; but, says Searle, there is some awkwardness about the very idea of violating a constitutive rule. Constitutive rules constitute the very activity, indeed they *define* it, so that not following them is tantamount to switching to some other activity.

To sum up the discussion thus far, there would seem to be a fair amount of consensus among scholars with respect to a felt need for postulating a distinction between two kinds of rule: descriptive, immanent, constitutive rules on the one hand and prescriptive, transcendent, regulative rules on the other. As already noted, it would help to bear in mind that the rules of the former kind assume the perspective of an 'insider', unlike those of the latter kind that presuppose the perspective of an 'outsider'. This difference may also be characterised as one between the role of a player and that of the referee with regard to a game that they both happen to be involved in. The various 'moves' of the player, in a sense, describe or constitute the game and are immanent to it; whereas the interventions made by the referee are designed to prescribe or proscribe, thus regulating the moves made by the players, and are made from a perspective that is (in principle, at least) transcendent in relation to the game itself.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 'NEOPRESCRIPTIVE TURN' IN CONTEMPORARY LINGUISTICS

It is against the backdrop of such a consensus or received view as thumbnailed above that we must go back to Lyons' reference to *neoprescriptivism*. Was the introduction of the new term meant to indicate that the familiar distinction was in need of a drastic revision? It is interesting to recall at this stage that, as early as 1968, Lyons himself had made a point of warning us:

It should be stressed that in distinguishing between description and prescription, the linguist is not saying that there is no place for prescriptive studies of language. It is not being denied that there might be valid cultural, social or political reasons for promoting the wider acceptance of some particular language or dialect at the expense of others. (Lyons, 1968: 43).

A direct confrontation of Lyons' 1989 definition of *neoprescriptivism* with the passage just quoted is, it seems to me, a very revealing exercise. One thing the comparison immediately shows up is that some of the terms are just the same in the two passages. The words "there are some senses in which not all languages and dialects are equal" read like a paraphrase of "the linguist is not saying that there is no place for prescriptive studies of language" from the 1968 passage. There is, however, one glaring difference: the words "valid cultural, social or political reasons" of the 1968 passage have been suppressed, and replaced by the more generic and somewhat evasive "some senses". The term *neoprescriptivism* seems to have been coined to mark this change from categorical certainty to cautious uncertainty.

In the remaining part of this paper, I shall argue that Lyons was anticipating by a few years what seems to be getting increasingly recognised by professional linguistics all over the world, viz., that *theory has political consequences, not so much in the familiar sense that it underwrites practice but in virtue of the fact that it is itself invariably and inescapably underwritten by ideological and political agendas*. Now, it is certainly not my intention to argue that such a conclusion can be straightforwardly read off from the text of Lyons' address to the Georgetown Round Table. My point is rather that the change of wording after the lapse of two decades signals a major turn in Lyons' thinking whose extreme importance and timeliness, for all we know, probably went unnoticed or was not fully appreciated even by the author himself.

I shall go about my task by first identifying what I see as a major (and indeed welcome) change in the way theoretical linguists are beginning to look at their own work. Thanks to a growing number of researchers who have underscored the importance of looking at given linguistic theories as historical products – as are indeed all other fruits of human labour, it has started becoming increasingly evident that our theories about language (or, for that matter, about anything under the sun and also above that heavenly body) reflect specific characteristics of the general ethos of the period in which they were elaborated. There is for instance, plenty of evidence to show that the phenomenal growth and expansion of modern linguistics in the United States in the first half of the 20th century coincided with the growing prestige of the sciences in general and also of the thesis that a scientific knowledge of the world's multifarious languages was going to be of paramount importance to a nation poised to take over as the world's number one Superpower, especially in the wake of the end of World War II and the collapse of the British Empire. In retrospect, it is also not all that surprising that with such basic claims as that human languages are all on

an equal footing and that all humans are equally well equipped to learn any human language (claims that helped linguistics forge its way instantaneously to prominence and public notice – and, needless to say, generous funding from the various government agencies) could not have been made at a historically more opportune moment, one when the very same democratic ideals that they catered to were being subjected to increasing threats all the world over (cf. Sampson, 1980).

Alastair Pennycook (1994:110) has nevertheless argued that “the effect of the growth of linguistics as a scientific discipline was an even more rigorous *disciplining of the language* than that which had gone before. Furthermore, the disciplining of the language was intimately connected to the *spreading of the word* through imperial expansion.” (The italics are part of the original text.). Pennycook thus points to an inaugural gesture of *prescriptive* violence that, paradoxically enough, instituted modern, *descriptive*, linguistics in the first place. It might be useful at this juncture to recall Foucault’s insightful reminder that it is more than a matter of historical coincidence or lexical happenstance that we use the same word *discipline* to refer to an area of academic specialisation as well as to what we typically think our prison inmates ought to be subjected to (Foucault, 1979). The spread of Linguistics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not, in other words, without its own ideological agenda (cf. Phillipson, 1992).

But then, once properly instituted as a ‘discipline’ in its own right, Linguistics has never tired of proclaiming its own scientific neutrality. And part of what the linguist means by saying that hers is an area of investigation that is out and out scientific is that she is not, *qua* linguist, interested in telling people how they should speak or write. As a scientist, her job is to *describe* how they speak, without making any value judgements on their accents, dialectal features, regionalisms or whatever.

In fact, this is the one principal grievance the modern linguist has registered time and time again against her intellectual predecessor, the so-called 'traditional grammarian' (the ever-handly whipping boy of modern linguistics). To cite an example, Cattell (1966:15) is all praises for Charles Fries, the author of the 1952 classic *The Structure of English* (cf. Fries, 1952), whose intention, he says, "[was] to start right from the beginning, almost as if conventional grammar did not exist, and try to build up a grammar by extracting the natural structure of language." In other words, there was nothing a scientifically minded linguist could possibly learn from the 'old-fashioned' grammarian. Their interests were completely at odds with one another and so any attempt at bringing them together was bound to be in vain.

By the mid-50s and early 60s, the so-called 'descriptive linguistics' had yielded its place to the new 'revolutionary' Generative paradigm. In his 1965 book, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Chomsky (1965) contemptuously dismissed the scientific pretensions of his predecessors, claiming that mere taxonomy of observable data that the structuralists had set up as the be-all and end-all of linguistic description was too meagre an achievement for a truly scientifically minded linguist to be proud of. Observational adequacy and descriptive adequacy were, after all, the minimum conditions to be met by any theory. What was further needed was, wrote Chomsky, to make the grammars *explanatorily* adequate. Now, the new goal of explanatory adequacy did strike a whole new generation of linguists (the present writer included) as a 'big leap forward' (Chairman Mao of China had popularised the slogan in the world political scenario). And, as recently as 1988, we find Chomsky reiterating his faith in explanation as the most important task of linguistic theory: "The task of description is difficult enough, but the task of explanation, of developing universal grammar, is far harder and more challenging" (Chomsky, 1988: 65).

Nevertheless, as Jacob Mey (personal communication) put it recently, despite the terminological innovation and all the enthusiasm it ignited, all that the Chomskyan explanation effectively meant was shifting the burden of proof from fidelity to the empirical data base to greater and greater abstraction in grammatical description. The word grammar itself became synonymous with language. If language is such a complex phenomenon, why on earth should anyone expect grammar to be any simpler? It is indeed an irony of fate that the following piece of dialogue from the English poet and critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge, originally meant to be humorous (or so, one should think), all of a sudden became dead serious and quite in tune with what scientific investigation into the workings of language was to adopt as its banner nearly a century and a half later:

THE DANIE: [...] Dhe bishop did ask me all dhe questions about all dhe religion in dhe Latin grammar.

ANSW.: The grammar, sir? The language, I presume ———

THE DANIE: (a little offended). Grammar is language, and language is grammar.

(*Satyrane's Letters* (1))

In effect, what all this emphasis upon explanation in linguistics amounted to was an enlargement of the very scope of description or, alternatively, it sought to legitimate grammatical description by relating it to a much wider and, as already noted, more abstract, context. The name of this wider context was 'universal grammar' that Chomsky described as the 'grammar of grammars'. As already noted too, grammars became progressively more abstruse and, indeed, esoteric. As Itkonen (1976: 186) was to complain: "No genuine answer is given [...] by the formulation of 'instance' functions that are decreed to match utterances with

sentences”. Itkonen went on to argue, therefore, that linguistics had become anything but an empirical science. Matthews (1982:9) was even more categorical in his condemnation of the new-fangled scientificity when he wrote: “[...] to talk of ‘natural languages’ as objects that can be both studied empirically and have theorems proved about them is acknowledged nonsense.” “[...] language is,” Chomsky himself had decreed, “a derivative and perhaps not a very interesting concept.” (Chomsky, 1980: 90).

In retrospect, it is indeed amazing that, writing in 1957 – the same year as the one that saw the beginning of Chomsky’s triumphant crusade – Martin Joos had demystified the aura around the word *explanation*. Here is what he had to say then (cf. Joos, 1957: vii) (again, I owe this reference to Jacob Mey – personal communication):

For me at least (I don’t know how many readers share this notion) the English words *statement* and *explanation* have quite different connotations, and I believe that Bloomfield felt the same. If the facts have been fully stated, it is perverse or childish to demand an explanation into the bargain. Explanation could serve only to facilitate filling out a fractional statement into a whole statement; or is explanation something magical? That is, if *explanation* is to have any useful difference in denotation from *statement*, it can only mean ‘statement of pattern’, while *statement* is reserved for the meaning ‘statement of what is there and in what spot each item is’: the same, but from a different viewpoint. To ascribe any other efficacy to explanation is obfuscation [...].

But the history of linguistics tells us that a whole generation of linguists did take the bait, or, rather, swallowed it hook, line and sinker. Entire volumes with such alluring titles as *Explaining Linguistic Phenomena* (cf. Cohen, 1974) bear ready testimony to the claim. Fortunately, however, it did not take very long for the clouds of self-delusion and willing obfuscation to settle.

Thus, as early as the early 80s, one finds a certain discontentment in the air as to the whole point of doing theory for its own sake. An early sign of the thaw can be sensed in the growing recognition in some quarters that the whole idea of explanation is at bottom a matter of one's metatheoretical predilections and not, as it had been bandied about with pomp and circumstance, a question of hitting the 'rock-bottom truth' about the ultimate and unquestionable validity of one's grammatical description. Dougherty (1974:128) nicely synthesised the new spirit when he said: "When a linguist selects one grammar over another, he is subscribing to a particular definition of 'explanation in linguistics'." That is to say, far from constituting the definitive and decisive litmus-test for verifying if a given grammatical description is the right one or the best one amidst a given set of possible candidates (as Chomsky had claimed), it may well turn out to be the case, according to Dougherty, that there are possibly just as many notions of what an explanation is all about as there are candidates for the certificate of quality control coveted by all and sundry, the one stamp of approval that publicly recognises it as explanatorily the most adequate one. Thus when Whitaker (1974:75) confidently proclaimed that "Explanation is minimally a coherent organisation of a set of data, using constructs that are more abstract than the data" or, in what comes to same thing, Postal (1972:137) asserted that "[...] given the same empirical base, on general grounds, one must choose that theory which has the most restricted theoretical make-up," what is being advanced is not a claim about the *semantics*, let alone, the *philosophy* of explanation, but the expression of a personal preference as to how one would like to go about doing the business of explanation. Appealing to one's 'gut feeling' etc. won't help either, because, we have already seen how someone like Martin Joos, cited earlier, can have a completely different view of the matter, based on his own equally robust common sense as to what the word means. It was perception of this fundamental truism that

led Dretske (1974: 22) to decree that “An explanation *is* simply a description that is responsive to certain interests.”

To put matters in a nut-shell, what the world of linguistics was going through was a certain growing unease over the inability to deliver on the promises made in the past. After a period of insurmountable glory and public recognition, after having been acclaimed as the standard-bearer of the human sciences, the sad realisation was beginning to dawn on a number of practitioners that promises had been made with not even the remotest chances of delivering the goods. Even more damagingly, it was increasingly being felt in many quarters that ivory-tower theorising may afford its practitioners great fun, but will offer little benefit either to themselves or the society at large that, in the ultimate analysis, helps maintain them closeted in the tower, far from the madding crowd below. In a 1971 paper ominously entitled ‘The linguist in the American society’, delivered at the 7th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, Newmeyer and Emonds were to make a clean breast of some of these growing worries. Here is a somewhat lengthy quote from that paper:

When grammatical theory could get funded, *that* was linguistics, regardless of what people wanted to study or felt was important to study. Now, who knows? There seems to be a slight increase (and a not relative increase) in money available to linguists from the teaching of English to foreign students, here and abroad. This money originates, by the way, mainly from the United States Information Service, the U.S. Office of Education, and the National Science Foundation. Many of our students, trained exclusively in theory, are finding out that, like it or not, they will have to take advantage of these programs. Perhaps another field definition is in the offing, so that we linguists can justify ourselves in our latest direction of channelling (Newmeyer and Emonds, 1971: 300-301).

“Regardless of what people wanted to study or felt was important to study”, “like it not”, “so that we linguists can justify ourselves” there can be no mistaking the tone of lamentation, of remorse at the thought that gone for good are the days when theory and theory alone was the one goal of professional linguists. (Incidentally, what Newmeyer very diplomatically considered it not important to mention was that it was not at all uncommon until a few years before he wrote his paper for research projects in theoretical linguistics to receive generous funding from the Armed Forces and other Federal Government Agencies whose interest in language-related research may not be all that obvious to most laymen and some linguists). With his own characteristic diplomacy and uncanny ability to be simultaneously profuse in meaning and evasive in intent, Chomsky (1966) had already taken pains to ward off future charges of uselessness of ivory tower theorising when it came to testing them in actual practice. “I am not sure,” he had warned all those who had the time and patience to mark his words (Hey, I warned you in time, didn’t I?), “this very brief discussion of some of the leading ideas of current research has been sufficiently clear to be either informative or convincing. Once again, I would like to stress that the implications of these ideas for language teaching are far from clear to me.”

4. THE STRATEGY OF RELEGATING ETHICAL DECISIONS AND VALUE JUDGEMENTS TO NEIGHBOURING OR ‘SUBSIDIARY’ DISCIPLINES

However, despite Newmeyer’s apprehensions and Chomsky’s patently uncomfortable verbal juggling, there was a general feeling that it is description that should dictate the rules of prescription and never the other way round. That is to say, it was widely believed (as it still is by many) that such practical concerns as language teaching had better be

based on a solid knowledge of work done by hard-core theoretical linguists. It is they who know what language is all about and if you want your practical work to be minimally sound you had better first listen to what they have to say. As Gudschinsky (1969: 229) put it: "He [the linguist] is the source of information about language and linguistic behaviour, and a check on the linguistic soundness of materials and methods." In retrospect, it seems fairly easy to identify statements such as these as typical of a period when the fledgling area of inquiry called 'Applied Linguistics' was seen as at best the junk yard of Theoretical Linguistics, the place where unresolved problems of linguistics, especially the ones involving practical – and hence necessarily ethical (more on this below) – issues could be conveniently stacked away from immediate concerns and public notice. In the words of a recent writer on the subject, "The term *applied linguistics* refers to the application of the knowledge generated by the science of linguistics to the solving of real-world problems." (Ferrara, 1995: 432).

But the same Gudschinsky cited earlier also expressed some unease over the prevailing idea that there might be a smooth and unproblematic passage from theory to practice. To quote her once again, "There are linguists who are telling educators how to teach, and there are educators who have taken 'linguistics' as a sort of magic talisman in the promotion of materials." (Gudschinsky, 1969: 229). What one notices in statements such as the one just quoted is a growing concern that all the elaborate explanations into the inner workings of language may be of little use to the classroom teacher and her practical concerns.

The decade of the 70s was marked by snowballing scepticism concerning the utility of modern linguistics for language teaching and other practical concerns. Already, at the turn of the decade, the so-called *Pennsylvania Project* had produced some surprise results and

thrown bucketfuls of cold water on the dream of showing how theory could better practice. Of the three methods of teaching that were compared and monitored under controlled conditions, *viz.*, the ones based on ‘traditional method’, ‘functional method’, and ‘functional skills with supplementary grammatical method’, well hold your breath, the first won by a convincing margin (cf. Diller, 1971:24).

In a paper written in 1977 entitled ‘The partiality and relevance of linguistic descriptions’, we find Henry Widdowson affirming that time had come for stipulating a condition of adequacy attaching to a pedagogic model of linguistic description: “[...] it should be in some way congruent with the language user’s concept of the nature of language rather than the language analyst’s” (Widdowson, 1977b: 242). It is important to stress that Widdowson’s words mark a turning point in the way the relation between the theoretical and applied branches of linguistics had typically been conceptualised until then. Widdowson was claiming that practice should not be seen as a blind follow-up from theory. In another paper written at about the same time (Widdowson, 1977b), he is even more confident that linguistics is of little use to the language teacher unless it is reinterpreted: “[...] linguistics stands in need of interpretation” (p. 215); “linguistics[...] requires the mediation of an interpreter for its potential usefulness to language teaching to be realised” (p. 217); “The process is one of adaptation” (p. 217); “[...] the selection of insights from the whole range of theoretical and descriptive studies of language, stripping them of their formal integuments where these are cumbersome” (p. 217).

It is important to stress that, amidst the growing concerns about the direct applicability of theoretical linguistics to practical ends, there was never any room for calling into question the received view that theory should always come first. Any mismatch between theory and

practice was to be resolved by building appropriate channels of communication (albeit, invariably one-way). In other words, the new role that Widdowson was advocating for Applied Linguistics was that of a bridge discipline.

Meanwhile, there were others who were beginning to suggest that the biggest mistake made by those early advocates of an autonomous area of study called Applied Linguistics was probably signalled by the very name they had chosen for the new area. Language teaching and other practical concerns that the new area was designed to foreground may have nothing, after all, to do with work done in (theoretical) Linguistics. Thus we find Wilkins (1972: 3) saying: "For the teacher's practical purposes there may not be much in a linguist's description that he did not already know" and again, "What seems good linguistics may turn out to be bad psychology" (Wilkins, 1972: 216).

In retrospect, one can only lament this split between theory and practice and the institutionalisation of the great divide leading to the current widely attested state of affairs marked, on the one hand, by a certain 'superiority complex' on the part of the pure theorists *vis-à-vis* their applied counterparts who they see as busying themselves merely with the piffling, practical side of things and, on the other hand, an equally corrosive distrust on the part of the inveterately practical-minded of what they see as the high-falutin' and mind-boggling but totally pointless brain-cudgelling bouts of their supercilious counterparts. In fact, the decade of the 70s saw the mutual distrust between the two reach its highest pitch.

Against the backdrop of the growing disenchantment with theory, there was also some apprehension in some quarters that, unless something was done to stem the tide, the whole enterprise of theoretical

linguistics would soon become an idle exercise of no practical relevance. Thus, in a paper published in 1982, we find the same Newmeyer pleading for continued interest in theory. "I hope to demonstrate," he wrote (Newmeyer, 1982: 89), "that the theory [of Transformational Generative Grammar] has led to insights and (some) applications *outside of* the realm of grammar." (Both the curved brackets and the italics are from the original). And, even more pathetically, he went on to declare, "In short, I will argue that it has shed light on numerous linguistic problems, where linguistic is understood in its broadest sense." Writing three years later, Cook (1985: 16) was complaining that "A recent characteristic of applied linguistics has been its dissociation from contemporary theoretical linguistics; a bare handful of articles have attempted to relate the Chomskyan position to applied linguistics...". By 1987, we find the word *application* yielding place to the more circumspect *implication* (cf. Newmeyer, 1987).

I venture to submit here that, in my view, no other institutional division of labour has done so much harm to our common vocation as the division between theory and practice – although, the manner in which Newmeyer and Cook would like to see the imbalance redressed contributes little, in my opinion, towards bridging the gap between theory and practice because of its insistence on the relation between the two being rigorously one-way.

5. ETHICAL ISSUES AS PRIMARILY ISSUES LOCATED AT THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The thoroughly untoward consequences of the division between theory and practice are no more self-evident than when one looks at the

ethical issues in Linguistics. Notice, first of all, that ethical issues are hardly ever raised in the context of theoretical linguistics *per se*. This has to do with a certain deeply ingrained conviction among scholars that facts and values are mutually incompatible in the sense that no theory can accommodate both of them. Scientific theories are concerned with describing and interpreting (explaining) facts; they are in no position to make value judgements. Value judgements imply the existence of a hierarchy of alternatives to choose from. And no facts of the matter can ever tell us how to choose between alternative courses of action.

Historically (and, as we shall see below, until very recently) scientists have tended to go about their routine activities *qua* scientists on the cosy assumption that, in so far as they are concerned solely with hard facts about Nature, they cannot be asked to bear any moral responsibility for the *consequences* of their findings. The underlying 'logic' of such a position may be spelt out as follows. Nature knows no ethics. One does not raise ethical issues when one is discussing natural disasters such as floods, droughts, bush fires, earthquakes, and so on. Ethical issues can only be raised when human conduct is involved. For instance, in the case of, say, a flood, the question of moral (and, of course, legal) responsibility can be, and indeed often is, raised in respect of the conduct of the authorities during the crises – on such issues as whether or not they had taken the right decisions at the right time about forewarning the people about the impending disaster, or, depending on the gravity of the situation, making arrangements for evacuating them on a mass scale, stocking provisions for emergency aid to would-be victims etc.

The line of reasoning summed up in the foregoing paragraph has a number of important implications which are often not interrogated at all by those who do science. For one thing, it exempts the scientist – the one whose sole interest is supposedly to study Nature and its 'laws' – from what their discoveries may ultimately lead to. In other words, science

is treated as entirely value-free. In one swift stroke, it also de-humanises science and the scientist (Whereof the all-too-familiar stereotype of the scientist as a being thoroughly unconcerned with household chores and even some of the basic human needs, as ably portrayed in Disney's *The Absent-Minded Professor*). Take the case of physicists, for instance. A case in point is the group of physicists at Los Alamos who discovered that an incredibly enormous quantity of energy could be produced by nuclear fission. Can they be held accountable for what happened later on in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Or, to consider yet another case, can the biologists who delved into the fascinating secrets of DNA and all the rest be asked to bear the responsibility for future uses of their discovery that include, to judge from the success of the cloning experiments already under way, the frightening possibility of such science fiction tales as the one told in *The Boys from Brazil* suddenly becoming a reality?

Fortunately, more and more people are today beginning to realise that answers to these questions are no longer as simple as many once thought they were. Stephen Toulmin discusses these and other important questions of the ethics of science in his book *Cosmopolis* (Toulmin, 1990). Before considering the moral responsibility of the scientists in relation to their discoveries, it is instructive to look into what distinctions are frequently brought to bear on the task of exempting them from any such responsibility. First of all, there is the familiar distinction between discovery and invention. As the distinction is usually understood, it is only in the case of the latter that deliberate human intervention takes place. What is discovered was, after all, always already there. But the inventor could have chosen not to invent his contraption, or she could have chosen to invent a different sort of gadget from the one she in fact did. This sort of reasoning legitimates a further distinction: the one between pure science and its applications or, alternatively, between science and technology.

The net result of these well-entrenched dichotomous divisions is that moral responsibility is laid exclusively at the door of the scientist *qua* inventor, as opposed to the scientist *qua* discoverer; or, in terms of the second dichotomy, the technologist is asked to bear the whole burden of moral responsibility, thus leaving the absent-minded scientist to carry on with her normal business in blissful disregard for the possible impact her work may have on the society at large as well as future generations. In the case of linguistics, this is usually done by taking refuge in pure theory. However, as Toolan (1989: 274) and many others have argued, “the competence linguists’ very maneuver of demarcation, in which an alleged value-free core is sealed off from parasitic hyphenated subdisciplines is a thoroughgoing ideological effort of marginalization with immense moral consequences.”

It should be fairly clear by now what an up-hill task it is going to be if we decide to rethink these issues. As we have seen, the deeper down we probe into these hardened convictions, the more we realise how solidly they are supported by dichotomies that strike us as resting on the supposedly self-evident, unquestionable, and rock-bottom truths about such matters (As evidenced, for instance, by the fact that many of these conceptual distinctions are recorded by lexicographers in their entries for the corresponding words – thus conferring upon them the status of ‘common knowledge’).

The important first step towards coming to terms with the inalienable ethical dimensions of one’s own theoretical reflections is to recognise that description and explanation, far from leaving in tact the phenomena that are described or explained, in fact help reconstitute them. In other words, the trick is to perceive that description and explanation are not the sort of thing that one, as it were, optionally ‘attaches’ to objects or phenomena in the world; so that the objects and

phenomena themselves are what existed before the description or explanation was 'foisted upon' them.

Now, it is certainly true that, at first blush, any such idea of regarding description and explanation as an integral part of the phenomenon under consideration would seem to go against what common sense would dictate on the matter. But it is very important to recognise that what we are up against is anything but common sense, not at least in the sense in which we ordinarily understand the term, viz., as a *doxa* which is available to the theorist as a pre-theoretical given. Quite on the contrary, the view in question in bears the unmistakable imprint of a formidable metaphysical heritage. According to that metaphysical heritage, objects and phenomena exist in their pre-theoretical innocence, ready for alternative theoretical descriptions and explanations to interpret differently, but in ways that by no means *affect* the objects and phenomena themselves. Now, the very idea that objects and phenomena can exist in their pre-theoretical innocence is itself the result of a certain meta-theory, according to which it is possible for a theory not to affect the objects it talks about.

Even a revolutionary thinker like Karl Marx fell into this trap when he lashed out against conventional academic philosophy for not attempting to intervene critically in the world of practical affairs. In so doing, Marx was implicitly conceding that it is possible to theorise in a ways that have no consequence whatsoever. Derek Attridge (1987) has, however, pointed out that any theory that has a minimum of success does end up by contributing towards changing the set of circumstances in which it was produced. With subtle irony, he notes: "We may agree that the point, as always, is not to interpret the world but to change it; the problem, however, is that to interpret it convincingly *is* to change it – and there are few more powerful stances from which to effect such

change than the one which disclaims any intent or even any capacity to do so.” (Attridge: 1987: 184).

6. LINGUISTICS AS PURE THEORY VS. LINGUISTICS AS TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

We have already seen in the previous sections how, in their eagerness to claim their discipline as scientific in the noblest sense of the word, the founders of Modern Linguistics – especially in the U.S. – distanced themselves from the other social sciences and systematically claimed for themselves research objectives and attitudes that would place their area of inquiry on an equal footing with such prestigious disciplines as physics, chemistry, and biology.

A case in point is the early insistence on the non-involvement of the scientifically-minded linguist in her object of study. The reason for such extreme precaution was that that was the only way one could ensure that once findings would be completely objective and disinterested. In practical terms, the injunction not to interfere with the object of inquiry at any cost meant treating language as though it were a natural object through and through (i.e. one in whose making social and cultural factors have at best an accidental and by no means constitutive role). In the hey-day of the Structural or Descriptive Linguistics, especially in U.S., it also meant not studying one’s own language but languages that were “exotic” and those that bore no obvious semblance whatsoever to the linguist’s own language. The Holy Grail that the “jungle linguists” (an expression made popular by Willard Quine) were after was language in its total objectivity and pristine native innocence (cf. Rajagopalan, 1997a).

No doubt, with the adoption of the Generative Paradigm, there was a significant change in the attitude of the linguists *vis-à-vis* their object of inquiry. It was possible for the first time to be rigorously monolingual and also to be a linguist (The idea still persistent in the mind of the layman that a linguist is essentially a polyglot only goes to prove how widespread it was before the generative linguistics made introspection an acceptable methodological procedure). But the old preoccupation not to be influenced by one's subjective evaluation of one's own language still remained and was attended to by the rigorous separation between the object language that one studied and the metalanguage that one employed in studying that object language.

What is seldom appreciated about the reinstatement of introspection as an acceptable methodological procedure in linguistics in the late 1950s, especially coming as it did in the wake of a long period when no linguist worth her salt would dare mention the word *mind*, is that it also relieved the linguist of a number of ethical worries in relation to data-gathering. A linguist could be her own informant (This is not strictly true; the right way of putting it would be something like "The linguist *qua* a native speaker of her own language could serve as the informant for the very same linguist *qua* linguist).

The ethics of data-gathering and of the complex relation between the investigator and her informant(s) became once again a major preoccupation as more and more linguists moved away from pure, ivory-tower theorising and started taking interest in hyphenated sub-disciplines such as sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics (the absence of the hyphen in the way these words are spelt today follows the familiar rule-of-thumb, according to which the more a word becomes part of the common usage, the greater the tendency for it to shed the hyphen that originally served to announce its recent coinage).

The urgent question of the linguist's ethical responsibility to her informants was highlighted by William Labov's classic paper "Objectivity and commitment in linguistics" (Labov, 1982). The famous Ann Arbor Black English Trial was the backdrop against which Labov discussed the whole issue of the social responsibility of the linguists (including himself) to bring the weight of their scholarly expertise to bear on the rights and aspirations of those who significantly contributed to the success of their research by co-operating with them as informants. In order to sustain their claim that their clients had been discriminated against by the school system for speaking a different dialect of English, viz., American Vernacular Black English (AVBE), the plaintiffs had to convince the judges that Black English was a distinct *dialect* of English and not just bad English (as the alleged derogatory attitude of those at the helm of the school system implied). To make the further case that such discrimination also involved racist connotations they also needed to show that the dialect in question was confined to the African American segment of the local population. Clearly, on both these questions, the last word institutionally belongs to the linguist, or to be more precise, to the sociolinguist.

To go straight to what interests us here, Labov's case for the social responsibility of the linguist brought to the fore the involute question of whether or not the objectivity of the scientist/investigator can be made to square with her moral debt to her informants and consequently her eagerness to extend them a helping hand when they need it, and indeed, her felt duty to *advocate* their cause. The reason why this is a question that needs to be discussed at some length is that one perfectly understandable common-sensical reaction to such a proposal would be to protest that advocacy and objectivity are mutually incompatible goals – consider, for instance, that a lawyer who has agreed to defend an alleged felon would be betraying her professional ethics if she were to devote her energies to exclusively finding the truth rather than to identifying the weak points in the charges being levelled against her

client with a view to, if possible, refuting them, regardless of their ultimate truthfulness.

But Labov (1982) is concerned to argue not only that objectivity and advocacy go hand in hand but also that advocacy is not an optional extra but an obligation as far as any objective scientist worth her salt is concerned. As Cameron, et. al. (1993) have pointed out, however, Labov's position is also riddled with all manner of problems. For even as one must admire his firm resolve not to remain closeted in the comfort of his study, unmindful of what happens in the world of practical affairs, one must also be wary of the logical premises on the strength of which he defends his stance. As a closer analysis reveals, Labov is committed to the view that what makes it incumbent upon himself and other linguists like him to offer help to the needy, especially the ones who volunteered to be their informants, is the expertise they have accumulated over the years. In other words, their duty follows from their specialised knowledge. This means that Labov is still committed to the positivist tendency to keep facts and value judgements in separate, water-tight compartments and, even if they are to be linked at some stage, to ensure that the order of priorities is to be always one-way i.e., knowledge of facts dictating value judgements. Epistemology, in other words, is given precedence over ethics – in the classic Kantian style.

7. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND THE DEBATE OVER ITS PRETENSIONS

The whole question of the ethics of linguistics was also brought to the centre-stage by the recent (and, from what I can see, ongoing) debate concerning the aims and objectives of Critical Discourse Analysis

(Fairclough, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Widdowson 1995a, 1995b, 1996, Rajagopalan, 1995). The claim made by a number of scholars over the recent years that, no matter how hard one may try, one can never conduct any investigation in an entirely value-free fashion is called in question by Widdowson, for whom the very term 'critical discourse analysis' is a contradiction in terms for, in his view, nothing can be both critical and analytic at the same time. Indeed, so powerful is the appeal of value-free theorising that Rampton (1995: 233) has recently observed that even such avowedly practical concerns as applied linguistics and English language teaching have often been described as neutral terminologies – a claim which the author advances on the basis of a thorough re-reading of classics like Corder (1973) and Munby (1978).

It is important to notice that the attack mounted by Widdowson on the very possibility of a linguist consciously assuming a critical stance in respect of her object of study while simultaneously claiming scientificity for her investigative methods is entirely positivist in spirit. It rests on the working premise that science is value-neutral and therefore a scientist must be (*qua* scientist) indifferent to the practical consequences of her discoveries. It also assumes that no amount of theorising can give us ready and definitive answers to which of the alternative courses of action should be chosen in a given context. Widdowson also makes no secret of his conviction, already apparent in his 1977 papers that theory, although by no means sufficient to dictate what should and should not be done in actual practice, must nevertheless be looked upon as necessary and therefore be assigned priority if practice is to be conducted on a sound basis.

In Rajagopalan (1995), I argued at length that the very claim of value neutrality itself is an ideologically significant posture (See Rajagopalan 1997b for a more recent elaboration of this argument, this

time in relation to the possibility of a pure aesthetics). In his 1996 rebuttal of Widdowson's criticisms, Fairclough offers the following statement of purpose for a critical approach to the analysis of discourse:

The critical discourse of CDA evidently incorporates particular values. To put it crudely, the claim is that certain discursive practices are bad for certain reasons, and other alternative practices would be better. Practices may be negatively judged on the grounds for instance that they covertly sustain inequalities between doctors and patients, or women and men. Other approaches avoid such judgements and maintain a 'descriptive' stance only in so far as they evade the issue of how discourse sustains relations of dominance, how discourse works ideologically, though descriptive approaches are characterised by covert value judgements [...] (Fairclough, 1996: 53).

I am very much in sympathy with much of what Fairclough has to say apropos of the linguist's long-nurtured delusion that hers is an area of inquiry where value judgements have no place. However, I have some trouble accepting what seems to me to be Fairclough's central motive for self-consciously assuming a critical stance *vis-à-vis* discourse analysis. For Fairclough often writes as if by adopting a critical stance one may contribute to setting right once and for all certain of the historically instituted power imbalances. There is, in other words, a certain teleological vision of a certain 'Happy End'. While such a projected paradisiac state of heavenly bliss, one where the lion and the lamb live for ever in harmony may indeed be a necessary delusion so as not to be overtaken by a sense of despair and helplessness, one should, I think, be careful not to fall into the trap of thinking that there must be methodologically secure and infallible ways of achieving such unrealistic goals.

The point I am making is that one should stop just short of postulating a new *methodology* of critical analysis. The fact that all analysis is bound to be critical, whether or not the analyst is consciously aware

of it, does not in itself entail that there must a pattern to all forms critical interventions that may therefore be subjected to a singular and exhaustive analysis. That is precisely the gesture whereby the urge for theory-building overcomes the imperative of practical vigilance. *The moment criticism is made automatic and fully predictable, it begins to take on the very characteristics of an uncritical analysis whose ideological self-delusions it originally sought to redress.*

Thus Cameron et al. (1993: 85) take issue with Labov's idea that the investigator's readiness to pay back her informants the moral debt she owes them by taking up their cause must, before everything else, be subservient to the will of the community. Labov's idea is that, in so far as she is an outsider, the investigator is not the right person to decide what is and what is not in the best interests of the community. But Cameron et al. point out – rightly, in my view – that the question is not all that easy to solve. How do we go about identifying the will of the community? Don't we, ask Cameron et al., end up by simply ignoring the diversity of interests and conflicting points of view among the very members of the community? What guarantee do we have that the supposedly 'majority view' – obtained, let us say, by some sort of opinion poll or whatever, itself does not represent results skewed by years and years of what one might literally call 'brain-washing' through massive propaganda stage-managed by outsiders with vested interests?

8. ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING AS AN EXERCISE IN MORAL TIGHT-ROPE WALKING

Ethics is the realm of choices made in real life. And choices imply freedom to decide between alternative courses of action. Evidently,

therefore, it makes sense to raise the issue of ethics just in case the person involved is free to act on her own, in accordance with her free will. Furthermore, in order for a person to be considered responsible for her actions, she must first be shown to have acted deliberately. If, for instance, it turns out that she acted under duress or under a magic spell or hypnotic influence, we are most likely not to bring up the issue of ethics. In criminal law, one of the commonest strategies used by defence lawyers is to argue that their clients were not acting on their own free will when they allegedly committed the heinous crimes that they are being accused of, but had either been submitted to a brainwashing, or were acting under duress.

Linguistic theories that treat the subject of language as completely *determined* by society, history, language itself, or whatever are, in a way, saying that there is no room for ethics within the confines of those theories.

What is seldom if ever remembered is that the set of platitudes just stated applies just as well to the investigator's own 'meta-stance' *vis-à-vis* her theoretical expertise, especially as she decides to address the ethical issues arising out of her own public role as someone entitled, and indeed empowered, to act on practical questions of far-reaching consequences. A linguist who attempts to reduce her ethical role to a handful of procedural rules of thumb by advancing a *theory* about her own conduct in such circumstances is in point of fact washing her hands of the very ethical role expected of her. By seeking the easy way out she is actually taking cosy comfort in the automaticity of the solutions and of procedures for deciding between alternative courses of action, supposedly offered by a new and further ramified theory.

Theory provides cold comfort by relieving the agent of ethical choices of facing up to her task and assuming full responsibility for the

actual choices she is being asked to make. It does so, ironically enough, by pulling a veil over the hierarchies (alternatives to choose from) that are thus made to look like binary divisions subject only to the inexorable logic of contradictories and thus 'facts of the matter' that, as it were, impose themselves on us. The crucial step in demystifying theory's hold on us is to perceive that all conceptual categories are ultimately derived from hierarchicised value systems, although their origins in those inaugural choices have subsequently been conveniently consigned to oblivion so as to pave the way for the absolute reign of value-free theory.

To repeat the point already made: *theory in this strong sense tolls the death-knell of the very possibility of ethical interventions by agents.*

The view of ethical responsibility of the intellectual in general, and of the linguist in particular, advocated in this paper has received additional impetus from a book the present author happened to be reading as he was writing the last few paragraphs of this paper: Berel Lang's *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide*. (Lang, 1990). In the Introduction to his book, the author raises an important point about why in his view one must curb one's impulse to theorise about one of the most sordid episodes of mass murder and genocide in the history of mankind: the planned execution of millions of Jews and other minority groups by the Nazi warlords during World War II. Lang insists that particularisation of the memory and not its universalisation in the name of theory is what will ensure that we – all of us and each one us – will face up to our ethical responsibility, a responsibility that accrues from constantly reminding ourselves of the fact that such episodes have occurred in the past and will certainly happen again unless appropriate decisions are taken both collectively and individually – underscoring thus the need for permanent vigilance rather than the comfort of lasting solutions. The following words by Lang (1990: xiv) provide a fitting conclusion to the discussion so far:

If the history of ethics has any single lesson to teach, it is that the status of moral agents is determined by their own places in space and time: they act always, if not only, as individuals and always and only in a context. To propose that they should escape this particularity is to propose also that they should be quite different beings.

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Why Literature is not a Bad Word for Linguistics*

John McRae**

The objective of my talk this morning is to try to build a bridge between the Applied Linguistics side of things and other aspects of English Studies. English Studies is a young and changing field. The areas of language and literature, society and culture, are overlapping more and more. For instance, *The Journal of Applied Linguistics* which is edited in our department in Nottingham, is taking in and illustrating many of the significant changes in the discipline of Language study, widening the brief of Applied Linguistics considerably.

What I would like to hold here is that Applied Linguistics is not a discipline, it has never been a discipline, it will never be a discipline. It is a part of Linguistics which may be useful for some things and not so

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useful for other things. The major advance in the use of Linguistics in the Humanities derives from the works of the Russian Formalists, to Jakobson and the works of Chomsky and onto the various new developments in language studies. Twenty years ago, discourse analysis came to represent a step forward in the work on spoken text. Spoken text was suddenly discovered to be a useful resource which had not been considered much before the work of Sinclair & Coulthard (1975), Brazil (1975) and researchers in Birmingham. That work has been improved upon by Tannen (1989) and by Carter & McCarthy (1994). Nowadays, a corpus of spoken grammar is being developed which, in about four or five years, will displace much of the work on corpus grammar of written language.

So, the question which now arises is: what will linguistics be applied to? That is the key now because much of the early work in discourse analysis study was done on classroom language, teacher/student relationships, formal and informal registers of language, this sort of thing. And this sort of thing went on for twenty years. This concerns referential language. It is the language of teaching, the language of the classroom, the language of the communicative approach, which implies more skills than speaking, reading and writing. Notice that this is the context of a language in a non-native speaking situation. Obviously in a native speaking situation, English is not studied *as* a language in the same way. This is a considerable mistake on the part of people who work in English Departments in Britain or America because it is seen not as part of a languages faculty. The English Department in Nottingham is part of the Faculty of Arts. This means that its linguistic aspects, or relationship with other languages are not considered. So, we are considered revolutionaries in our department because within the department of literature we also bring in aspects of language such as Applied Linguistics, for example, stylistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis

and the other resources which help in our work in the overall view of the study.

That work has to go beyond the referential level to the representational level, by which I mean language is never as simple as it is in language teaching books and in the language of the classroom. Language always means more than it says. It is very rare to have a sort of language which only has a referential level. The English expression I use to illustrate this is "This is not my cup of tea". In a dictionary you will read that this expression means "this is not something I care for". You cannot normally say "This is not my cup of tea" unless you've got two or three cups of tea. This shows that the referential level of that sentence is very limited.

The representational use of that sentence is much more common. Language is, by its nature, representational. Some linguists have built their entire reputation on the representationality of language without noticing that a lot of the teaching of language is done on a referential level. One of the things that we have seen in the last twenty years is that English Studies have learned from the non-English situation (Durant, 1995). That is, much of the best work in the whole field has been done in non-native contexts, outside Britain and America. People working in the teaching of languages and literature in different cultures have found that there is a gap between the target language and the way they speak something. You learn a foreign language not in the way that children learn their own language but in as input which becomes acquisition after a while. The study of second language acquisition has been fundamental in showing how Applied Linguistics is necessary to what we are doing, to show how we've got to go beyond what we're learning to reading context and so on. I'll suggest that this quotation becomes important: "our examinations are not designed merely to check whether

[the student] has read and remembered certain books but to test his or her progress as a reader of literature”. It comes from Jonathan Culler’s essay “Structuralism and Literature” (1977). It is one of the most important reflections of our time.

There is a difference between what we ask a student to do in his or her own language and what we ask the students do in a second or third language. Because we have not had a methodology, many teachers all over the world have resorted to this ‘testing remembering’ rather than ‘evaluating progress’ of the reader whether or not of literature. I use the word “literature” with a small “l” (McRae, 1991) to indicate any text which is representational, any text at all, that could be in the newspapers, a song, etc. It seems to me very important to realise that linguistics is not simply concerned with language. Halliday suggested in his seminal work *Language as Social Semiotic* how far language has to be seen in social contexts (1978). Language is concerned with any kind of *text*. Text is a key word. Texts can be, as we know, spoken or written, but they can be visual, verbal and can be non-verbal, musical; a musical text is just as susceptible to analysis as any other. These kinds of texts are available to us as resources in our teaching and learning. The phenomenon of Cultural Studies has now grown up, especially in Europe. There are now schools of British Cultural studies, French Cultural studies, Germanic Cultural studies, Scandinavian Cultural studies, Eastern European Cultural studies. Cultural studies has become a blanket term sometimes used instead of literature, but I maintain we have to make a balance between literature with a capital “L” or with a small “l” and all cultural manifestations. We have to make a distinction because we are working in the field of human expression and the field of human expression uses language whether it be English, Portuguese or any other language. There are also architectonic language, musical language, etc.

What we have been discussing is representationality. I want to propose this thing that I call the three Vs: visual, verbal, vocal. In fact, vocal, that is, oral representation, is the first representation of any literature in any culture in the universe (Ong, 1982). Some of the major representations of any culture are dramatic, which is an oral production. The literary tradition of texts derives from the orality of *Beowulf* or Shakespeare or, in the Indian cultures, the Upanishads. These are oral texts, just as much as a conversation analysed by Deborah Tannen or classroom interaction analysed by Sinclair & Coulthard.

What we need to find is some kind of mediation between what is analysis, what is reading, what is studying, what are we studying it for, what are we learning. Difficult questions! Because if we are only studying for an exam, we are doing what Jonathan Culler is saying. We are reading and remembering. I do not want my students to memorise forgettable things. I want them to remember the memorable. And remembering the memorable would seem to imply that there is something over and above the analytical level of study. This is part of the intellectual training which universities should require.

We must not forget that we are working within the humanities, we are working with the aesthetic, with indefinable abstracts. That's where it seems to be fundamentally important that if we read Shklovsky, Searle, Jakobson and back to Saussure we must also be reading Lacan, Derrida because these people are working with the representational manifestation in language. We cannot have one without the other. If we look only at Shakespeare we might miss the other products of the greatest age of English drama. If we look only at English Literature, meaning the canon within British Great Tradition (Leavis, 1948), we might miss American, Australian, and the other literatures in English including Southeast Asian. If we look at the great tradition as it has been established by critics since

the subject was invented one hundred years ago, we miss all the contributions of various critics who restored so many women writers to some degree of respectability. If we look only at the language we miss the possibility of many other levels of analysis and response.

This is why in the past twenty years there has been a whole new boom in areas of study within language and linguistics (Fairclough, 1989; Simpson, 1993; Mills, 1995, Cook, 1994). Very few people would now say they do Applied Linguistics because the next question would be "Oh, what part of Applied Linguistics?". Pragmatics, genre analysis, these are two of the great new areas of study, but we don't know what pragmatics is because pragmatics is so many things. Similarly, genre analysis is so many things, applied linguistics is so many things, linguistics is so many things.

Now for a book of enormous importance, Stephen Pinker's *The Language Instinct* (1994), one of the great books of the past years totally indispensable to everybody working with language and literature. The traditional way of analyzing language takes us away from studies on cognition, on how we learn language, how we read, how we invent languages. Studies in cognition are a resource for us because we are not teaching the first language. For our students the first language is something they take for granted. This is wrong because what is needed now and what is very much part our armoury is an essential language awareness which implies a contrasted awareness within our own language and the target language. Language awareness (James & Garret, 1991; van Lier, 1995) has become a kind of fashionable subject but it is very necessary for the development of an awareness of how language works in relation to L1, leading to *text awareness* which ties in with anything to do with spoken or written language, which leads to *cultural awareness*.

Now if we are in a teaching project, all of that has to go into some kind of cognitive awareness, whether it be analytical or aesthetic, whether it be hermeneutics or language acquisition, because the pedagogical aspects of this are endless. The pedagogic implication will not go away. We cannot ignore the fact that the world is changing before our eyes and our very subject is changing. Actually, the subject changes every time someone publishes another book. There are too many books coming out. We cannot possibly keep pace with our subject any more. Our subject is a new subject. It was invented just over a century ago – the first discipline of English; other nations and cultures such as French, in particular also German, had this cultural awareness long before English. English as a subject was invented ideologically to bolster the crumbling British Empire. They could sell the language, they could sell the literature, they could sell the culture and it's still partially dominated by that, historically and ideologically, but one of the things which this leads us to is that language awareness must lead us to *historical awareness*: the awareness that the language we are working in has a huge tradition of representationality, and that very representationality is now what literature is examining: how language works in its manifestations through time.

Therefore Applied Linguistics, one of the greatest resources we have, is a resource which is a bit of a double-edged one, because if we analyse particularly one area of discourse we are in less danger that we ignore the universe of discourse. And the universe of discourse is to be viewed historically, diachronically as well as synchronically, and related to pedagogic issues. Stylistics as a term has been called into question – should it be 'language-based approaches to text', 'historical pragmatics' or some such term? Does it really matter what it is? Probably we will be called stylisticians by people who don't like stylistics for many years to come.

People ask me am I a language person or a literature person ? And I haven't answered it because I cannot separate language from its representational form. Literature with a capital "L" means from *Beowulf* to Virginia Woolf in the English canon, and there is Literature with a capital "L" in every culture. In many cultures you have high literary language and ordinary everyday language. What I'm interested in is the *process*, not the *product*.

Literature teachers told us how to read, what to read. They never told us *why* to read. They never, ever taught us *how* to read. What the ever-expanding field of linguistics has given us is the tools with which we can read anything. We must, therefore, look after these tools, must make sure that these tools are helping us to do our job. And the job is to read, not just English, not just Portuguese, not just written language, not just spoken language, not just today in Rio, not just Shakespeare, not just Goethe or Weber.

We are reading universes of discourse. And the universes of discourse mean that we have to specialise. Of course we have to specialise. We cannot now be masters of our whole area. The world is too big for us to master all the universe. The Renaissance man or woman cannot exist any more. There's too much to learn, too much to study, too much to know. We cannot even know everything in our own subject. I have not read every book in 'English Literature'. It would be too much. We cannot read every new book that comes through our specialisation. We are always running fast but staying in the same place. But there are people working on advertisements, another area of study – a wonderful representational use of language of image, of sound, of colour; other people working on movies, soap operas, Shakespeare, the teaching of literature, the teaching of language, classroom interaction. We have people working in every available discipline. Why ? Because we have the

privilege of being able to work in an ever-expanding universe, which means that our curiosity can keep expanding. I came to Brazil for the first time seven weeks ago. I didn't know any Portuguese but now I have seen Portuguese texts, Portuguese images, Portuguese television, Portuguese newspapers, the beach. These are all universes of discourses which can be read, analysed. Our work touches anthropology, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, touches so many areas. If you are interested in the psycholinguistic elements of discourse, it is very fashionable to read Lacan. All of these can be encompassed within the fields of language, linguistics, and studies of culture.

The nature of language is changing. Fifty years ago English was an imperial language, the language of the colonisers who spread English around the universe. This linguistic imperialism of the British was transformed by a cultural moment in 1917 which changed the history of the world. That was the moment when America came into Europe for the first time and helped to defeat the Germans. At that point began the linguistic imperialism of American English. And instead of the colonisation of British we have what I like to call the "cocacolonization" of the Universe by America.

Now, there is no such thing as English. There are many, many "Englishes": American English, British English, Australian English, Brazilian English, Carioca English, Paulista English. We have found that although we live in the universe of discourses, the universality of a language is very very restricted. The universality of language would remain on that point of the referential level that every air-hostess can speak. Every air-hostess can say the same things in four languages, but often they cannot speak any languages. They are limited to a range of reference which is a professional, international register, a professional international discourse. Professional discourses are among the most

interesting of the new discourses because we have computer discourse, we have teacher discourse, and there are universals within teacher discourse, just as there are universals within doctor-patient discourse, within policeman/criminal discourse. Police soap operas are wonderful texts for this. But these universals turn out to be not linguistic universals because the language is fulfilling some kind of human psychological need, some human psychological function. At that point our discourse analysis overlaps with psycholinguistics, with sociology, with sociolinguistics, with cultural studies.

The contrastive nature of what we are doing gives us endless possibilities. Doctor-patient discourse has been analysed endlessly. The three main ones that people seemed to have analysed *ad infinitum* or *ad nauseam* are doctor-patient, teacher-pupil classroom discourse and the police, just as in translation studies, the first thing they always do is a weather forecast. Why they do a weather forecast I don't know. But it is universal in translation studies that weather forecasts are analysed.

In language teaching everybody uses newspapers to show how different newspapers tell the same story. Very interesting to pragmatics, but one of the interesting possibilities is to analyse your samples in any language of doctor-patient, written samples from novels, soap opera samples, historical samples, and by looking at samples of texts from various places, times and cultural contexts we begin to see some kind of a range, not a minimalist focus, but a wide-ranging focus which can imply something historical in the processes rather than something of a moment in the process. I'd like to think therefore of that historical moment, if that's not a contradiction in terms.

It seems to me, therefore, that in what we do, if we are working with the L2, which we all are, we need to expand our students' range

beyond the referential. Referential language is only useful in, let's say, medical register where a doctor is writing up a prescription which can have only one meaning. Only one meaning, otherwise the patient perhaps will die if he gets the prescription wrong. It has got to be precise. A dictionary should be precise, should give a definition which does not have any argument but if you take four dictionaries and the same word you will get different definitions, different emphases, although it should be purely referential.

I mentioned the four skills. That communicative teaching revolution was a great step forward in language teaching and the awareness of cognition, acquisition, in language learning. It was a tragic mistake, however, in one sense, that it concentrated on the four skills. The most important one has been left out: thinking. If language learners do not think, these four skills do not work. They will learn mechanically, and maybe they will be able to do things mechanically. Anyone who has taught in a classroom for more than five minutes knows in advance that the students do not retain what they learn mechanically. They do not apply it to studying. They forget it. Now, this would seem to me to imply that a fundamental human characteristic is missing from a lot of our work: that is the imagination, the interaction, the negotiation and the evaluation of meanings, of interpretations, of actions.

Language used to be concerned with meaning. There used to be in some people's minds a direct relation between language and meaning. There used to be a question "What does it mean?". There used to be an answer. I would suggest that now the question "What does it mean?" can only lead to modality: 'it *might* mean', 'it *could* mean', 'it *seems to* mean', 'in my opinion', 'historically it meant but now it might be something different'. Meaning is lexical, meaning changes all the time, meaning changes in context, from individual to individual. Therefore, it

seems to me a lie to try to pin meaning down in a way that in the fifties and sixties some schools of linguistics worked. We have gone way beyond that. But there is still an attempt to pin something down as definitive. We are lucky we are working in the humanities. We are not scientists. We must apply scientific rigour to our work, yes, we cannot go on in a universe of literature teaching where 'competitive sensitivity' is a criterion. We have to have some kind of objective criteria. We have to have these in our analysis. And if in the work I do have a checklist, that checklist covers every range of discourse to indicate to us some of the features of the text which may or may not be of interest, which may or may not be of help in building this into this: language and the meaning potential of the text. *Meaning potential* is what we are now working with rather than definitive meaning. The philosophers of the twentieth century have shown us that meaning is *meaningless*. Language is also *meaningless*. These are resources. This is why I say literature is not a bad word. What made it a bad word was the way it was taught. Literature has for so long been taught, as it was taught to me, as something that I would never reach because it was above me, it was on the heights, and I, just some poor little student, who would never reach that level because I was taught to respect the authority of the teacher. I don't respect the authority of the teacher. I don't even respect my own authority. The authority I respect is the authority of the text. If we can learn to use our tools to analyse in this way, we will open up the universes of discourse to all the language and meaning potential that we want. We will be able to use our tools to help ourselves and our students and future generations to be better readers: readers not only of literature but, fundamentally important, in my ideology of teaching, to help them become better readers of the world they live in. That is the challenge. That is what we can do. We can read, interpret better by applying the tools which the past century has given to us, by sharing tools together from all sides of the universes of discourse which are at our command.

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Livro Didático: *Arma* Pedagógica?*

*Deusa Maria de Souza***

A partir de uma perspectiva discursiva, o presente artigo buscará discutir a constituição da identidade professor-aluno em contexto escolar, levando em consideração o papel do livro didático no processo de ensino-aprendizagem de leitura em LE (língua estrangeira).

A utilização do livro didático em contexto escolar é um elemento importante a ser considerado quando falamos do processo de construção de sentidos na sala de aula.

Em seu livro publicado em 1987, *Making the most of your textbook*, Neville Grant afirma que para a maioria de nós, professores, o livro-texto (ou o livro didático) é a principal arma em nosso arsenal “for most of us, the textbook is the main weapon in our armoury.”

Examinar a metáfora do livro didático enquanto “arma” a ser utilizada na sala-de-aula pode significar um ponto de partida interessan-

* Algumas das reflexões apresentadas neste artigo estão baseadas em minha dissertação de mestrado intitulada *A Questão Ideológica e o Ensino de Leitura do Inglês: Uma Proposta de Reflexão Pedagógica Através do Discurso de Tema Ecológico em Livros Didáticos* (PUC-SP, 1993).

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te para estabelecermos um ângulo de discussão acerca da ação pedagógica em relação ao livro didático.

No universo escolar da situação didático-pedagógica são elementos-chaves a sala-de-aula, o professor e o aluno. É preciso atentarmos para os lugares e posições que eles ocupam em relação ao livro didático. Por que falar em ‘arsenal’ e na necessidade de lidarmos com a ‘arma (livro didático)? Haveria uma ‘melhor arma’? Quais seriam então, as outras armas, além do próprio livro didático?

Se tomarmos o papel do livro didático mesmo metafóricamente enquanto ‘arma’, parece-nos que o sucesso residiria em saber manejá-la, manipulá-la bem. Caberia, assim, ao professor lidar com o livro didático e demonstrar que tem habilidade para realizar esta função.

Ao manipulá-la, parece haver também implícita a idéia de que se deve usá-la enquanto recurso de defesa em relação a algo perigoso ou em situação que envolva ameaça ou competição.

Assim, saber lidar bem com o livro didático pressupõe a possibilidade a ele intrínseca de promover a possibilidade de o professor ‘reger’ o livro ao mesmo tempo que há a construção de uma identidade, através da constituição de uma posição de sujeito. Este controle ou ‘regência’ é favorecido e se constitui a partir das condições de produção de sua existência, ou seja, pelo fato de o livro ser um paradigma no contexto escolar brasileiro, uma vez que ele faz parte de uma tradição. Ele está inserido em um contexto que prioriza a transmissão de conhecimento via livro didático.

Já tivemos a oportunidade de apontar (cf. Souza, 95: 114) que o livro didático tem sido, tradicionalmente, o principal mediador no en-

sino promovido pela instituição-escola. Ele costuma ser, quase que exclusivamente, a principal fonte de material didático utilizado por professores nas escolas da rede oficial de ensino para transmissão de conhecimento. Embora alvo de críticas diversas, não se pode deixar de encará-lo enquanto um paradigma que sustenta a transmissão de saber via escola.

O professor está, então, inserido neste contexto do paradigma do livro didático não podendo fugir de certos conflitos que se impõem. É, ainda, neste mesmo contexto que se pode buscar compreender de que forma se dá a constituição da identidade do professor.

Discutir a configuração da identidade do professor em contexto de ensino na rede oficial de São Paulo é tarefa complexa que envolve fatores de natureza diversa.

Parece-nos providencial o trabalho publicado por Oliveira, J. (1984) intitulado, *A Política do Livro Didático*, ocasião em que discute não somente o papel do professor em relação ao livro didático, como os diversos aspectos envolvidos nessa questão, tais como as funções do livro didático (pedagógica, econômica, político-pedagógica), o livro didático inserido em uma política educacional, o papel do Estado e a política editorial.

Oliveira (1984: 26), toca no que consideramos a questão fundamental que se encontra na base de qualquer discussão acerca do papel do livro didático. Segundo o autor, a partir do século XIX, período em que as escolas, similares aos modelos escolares que conhecemos hoje, começaram a serem implantadas em maior escala nos países ocidentais, os primeiros livros didáticos começaram a surgir nas escolas de elite enquanto única forma autorizada pelas comunidades com a função de

complementar os até então, hegemônicos e legítimos textos sagrados. Naquela época, a tradução de livros didáticos para fins específicos não significava genuína preocupação com autonomia intelectual dos alunos, uma vez que a prática pedagógica estava essencialmente caracterizada pela memorização e a recitação.

A pesquisa de Oliveira revela que:

“A introdução, em larga escala, do livro didático, acompanhando a revolução intelectual e a expansão do sistema educacional formal em direção a outras camadas da sociedade, vem intimamente ligada aos aspectos econômicos, religiosos e secundariamente aos aspectos pedagógicos. Assim, é que, na Inglaterra, as associações religiosas que subsidiavam a impressão e a distribuição de bíblias não tinham, nem mesmo no governo nem na sociedade, mecanismos alternativos para o financiamento e subsídio de livros escolares...”

Deliberadamente ou não, a partir da Revolução Industrial, o livro didático passa a assumir mais representativamente um papel de importância nas questões relacionadas à aprendizagem e à política educacional. No caso dos países desenvolvidos, os exames públicos acabavam por condicionar a adoção de determinados livros.

A partir daí, observa-se o delineamento de um percurso que vai dos exames em direção aos livros selecionados para adoção obrigatória, passando pelos interesses dos próprios autores desses livros que, por sua vez, estabelecem níveis e parâmetros para os exames, chegando até os currículos escolares propriamente ditos. Nesse quadro histórico que data do início do século passado, já era possível observar a importância do livro didático; nos dias de hoje, ele passa a assumir um papel cada vez mais preponderante.

A maneira através da qual o conhecimento está organizado no livro didático revela a expectativa de ter o professor enquanto seu principal “regente”, condutor ou controlador. Podemos observar esta potencialidade nas próprias atividades propostas pelos livros para apresentação e abordagem dos conteúdos selecionados. É através dos vários tipos de exercícios que podemos encontrar exemplos que ilustram as posições que os sujeitos aluno-professor ocupam em sua relação com o livro didático.

ATIVIDADES PARA COMPREENSÃO DE LEITURA PROPOSTAS PELOS LIVROS DIDÁTICOS – APRESENTAÇÃO E DISCUSSÃO

Através de um exame das atividades propostas para abordagem do conteúdo dos livros, podemos observar de que forma o aluno é levado a se relacionar com o livro didático.

Para nossa análise, selecionamos nove livros didáticos utilizados para o ensino do idioma inglês como língua estrangeira e procuramos analisar as atividades que abordam textos para o ensino de leitura.

Os tipos de atividades em leitura presentes em nosso corpus de análise são:

a) **information gap** ou **jigsaw reading**. Este é um tipo de atividade em leitura de grande ocorrência nos livros didáticos.

Os alunos devem geralmente trabalhar em pares ou em grupos, lerem textos diferentes ou diferentes trechos de um mesmo texto, para, em seguida, trocarem informações entre si sobre o que leram.

Observemos alguns exemplos:

1. *Work in pairs. Look at the two passages below: each of you should concentrate on a different passage. Find out about your partner's passage. What are your reactions?*

2. *Work in pairs or small groups, and read one of the two reports that appeared in the British newspaper The Independent. Do not look at the other report. Write a headline for the report that you are reading.*

A partir de observações feitas em sala de aula, podemos perceber que ao realizarem tais atividades, os alunos tendem a “memorizar” sentenças do texto que eles consideram chave para transmitir aos colegas. Muitos fazem um pequeno resumo, somente do que está no texto. Assim, o resultado dessa atividade consiste em praticamente reproduzir o que está impresso.

b) **Scanning**

O *scanning* é um tipo de técnica de leitura para fins específicos. Seu objetivo principal reside em simplesmente localizar no texto a informação desejada. A partir dessa técnica de leitura, várias atividades são elaboradas.

(i) Atividades centradas no vocabulário

Observamos diversas atividades voltadas para a exploração do vocabulário:

1) vocabulário explorado a partir de uma lista de itens lexicais retirados dos textos, onde os alunos devem preencher lacunas em diferentes sentenças:

A. Vocabulary

limit	figures	method	shortage
control	increases	raise	disaster
although	provide	overpopulated	resources

1. _____ most journalists studied journalism in college, some older writers never attended a university.

2. Can you explain the _____ for changing salt water to fresh water?

3. The number of injuries from automobile accidents _____ every year.

Poderíamos argumentar que essas atividades, ao invés de despertar o senso crítico do sujeito-leitor em relação ao conteúdo do texto, exercem um efeito distanciador, ao priorizarem o aspecto puramente lingüístico.

2) Uso do dicionário para:

- checar a pronúncia e significado de palavras isoladas

Use your dictionary to define *forsee*.

Use your dictionary to check the pronunciation of *crisis*, and write its transcription, including the stress mark.
What is the adjective? Write its transcription, including the stress mark.

- dar sinônimos a expressões ou palavras equivalentes retiradas do texto:

Find words or phrases that can be replaced by the following:
urgent
are exhausted

- derivar palavras por analogia, prefixação e sufixação:

Consider *decrease*, *descend*; and *undergraduate*, *graduate*, *postgraduate*. What does *degrading* mean?

As tarefas que utilizam a técnica do tipo *scanning* são normalmente utilizadas quando o professor pretende que o aluno localize informações específicas em um texto: um número de telefone na lista, uma palavra no dicionário, horários em tabelas, etc. São tarefas de certa forma limitadas, conforme afirma Grellet, “scanning is... limited since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose” (1981:19).

O uso de *scanning* para abordar um texto limita o trabalho de leitura do aluno a aspectos superficiais de questões discutidas e exige pouco em termos de operações cognitivas.

- c) Question-types: são atividades que envolvem perguntas do tipo:

1) múltipla escolha

Segundo a literatura em ELT (English Language Teaching) sobre o ensino de leitura, as questões de múltipla escolha (i) testam a compreensão do aluno com referência a determinado texto; (ii) ajudam o aluno a compreender o que talvez fosse de difícil compreensão como, por exemplo, o significado de uma palavra; (iii) ajudam os alunos a pensarem sobre uma palavra ou um texto (Grellet, 1981: 218).

Observamos que as atividades de múltipla escolha de fato “ajudam” o aluno, pois, a nosso ver, ele não precisa “pensar” sobre o texto, já que as respostas às perguntas já foram previamente elaboradas pelos autores dos livros didáticos. O aluno simplesmente “escolhe” a resposta considerada correta.

2) *WH-questions* -

São perguntas para compreensão de texto, iniciadas por : *what, which, who, when, why, how*, cujas respostas podem ser localizadas nos textos.

As atividades do tipo *wh-questions* se assemelham às atividades do tipo múltipla escolha, na medida em que “guiam” a interpretação do aluno, controlando-a.

d) Identificar as idéias principais dos textos:

As atividades que envolvem identificar as “idéias principais” de um texto são utilizadas para “treinar os alunos a perceber a estrutura e coerência de um texto” (op. cit. p. 27). Tais atividades incluem:

- preencher quadros, diagramas com informações retiradas dos textos;
- preencher lacunas em um texto com sentenças pré-determinadas.

Nesses tipos de atividades, espera-se que o aluno seja capaz de perceber as idéias principais do texto, preenchendo lacunas através da escolha de sentenças apropriadas, mas a partir de uma lista pré elaborada pelos autores do livro didático.

Após a descrição das atividades propostas pelos livros didáticos, podemos argumentar que as atividades examinadas parecem conferir aparente “unidade” e “transparência” aos textos. Assim, os textos funcionariam como espécies de “arquivos” onde o único objetivo é a localização de respostas.

O “conteúdo” dos textos é simplesmente absorvido e “devolvido” pelo aluno através das chamadas questões de compreensão.

As atividades exploram elementos lingüísticos formais (léxico, estruturas gramaticais, etc.) sem considerarem seu uso em uma perspectiva discursiva.

IDEOLOGIA E A POSIÇÃO DO SUJEITO-LEITOR

O tipo de sistema educacional que encontramos em uma determinada sociedade está em relação com as estruturas e significados daquela sociedade, com todas as suas contradições refletidas nas contradições inerentes num sistema educacional em particular (Kress, 1987: 123).

Ao considerarmos a questão da aprendizagem de uma língua, devemos olhar para a língua alvo através da sociedade como um todo. Na nossa relação com a linguagem, nossa participação na atividade linguística está sempre relacionada com o processo de formação de textos.

A nossa relação com a língua estrangeira dá-se, geralmente, através de textos, que, por sua vez, são mediados pela instituição escola. Considerando que textos são organizados a partir de um ponto específico na estrutura social e cultural, a aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira é um aspecto de um processo abrangente.

A fim de percebermos processos ideológicos perpassando textos, precisamos compreender não só processos envolvidos na formação de textos, mas também a posição do sujeito- leitor em relação a eles.

Devemos examinar como o leitor, enquanto sujeito, agente social, se constitui no processo de aprendizagem de uma língua.

Os livros didáticos com seus textos aqui analisados fazem parte de instituições educacionais formais, ou seja escolas.

Gostaríamos de sugerir que esses textos têm a ver com o aspecto de “instrução” do leitor, no sentido de “ser/estar informado” e no sentido de “ser comandado” para tender a um tópico em particular, ao conhecimento e à autoridade.

Conforme vimos no item anterior, são as atividades propostas pelos livros didáticos que de certa forma guiam a leitura, pois elas determinam o foco de atenção do aluno (em relação a algum item lexical em particular ou uma determinada estrutura gramatical). É o caso, por exemplo, de um texto que é explorado em sala de aula como forma de ilustrar

o emprego da voz passiva no inglês. Observa-se, assim, ênfase no “treinamento” dos alunos para determinada estrutura sintática.

É o livro, através das atividades de abordagem dos textos, que parece decidir quais os tópicos, aspectos dos textos devem ser considerados mais importantes ou relevantes para sua compreensão.

Observamos nos exemplos a seguir, de que forma pode se dar a “instrução” do aluno. Notemos, por exemplo, a maneira pela qual as questões são introduzidas em atividades para abordagem de um texto:

How many of these questions can you answer...?

Nessa atividade, o sujeito-leitor tem como pressuposto o fato de que ele talvez não possa, não seja capaz (can) de responder a todas as perguntas. O leitor é posicionado em relação a uma escala de sucesso: ele está sendo “desafiado”, ao mesmo tempo em que há o “comando”, para que ele responda às questões.

No exemplo seguinte, podemos notar de que forma o aluno é *instruído* para realizar a atividade com sucesso:

Summarise the information... by copying and completing the table...

Ao examinarmos a abordagem dos textos nos livros didáticos selecionados, percebemos que os produtores de textos constroem posições para que os leitores ocupem, posições que os leitores podem assumir ou não, dependendo de um complexo de fatores sociais.

Em Citelli (1988:53):

“... no livro didático, com a “neutra” função de ensinar, de servir como instrumental de leitura, transita ideologia, configurando uma atitude nitidamente persuasiva.”

Observamos, ainda em alguns exemplos, de que forma o sujeito-leitor é posicionado, a partir de tarefas elaboradas pelo livro didático.

Look at the passages below...
work in pairs...
Write a headline...
Use your dictionary

Parece claro, por um lado, que os co-autores dos livros didáticos procuram posicionar seus leitores de maneira precisa. Os alunos-leitores, por outro lado, devem ser treinados (instruídos) a reconhecer não só o “posicionamento”, como também as sanções que sustentam essa posição “imposta”. Não aceitar o “lugar” de leitor nessa situação pode acarretar consequências práticas, como, por exemplo, a reprovação em provas ou exames.

Entretanto, não devemos crer que haveria uma intenção totalmente consciente por parte dos autores de livros didáticos para limitar a ação e criatividade do sujeito-leitor. Não deve haver aí, uma intenção conscientemente perversa de anular a capacidade crítica do aluno. A crença de que se pode (de)limitar as interpretações de um texto no ato de leitura é uma ilusão de natureza ideológica.

Ao posicionar o sujeito-leitor em determinado lugar, o livro didático exerce sua autoridade ao estabelecer parâmetros na releção do aluno com o texto. O sujeito-leitor deverá “cooperar” com o livro didático.

A constante recorrência de atividades que remetem sujeitos-leitores a determinados *lugares* no processo de interação com o texto, pode constituí-los enquanto agentes sociais, leitores e produtores de textos.

CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

O professor pode se sensibilizar, aguçar seu senso crítico e analítico, acabando por adotar progressivamente uma postura de questionamento tanto em relação ao material didático utilizado para o ensino de inglês como em relação ao próprio momento histórico-social no qual ele está inserido.

Cabe ao professor promover entre seus alunos momentos que contemplem questionamentos do papel do livro didático, não enquanto a principal 'arma' para sua atividade pedagógica, mas como um dos recursos a ser abordado de forma crítica. O livro didático é, geralmente, um dentre os componentes de uma situação de aprendizagem. É difícil avaliar o grau de eficácia e eficiência de um livro didático se não levarmos em conta as condições de produção de sua elaboração e de seu uso.

É preciso levar o aluno a questionar o lugar que lhe é atribuído, tendo em vista a convivência quase que inevitável com o livro didático.

Uma mudança de atitude por parte do professor (e do aluno) em relação ao livro didático pode gerar implicações em nível metodológico. O professor poderá ter a opção de escolher não abordar o livro enquanto 'arma', deixando de ser escravizado por ele.

Acreditamos que seja também de responsabilidade do professor de língua estrangeira criar condições que favoreçam o processo de desenvolvimento da habilidade crítica do aluno. Entretanto, isso não será possível se não houver iniciativa e disposição do professor para questionar e tentar transformar, na medida do possível, o círculo vicioso **texto-perguntas sobre o texto-respostas no texto-via professor-via livro didático**.

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Deviant Spellings and their Uses

*Göran Kjellmer**

Anyone who reads a newspaper cannot help noticing the great number of misprints that continually occur on its pages. I am saying “newspaper” advisedly, because in other types of writing – journals, books – misprints are much less frequent. It is of course only natural that misprints should occur so frequently in newspapers, where writers, proof-readers and compositors (that is, proof-readers and compositors in so far as they still exist) have less time to check the language than in other parts of the printing industry. Readers tend to notice printing errors only when they have some entertainment value; otherwise the errors are generally neglected.

However, as observant readers notice from time to time, some types of deviant spellings recur so frequently that something else than chance appears to be responsible. If we look at the misprints in this way we may hope to extract some information from them of more significance than that somebody happened to slip up again. First of all it will be of some interest to chart the areas where deviant spellings aggregate. The charting may then have some prognostic value. Secondly we could hope to elicit some information in this way to do with the

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phonological system of the writers and the influences they are subjected to and perhaps even some indication of incipient changes in the language.¹

This paper is based on a collection of misprints from British newspapers from the 1980's, chiefly *The Observer*. It should perhaps be pointed out that the paper in question is in no way suspected of containing more misprints than other papers. If anything, it probably contains fewer of them (there are very few cases of *hte* and *adn* and the like), which may lend some additional interest to the ones that remain. The collection is not a systematic one but rather an assortment of instances of such spellings as had made themselves conspicuous during my reading. It would therefore be pointless to give frequency figures or to claim that the ones in the collection are the only ones where some sort of overrepresentation exists; nor would there be much point in giving references for the many cases that will be given in illustration. I hope to be able to show, nevertheless, that some information can be extracted from them. The spellings in question have thus been culled from British English writings, and the conclusions from them therefore refer to British English, or more precisely "English English". It is more than likely that a similar collection based on, say, Scottish or American material would produce partly different results.

In the following I shall be looking at a number of types of deviant spellings and discuss them separately. It will be seen that in some cases the types overlap to a certain extent.

(1) Words with <e>- , <ee>- and <ea>-spellings

¹ In fact, we will then be looking at them in the same way as medieval scholars have traditionally regarded spelling variations in manuscripts from pre-printing periods.

There is sometimes variation between the spellings <e>, <ee> and <ea>, as in *ceded* for *ceded* or *meets* for *meals*. Wherever this variation occurs, the corresponding pronunciation is /i:/, and <e>, <ce> and <ca> are all capable of representing that phoneme.

(2) Words with <ci>- and <ie>-spellings

A frequent type of variation is that between <ei> and <ie>. The variation goes both ways. There is <ci> for <ie>, as in *beseiged*, *blitzkreig*, *seige*, *theives* and *weilding*, and <ie> for <ei>, as in *recieved*. The explanation is similar to that in (1): all the words in question have /i:/, and <ei> and <ie> are both capable of representing that phoneme.

(3) Words with <oo>-spellings

In some cases there are <o>-spellings for <oo>-words: *chose* for *choose*, *shot* for *shoot* and *to* for *too*. (There are no <oo>-spellings for <o>-words in the material.) The number of cases is small, but it could be noticed that all the deviant spellings exist as standard spellings in different contexts. Furthermore, words where the standard <o>-spelling represents /u:/, as in *lose*, *move*, *prove* (and *to!*), could have had some analogical influence.

(4) Words with unstressed vowels

This is a major problem area. An impressive number of instances have been found where the vowel in an unstressed syllable has been spelled in an unorthodox manner. A pattern is noticeable here. The deviant spelling very often results in a morpheme which is inappropriate in the word in question but which exists elsewhere in the language. There is *Capital Hill* for *Capitol Hill* (a Freudian slip?). There is *then* for *than*,

than for *then* and *Britan* for *Britain*. There is *consistant*, *opulant* and *Superintendant* for *consistent*, *opulent* and *Superintendent*, and *defiant* for *defiant*. There is *admissable* for *admissible* and *indispensible* for *indispensable*. There is *continuce* and *resemblence* for *continuance* and *resemblance*, and *existance* for *existence*. There is *robberery* for *robbery*. There is *salutory* for *salutary*. There is *auther* for *author*, *demonstrater* for *demonstrator*, *chauffer* for *chauffeur*, *hanger* for *hangar*, *imposter* for *impostor*, *murmer* for *murmur*, *negotiater* for *negotiator*, and not least *grammer* and *Grammer School* for *grammar* and *Grammar School*. *Hatered* for *hated* also belongs here. And, above all, there is one case of *woman* for *women* but no fewer than ten cases of *women* for *woman*.² In fact, there are few instances where the unorthodox spelling does not reflect an existing morpheme, instances such as *cannibis* for *cannabis* or *riated* for *rioted*. In any case we must of course be aware that they could be ordinary trivial typographical errors.

(5) Words with <wh>-spellings

There are some instances showing uncertainty with regard to the spelling of initial <wh->: *wether* for *whether*, *were* for *where*, *wittled* for *whittled*. In the material there are no cases of inverted spellings, i.e. <wh-> for <w->.

(6) Words with double consonants

² There are two signs outside the Public Conveniences in Falmouth, Cornwall. One says "Ladies", and the other says "Gentleman".

This is another important problem area. Spellings that are deviant with regard to consonant doubling occur both before and after a stressed vowel. We shall look at the two phenomena separately.

Cases of deviant spellings where traditional orthography has consonant doubling before stressed vowels include the following: *appear*, *apointment*, *atched*, *atacked*, *atempt*, *Atorney*, *comando*, *esential*, *Mediteranean*, *suported*, *suporter*, *terific*, *unbeligerent*. In the material there is only one case of doubling in this position where there is none in the traditional orthography: *ressult* for *result*. Why is there this dislike of double consonants before a stressed vowel? One hypothesis is that consonants are not normally doubled in this position, and that hence the deviant spellings actually conform to a more general pattern in the language. To investigate this possibility a sample was drawn from the LOB Corpus in such a way that the first full page of each letter in Hofland and Johansson 1982 was scanned, and all the cases of either single non-initial letters or double non-initial letters preceding a stressed vowel were recorded together with their frequencies. The first group thus contains words like *banana* and *imagine*, and the second group words like *balloon* and *immoral*. The results were these:

	Single consonant before stressed vowel	Double consonant before stressed vowel	Total
Number of word types	169 (74%)	59 (26%)	228 (100%)
Number of word tokens	3393 (72%)	1307 (28%)	4700 (100%)

Our hypothesis thus seems to be borne out: in approximately three cases out of four, whether we count types or tokens, the non-initial consonant preceding a stressed vowel is single. Anyone uncertain whether to double the consonant before a stressed vowel will thus stand a better chance of spelling it correctly if he does not. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that analogy with the more frequent type of spelling is responsible for the considerable number of single consonants for double consonants.

There is also a limited number of cases where a stressed vowel is followed by a single rather than a double consonant: *accomodate, allotted, Ambassador, canot, deterence, deterrents, eforts, embarassed, embarassing, occured, occurence, perenially, posses*. The explanation is less obvious here, and again we have to allow for occasional misprints. One tendency which can be observed in most of the cases is that writers seem singularly reluctant to write double letters twice in a word. In the above list *accomodate, allotted, embarassed, embarassing, occured, occurence, perenially* and *posses* are cases in point. (For *alloted* and *occured*, see also (8) below.) Such a tendency would also account for some very frequent misspellings, viz. *accomodation* and *millenium*.³

(7) Words with the apostrophe

There is a great deal of variation in the use of the apostrophe. This is a very real problem area for many writers, and one where it is possible to deviate from standard usage in many ways. The following types of deviation can be noticed:

³ Cf. Kjellmer 1986.

- Use for standard non-use: *it's, who's, want's, the Arnot's, the Iraqi's, west of the Shetland's* for *whose, wants, its, the Arnots, the Iraqis, west of the Shetlands*.
- Non-use for standard use: *its the best, a newsagents, his parents marriage, a years free membership* for *it's the best, a newsagent's, his parents' marriage, a year's free membership*.
- 's for standard s': *a miner's rally, the Chamberlain's new baby, S. is a scientist's scientist* for *a miners' rally, the Chamberlains' new baby, S. is a scientists' scientist*.
- s' for standard 's: *the Old Sheeps' Reunion, each others' scooters, last weeks' Sizewell report* for *the Old Sheep's Reunion, each other's scooters, last week's Sizewell report*.
- s's for standard 's: *a patients's tonsils* for *a patient's tonsils*.
- s's for standard s': *the Davidsons's track record* for *the Davidsons' track record, wonderful grist to the socialites's, journalists's and dramatists's mill* for ... *socialites', journalists' and dramatists' mill*.
- Misplacement of apostrophe for contraction: *ca'nt, had'n't, would'nt* for *can't, hadn't, wouldn't*.

It is obvious that the conventional use of the apostrophe presents a great many difficulties to inexperienced writers. There are several reasons for this. One is the fact that in a few frequent cases (*its, whose*) a standard genitive form without the apostrophe occurs alongside a homophonous word with an apostrophe (*it's, who's*). Since 's is a normal indication of genitivity, the analogical pull of *it's* and *who's* on *its* and *whose* must be considerable. Secondly, there are variations even in the

standard language. One such case is that usage varies when a word in *-s* takes a genitive form. *Sands's death* can also occur as *Sands' death*, *Burns's poetry* as *Burns' poetry* and *Jones's house* as *Jones' house*.⁴ Another is the names of businesses, where the genitive can be interpreted as a plural, as in "We shop at Woolworths/Woolworth's/Woolworth."⁵ If such variations are acceptable in the standard language, they can easily make way for less acceptable variation.⁶ Finally, in the many cases of plural genitives ending in *s'*, as in *parents' obligations*, the presence or absence of the apostrophe makes no difference from a phonological point of view; there is hence no phonological incentive to add an apostrophe to a familiar-looking form.

(8) Homophones and other "confusibles"

English is a language rich in homophonous doublets; even homophonous triplets occur. If homophonous words are spelled differently⁷, they are clearly liable to create problems for the speller, who may select the wrong alternative. There is evidence of this phenomenon in the material: *August* occurs for *august*⁸, *bazaar* for *bizarre*⁹, *forward* for *foreword*¹⁰, *lead* for *led*¹¹, *one* for *won*¹², *peddled* for

⁴ Greenbaum and Whitcut 1988: 48.

⁵ Greenbaum and Whitcut 1988: 49. A special case is variation before *sake*, as in *for goodness/goodness' sake*.

⁶ Or even total confusion, cf. "Near it's eastern end is a barbers, ..." and "Brahm's birth".

⁷ I.e., if they are what could be called "heterosemous homophonous heterographs".

⁸ "Weatherbys, that August institution, ..."

⁹ "A typeface can be ... elegant, classic or even bazaar."

¹⁰ "J.B., whose forward to Nelson's book was very complimentary."

¹¹ "This should have lead to a mass exodus of talent westwards."

¹² "Your team has just one. You should be celebrating"

*pedalled*¹³, *rung* for *wrung*¹⁴, *their* for *there*¹⁵, *you're* for *your*¹⁶, and perhaps even *importance* for *impotence*¹⁷. Homophony could also explain *wether* for *whether* and *were* for *where* under (5) above. Non-homophonous “confusibles”¹⁸, such as *mitigate* and *militate*, do not really belong in this study at all, but it is arguable that the spelling *adopt to* for *adapt to* is a borderline case.

(9) Words with paradigmatic variation

Most English word stems are paradigmatically invariable. To put it differently, the words that occur in paradigms do not normally change their stems. This is true of nouns (*book*, *book's*, *books*), verbs (*work*, *works*, *worked*, *working*), adjectives (*slow*, *slower*, *slowest*) and some adverbs (*hard*, *harder*, *hardest*). However, as not a few words have stems that do vary, one can expect to find that the distribution of the different stem-forms occasionally deviates from the generally accepted pattern. A few deviant spellings could be explained in this way. They are *experienceing* for *experiencing*, *moveing* for *moving*, *plys* for *plies*, *pronounciation* for

¹³ “The only real difficulty I’ve ever had was with a young woman who wanted to ride her bicycle through the arcade. I requested her to desist. She used some very unladylike language and peddled past me.”

¹⁴ “Lord Byron was indebted to his trade because it rung his thoughts from reality to imagination ...”

¹⁵ “the really well-trained dog is the one that turns his somersault when there is no whip.” “...there is no chance of them enjoying their ill-gotten swag”

¹⁶ “you’re training takes care of that.”

¹⁷ (A football match between England and Scotland.) “The Sc[o]ts’ belief in their invincibility grew and by the end they were not only splitting the English defence apart but reducing their opponents to impotence as they tackled every desperate counterattack into the ground.” But this would suggest that *importance* and *impotence* are pronounced identically, which is not normally the case.

¹⁸ McArthur 1992, sub voce.

pronunciation and *underly* for *underlie*.¹⁹ Analogy with the base form could also help to explain the spellings *alloted* and *occured*, see above.

(10) Words with American spelling alternatives

In the homonyms discussed above, the spelling of one word was mistaken for that of another, identical-sounding one; both spellings were acceptable in different contexts. There is another kind of variation, where two standards, viz. the British and the American one, conflict.²⁰ In an English newspaper spellings such as *practicing*, *traveling* and *untrammeled* for *practising*, *travelling* and *untrammelled* must be regarded as deviant, although they are of course regular in American English. In view of the powerful American influence on present-day British life, one might have expected to find a great many American spellings in British newspapers. That this cannot be said to be the case is primarily ascribable to the fairly small number of divergences between the two spelling systems. It is in fact possible to read page after page of a book without being able to establish whether its author is British or American. Nevertheless, in the places where usage does diverge, American pressure is clearly considerable.

(11) Unfamiliar words

It is, finally, natural that words with which the writer is not familiar should run a greater risk of being misspelled than those he knows well.

¹⁹ It is difficult to tell whether the spelling *pronunciation* indicates a changed pronunciation of the stressed vowel from [Z] to [a:] — <ou> could still be taken to indicate [Z] as in *double*, *trouble*, *cousin*, *couple*.

²⁰ In this case there is thus “homosemous homophonous heterography” (allowing for systematic British-American phonetic divergences).

This may explain spellings like *theodite* for *theodolite*, *fuedal* for *feudal* or *embue* for *imbue*. (*Embue* could also be explained under (4) above.) Trivial typographical errors could of course again be responsible. The risk is particularly great if there are temptations in the form of associations to words with some common semantic feature(s). One such case is *aerolons* for *ailerons*, an aileron being a vital part of an aeroplane. It is obvious that orthographic deviations of this kind frequently overlap other categories discussed above.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions that can be drawn from the above survey concern both such specific tendencies within the phonemic universe of present-day English as are accidentally manifested in the material and the forces that are at work at a general level. As for the specific tendencies, the cases discussed above illustrate tendencies that are well known; they serve to confirm observations that have already been made. Complete merger of Middle English /e:/ <ee> and /ɛ/ <ea> in Southern Modern English /i:/ is seen in the spellings under (1) and (2). Further, there is a great deal of evidence to show that vowels in unstressed syllables (4) generally merge or have merged to become one vowel, /ɜ/, as is pointed out for instance by Wells 1990a: 778. We have reason to assume that the unorthodox and the orthodox spellings would in every case correspond to the same pronunciation, and that therefore the choice between them is of no great consequence from a purely phonological point of view. The loss of /r/ before consonants in Southern Modern English is shown by *hatered* for *hated* (4) and (perhaps) *importance* for *impotence* (8), and the southern loss of /h/ after /w/ is shown by the words under (5).²¹ The case of *hatered* is interesting from another point of view. "In various

unstressed positions before a consonant, /ɪ/ is gradually being supplanted by /ɪ/ [in RP]. ... The same change is also increasingly heard in the endings *-ed* (*waited*) and *-es* (*churches*) and in the unstressed prefixes *e-*, *de-*, *re-* (*effect*, *denote*, *remember*) ...” (Wells 1990b: 5). The spelling *hatered* clearly reflects the new pronunciation variant; *hatered* is an inverted spelling rendering the pronunciation /'he=ɪd/, which rhymes with e.g. *catered*.

Some general factors that lie behind the deviant spellings are obvious. As before, there is a fair amount of overlap or collaborative operation.

Analogy is a powerful factor in language variation, and ultimately in language change. A language element that can be seen as having something in common with another element tends to be influenced by it and sometimes exchanged for it. We are now focusing on orthography, and here analogy operates on different levels: on the lowest level, “letter level”, as when *siege* is spelled *seige*; on the morpheme level, as when *consistent* is spelled *consistant*; and on the word level, as when *bizarre* is spelled *bazaar*.

Hypercorrection is a logical complement to analogy. Writers who are aware of the analogical pull of associative elements will try to counteract it by correcting the element at risk in a non-analogical direction. For example, they will change their “it’s size” to “its size”. In most cases they will be successful, but occasionally they will overreact and change e.g. “It’s the best” to “Its the best”. There are many instances of hypercorrection in the material, indeed, most of the examples of

²¹ Daniel Jones commented in 1955 on the rarity of /hw/ rather than simple /w/ for words spelled <wh-> (Wells 1990b:8).

deviant spellings given above can be ascribed to either analogy or hypercorrection. Two cases of the latter may be particularly worthy of mention: *half and hour* for *half an hour*, and *damned up energy* for *dammed-up energy*.

Organisation of the lexicon. In order for analogy and hypercorrection to arise, speakers and writers must have organised their lexicon in such a way that associations between categories can occur.²² There is evidence in the material that speakers and writers are conscious, if only imperfectly, of the morphological segmentation of English words. It was shown above that the deviant spellings of unstressed syllables regularly represent spellings of other existing morphemes, and even if accidental deviations would have produced the same effect in many cases, the tendency is consistent enough not to be due to chance alone. The same phenomenon clearly underlies the spellings discussed under (9) ("Words with paradigmatic variation").

To summarise, I think it can be said that deviant spellings are less random than they may first appear to be. To be sure, there are accidental typos like *hte* or *adn* in any text that has not been scrutinised carefully, but the majority of the misspellings seem to cluster in a limited number of areas. This is due to the fact that they are *not* accidental but rather natural and foreseeable in view of the characteristics of the language in which they occur. From the linguist's point of view they are useful in that they can furnish information on preferences and tendencies in the language, both those which have resulted in phonological change in the past and those which reflect variation and possible change in the future.

²² See Aitchison 1987, particularly Ch. 17.

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*Translation/
Tradução*



Crop. 4/5
1997-1998

Presença de Autores Afro-americanos no Brasil: as Traduções

*Alvaro Hattnher**

Este trabalho é um produto indireto de meu envolvimento com a pesquisa sobre as literaturas e culturas afro-americana e afro-brasileira, que vem acontecendo desde 1987. No percurso das leituras que orientaram meu estudo sobre a criação poética do afro-americano Langston Hughes,¹ comecei a me interessar pela questão da presença de obras de escritores negros norte-americanos no Brasil, voltando minha atenção para a publicação de traduções desses autores. Incentivado pela gratificante experiência de ter traduzido três livros do romancista Chester Himes, além de alguns poemas do próprio Hughes e de outros poetas afro-americanos, procedi a um levantamento bibliográfico que pudesse representar um panorama inicial de títulos publicados no Brasil.² Os títulos reunidos podem conduzir a algumas reflexões

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¹ A. L. Hattnher, *A expressão da negritude na poesia de Langston Hughes e Solano Trindade*. Araraquara, 1992. 120p. Dissertação (Mestrado em Estudos Literários) – Faculdade de Ciências e Letras, Universidade Estadual Paulista.

² Parte dos resultados e observações aqui contidos foram apresentados originalmente em uma palestra proferida durante o I Congresso Ibero-Americano de Tradução e Interpretação, realizado em maio de 1998 na Faculdade Ibero-Americana, São Paulo. Agradeço aos professores Aduari Brezolin e Cleide Cerdeira o gentil convite.

interessantes não só sobre questões de tradução propriamente dita, mas também sobre aspectos como contextos e critérios de publicação, fortuna crítica de um determinado autor e elementos paratextuais (capas, orelhas, etc.).

A bibliografia apresentada neste trabalho foi dividida em três grupos: I. poesia; II. prosa de ficção; III. autobiografias e ensaios. Embora cada grupo apresente peculiaridades que serão alvo dos comentários abaixo, o grupo (ii), por ser o que apresenta número mais significativo de ocorrências, será discutido de forma mais detalhada.

I. POESIA

A relação dos poetas afro-americanos traduzidos no Brasil ainda é pequena. A característica geral da presença desses autores em textos em português é sua dispersão por diversas antologias. Não há um livro individual de nenhum poeta, embora tenhamos notícia de uma possível coletânea de poemas de Langston Hughes traduzidos por Sylvio Back a ser publicada em breve.³ Hughes é, sem dúvida, o poeta afro-americano mais conhecido fora dos Estados Unidos. Essa afirmação vale também para o Brasil, onde Hughes é o poeta com maior número de traduções, realizadas por nomes como Manuel Bandeira, Guilherme de Almeida,

³ O jornal *Folha de São Paulo* publicou uma página sobre a obra de Hughes e alguns poemas traduzidos por Back em sua edição de 15 de fevereiro de 1998. Algumas dessas traduções (os poemas “Democracy”, “Hope” e “Dream”) foram publicadas na revista *Nicolau*, v. 4, n. 35, out/nov 1990.

Sérgio Milliet e outros.⁴ Seu poema intitulado “Ku Klux”, em tradução de Sérgio Milliet, foi possivelmente o primeiro poema de um autor afro-americano a ser publicado no Brasil (em 1943). Um aspecto interessante das traduções de Hughes no Brasil está relacionado a Manuel Bandeira. Uma das traduções de um poema de Hughes feita por Bandeira foi transformada em música por um compositor pernambucano (Lourenço da Fonseca Barbosa, apelidado “Capiba”).⁵ Infelizmente ainda não descobri qual é o poema que foi utilizado, mas não deixa de ser instigante pensar em todas as possibilidades oferecidas pela tradução como recurso intertextual e intercultural sugeridas por essa ocorrência.

Outros poetas que tiveram textos publicados no Brasil incluem Lewis Alexander, Richard Bruce, James Corrothers, Countee Cullen, Waring Cuney, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Angelina W. Grimké, Gladys May Casely Hayford, LeRoi Jones, James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay e Charles P. Wilson. Entre os tradutores, além de Guilherme de Almeida, encontram-se Ribeiro Couto, Orígenes Lessa, Oswaldino Marques, Ítalo Moriconi Jr., Cassiano Nunes, Abgar Renault, Domingos Carvalho da Silva, Jorge Wanderley e o poeta afro-brasileiro José Carlos Limeira. As referências detalhadas dessas publicações encontram-se na primeira seção da bibliografia geral deste ensaio.

⁴ Para um levantamento razoavelmente completo das traduções brasileiras de Hughes até 1992, ver A. L. Hattner, Langston Hughes no Brasil: as traduções. *Estudos Anglo-Americanos*, 16, 1992, p. 57-80.

⁵ Em “Os maracatus de Capiba”, Bandeira afirma: “(...) [Ariano] Suassuna dá como ‘a mais audaz e mais musicalmente perfeita entre as canções do compositor nordestino aquela que tem por letra a tradução que fiz de um pequenino poema de Langston Hughes.’” In: Manuel Bandeira, *Poesia e prosa*. Rio de Janeiro: Aguilar, 1958, v. 2, p. 275.

II. PROSA DE FICÇÃO

Romances são indiscutivelmente o ponto alto da presença afro-americana no Brasil por meio de traduções. Pode-se sugerir alguns motivos para a maior incidência desse gênero em nosso país. O aspecto comercial é decisivo. A prosa tem, inegavelmente, maior penetração e aceitação entre o público leitor brasileiro. Esse fator torna-se determinante na opção editorial por este ou aquele escritor, raciocínio que me parece válido para qualquer autor, afro-americano ou não. Some-se a isso o fato de que alguns dos títulos publicados inscrevem-se em divisões específicas do gênero prosa de ficção, como o romance policial, caso de autores como Chester Himes e Walter Mosley. Algumas obras tem sua determinante de publicação em fatores puramente extra-literários. Nesse sentido, pode-se lançar a hipótese de que se a série televisiva *Raízes* não tivesse logrado tanto sucesso entre o público brasileiro (e mundial), talvez o livro homônimo de Alex Haley nunca tivesse sido traduzido entre nós. Voltaremos a falar desse aspecto mais à frente.

O primeiro romance de um autor afro-americano publicado no Brasil foi *Native Son*, de Richard Wright, em 1941 pela Companhia Editora Nacional. Lançado nos Estados Unidos em 1940, a tradução brasileira, encomendada a Monteiro Lobato e intitulada *Filho Nativo*, foi iniciativa de Ênio Silveira, que sobre ela comentou: “Foi um dos grandes sucessos da editora (...) chegou mesmo a ser um *best-seller* para aquela época, para a década de 40. Foi um livro que em 3 ou 4 edições sucessivas vendeu por volta de 50 mil exemplares”,⁶ número significativo hoje e, principalmente, naquela época. Com o subtítulo, inexistente na edição norte-americana, de “Tragédia de um negro americano”, a tradução

⁶ In ALMEIDA, M. A. *Ênio Silveira*. São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1992, p. 38.

de Lobato representa um excelente objeto para estudos voltados para crítica de tradução, em especial se comparada com a tradução de Jusmar Gomes publicada em 1987 pela editora Best Seller. Outro livro de Wright publicado pela Companhia Editora Nacional, em 1946, foi *Black Boy*, com o título de *Negrinho* e tradução de Wilson Velloso. Curiosamente, uma nova tradução de *Black Boy*, publicada em 1993 pela editora Espaço e Tempo, manteve o título original com o subtítulo “infância e juventude de um negro americano”.

O escritor afro-americano com maior número de traduções publicadas no Brasil é Chester Himes, seguido de perto por James Baldwin. Himes, da mesma forma que Baldwin e Wright, faz parte do grupo de escritores norte-americanos auto-exilados na França a partir da década de 20. Um número significativo de seus romances foi publicado primeiramente em francês, em especial os romances do ciclo “Harlem Police Novels”, pelos quais o autor é mais conhecido. Dessa série, quatro títulos foram publicados no Brasil, um na década de 60, seu primeiro título publicado no Brasil, e três outros na década de 80. Outro três romances do autor foram publicados. Um deles, *O primitivo*, publicado em 1968, aproveitava o texto da edição portuguesa, com “adaptação para a grafia brasileira” feita por Luís de Meneses Nazaré e seria republicado em 1975, com nova tradução e “revisão de tradução” de Cassandra Rios. Uma leitura superficial das duas versões indica claramente possibilidades fascinantes para um estudo comparado.

James Baldwin é um dos mais famosos escritores afro-americanos publicados no em nosso país. Sua obra em edições brasileiras inclui não só romances,⁷ mas também ensaio, entrevistas e, até onde esta pes-

⁷ Um deles, e talvez o mais conhecido, *Giovanni's Room*, foi publicado por três editoras diferentes: Civilização Brasileira (1967), Abril Cultural (1981) e Rocco (1984).

quiza pôde averiguar, uma das únicas peças teatrais de um autor afro-americano, o texto de *The Amen Corner*, publicado pela Lidador em 1972, com tradução de Aldomar Conrado. Essa edição, além do texto integral da peça, apresenta também uma introdução do autor.

Um dos exemplos mais interessantes do sucesso de um autor afro-americano no Brasil é o de Alex Haley. Jornalista profissional, Haley foi co-autor da famosa *Autobiografia de Malcolm X*, importante documento sobre a vida e as idéias de um dos mais importantes líderes negros norte-americanos. No entanto, seu sucesso brasileiro se deve à tradução do romance histórico *Roots*, de 1976. A publicação dessa obra em edição brasileira seguiu-se ao enorme sucesso de público da minisérie televisiva. Traduzido por A. B. Pinheiro de Lemos, com o título de *Negras Raízes*, a obra de Haley impulsionou a pesquisa histórica sobre as comunidades negras nos EUA. Curiosamente, os resultados desses estudos incumbiram-se de mostrar diversas imprecisões históricas do romance. A edição brasileira, publicada em provavelmente em 1977, traz uma das primeiras tentativas de posicionamento diante das questões suscitadas pelo uso do “Black English” e os possíveis desafios que a tradução desse uso acarreta. Em sua “Nota do Tradutor”, Pinheiro de Lemos afirma ter resistido “à tentação de fazer uma adaptação da pronúncia dos negros americanos para o português”. Apresentando algumas justificativas questionáveis e, às vezes, contraditórias, sobre suas opções, o tradutor encerra a nota afirmando que o conjunto de sua tradução corria “os riscos de uma adaptação exagerada que poderia *trair o espírito do original e as intenções do autor.*”⁸

⁸ “Nota do Tradutor”, in Alex Haley, *Negras raízes*. Trad. A. B. Pinheiro de Lemos. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1977(?), grifo meu.

As escritoras negras também têm um espaço significativo entre as traduções de obras de autores afro-americanos no Brasil, pelo menos em termos quantitativos. Dez títulos foram traduzidos, até o momento de redação deste artigo, todos eles de autoras consagradas: Alice Walker (cinco livros), Toni Morrison (quatro) e Maya Angelou (um).

Entre as obras de Walker encontra-se o romance *The Color Purple*, 1982, que chegou até nós quatro anos depois de seu lançamento norte-americano, em excelente trabalho conjunto das tradutoras Peg Bodelson, Betúlia Machado e Maria José Silveira. O texto de *A Cor Púrpura* traz diversas tentativas bem-sucedidas de traduzir as especificidades lingüísticas do “Black English”, em uma clara demonstração de ousadia tradutória e das vantagens de se entregar às “tentações”, contrariando a “castidade” advogada por Pinheiro de Lemos.

Esse romance de Walker, que lhe valeu o prêmio Pulitzer, o National Book Award e o American Book Award, tornou-se mundialmente famoso por sua versão cinematográfica dirigida por Steven Spielberg e lançada em 1985. O sucesso do filme foi, sem dúvida, um fator relevante para a publicação no Brasil não só desse livro, mas também de outros títulos da autora. Nesse sentido, vale ressaltar a riqueza de possibilidades apresentadas por estudos comparativos entre o texto de legendas ou dublagem em português e o texto da edição brasileira, o que poderia ser feito não só com *A Cor Púrpura*, mas com diversas outras versões cinematográficas baseadas em romances de autores afro-americanos que apresentam traduções brasileiras.⁹

⁹ Outro caso seria o romance *O diabo vestia azul*, de Walter Mosley, que recebeu uma versão cinematográfica em 1995, dirigida por Carl Franklin e disponível em vídeo.

III. AUTOBIOGRAFIAS E ENSAIOS

Entre as obras que inseri neste sub-item encontra-se o título que provavelmente representa o primeiro texto de um autor afro-americano publicado no Brasil. Trata-se de *Up from the Slavery*, autobiografia do educador afro-americano Booker T. Washington e publicado em 1901. A edição brasileira, em tradução de Graciliano Ramos, foi publicada pela Companhia Editora Nacional em 1940, ou seja, um ano antes do romance de Wright mencionado na seção I deste trabalho.

Ainda entre os textos autobiográficos publicados em nosso país, os leitores podem encontrar *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, de autoria do influente líder negro e que contou com a colaboração de Alex Haley (cujo nome é citado na capa como “autor de *Negras Raízes*). A primeira edição brasileira, em tradução de A. B. Pinheiro de Lemos pela Editora Record, foi publicada provavelmente em 1988, possivelmente aproveitando as comemorações dos cem anos de abolição da escravatura no Brasil, momento em que o mercado editorial brasileiro lançou diversos títulos sobre cultura negra em geral. Essa tradução apresenta uma característica, no mínimo, curiosa: o uso constante das palavras “preto” e “preta”, como adjetivos ou substantivos, para designar os afro-americanos ou o universo cultural a eles associado: “raça preta”, “o homem preto mais controverso do mundo” (referência a Marcus Garvey), “o Continente Preto, a África”, “uma concentração pacífica de 100 mil pretos”.¹⁰

Langston Hughes também teve sua autobiografia publicada no Brasil, *The Big Sea*, original de 1940, saiu em edição brasileira pela Editora

¹⁰ In Malcolm X (com a colaboração de Alex Haley), *Autobiografia de Malcolm X*. Trad. A. B. Pinheiro de Lemos. Rio de Janeiro: Record, s.d., p. 15, 194, 323 *passim*.

Vitória em 1944. Nenhuma das fontes que consultei apresentavam o nome do tradutor. A julgar pela data de publicação no Brasil, provavelmente o nome do tradutor não foi incluído na edição, em mais um caso flagrante de “invisibilidade”.

Hughes também teve publicada no Brasil sua coletânea de pequenas biografias intitulada *Famous American Negroes*, de 1953. Lançada aqui em 1957 sob o título *Negros Famosos da América do Norte*, com tradução de Helena R. Gandelman e Maria Helena Muns, a publicação dessa obra contou com os auspícios do USIS, que comprou os direitos de tradução, o que favoreceu a existência de edições em várias outras línguas, como o árabe, o bengali, o francês e o hindi.¹¹

A ensaística afro-americana é o gênero de publicações menos representado no Brasil. Embora contando com alguns nomes bastante significativos, como o historiador John Hope Franklin, o teórico da literatura Henry Louis Gates, Jr., e, mais recentemente, o filósofo Cornell West, a produção teórica acadêmica dos últimos dez anos, variada e de excelente qualidade, parece não despertar o interesse dos editores brasileiros. Henry Louis Gates, por exemplo, que pode ser considerado um dos mais importantes teóricos afro-americanos das últimas duas décadas, tem um único texto publicado no Brasil, em uma coletânea de autores que abordam questões relacionadas, em termos gerais, ao Pós-Modernismo. Seu ensaio, “The blackness of blackness: a critic of the sign and the Signifying Monkey”, publicado originalmente em *Black Literature & Literary Theory*, de 1984, recebeu tradução brasileira de Cristina Cavalcanti, com a seguinte indicação logo à primeira página: “Este artigo é aqui apresentado de forma resumida”. Por “forma resumida” entenda-se uma série de cortes ao texto original. Não há, obviam-

¹¹ Cf. Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, Volume II: 1941-1967 – I Dream a World. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 261, 283.

mente, qualquer justificativa para essa “edição” do ensaio de Gates, mas pode-se aventar a hipótese de “diminuição para inclusão”, tendo em vista a extensão do original.

Outro caso curioso é o da obra *Blues People*, do poeta, dramaturgo e ensaísta Imamu Amiri Baraka (que à época ainda publicava usando seu nome anglo-americano LeRoi Jones). Esta obra, um excelente estudo sócio-histórico sobre o desenvolvimento do *blues* como forma musical especificamente afro-americana, foi publicado sob o título de *O jazz e sua influência na cultura americana*. Assim, o leitor brasileiro compraria gato por lebre provavelmente porque os editores julgaram que um livro sobre *blues*, forma musical de divulgação ainda restrita no Brasil à época do lançamento do livro (1963), não teria tanto apelo comercial quanto uma obra sobre o *jazz*.

CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

Este trabalho teve por objetivo esboçar um panorama geral da presença de autores afro-americanos no Brasil pela via de suas obras traduzidas. Acredito ter reunido aqui algumas informações relevantes para alavancar pesquisas interessantes e necessárias para a área de Estudos da Tradução. Como já mencionei, uma questão riquíssima e que merece a atenção dos estudiosos é a análise das formas lingüísticas encontradas pelos tradutores para expressar (ou, pelo menos, tentar expressar) as particularidades do “Black English”. da mesma forma, a ausência da tentativa de buscar essa expressão em português pode ser um importante indicativo sobre posturas tradutórias (ou, às vezes, editoriais) específicas, que evitem assimilações, aclimações, ou qualquer tipo de transformação do texto original.

As informações aqui contidas também deverão ser de valia para os pesquisadores que transitam pela área da Recepção. Nesse sentido, uma trilha instigante seria a avaliação das resenhas jornalísticas recebidas por alguns dos textos aqui citados. Escrevo “alguns” porque boa parte das obras aqui elencadas passaram completamente despercebidas da mídia jornalística, com a possível exceção daqueles autores que conseguiram furar o bloqueio do cânone literário norte-americano, como Langston Hughes, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker e Richard Wright.

Por fim, parece-me importante afirmar minha consciência diante do caráter provisório da bibliografia que ora apresento. As eventuais ausências certamente derivam de falhas no processo da “caça ao texto” por mim empreendida. Pensando-se nos “pássaros voando” proverbiais, resta apenas dizer que esta pesquisa continua. Ainda assim, o que temos nas mãos hoje representa material rico e diversificado, que poderá entreter e instigar, por um certo tempo, estudiosos provenientes de diversos territórios do mundo das Letras.

BIBLIOGRAFIA PROVISÓRIA DE AUTORES AFRO-AMERICANOS EM TRADUÇÕES BRASILEIRAS

Os títulos foram ordenados pelos três gêneros apresentados no texto, em ordem alfabética por autor, com ordem crescente de datas para as edições brasileiras. A letra *c* antes do ano da edição brasileira indica data estimada de publicação. Os títulos marcados com * receberam edições posteriores à indicada.

I. POESIA

KREYS, K. S. (Org.) *Quingumbo: Nova poesia norte-americana*. São Paulo: Escrita, s.d. (Edição bilíngüe, contém os poemas “The Dance”, “Sex, Like Desire” e “A Poem for Black Hearts”, de Leroi Jones, os dois primeiros traduzidos por Ítalo Moriconi Jr., e o último por José Carlos Limeira Marinho Santos).

MARQUES, O. (Org. e Trad.) *O livro de ouro da poesia de língua inglesa*. Rio de Janeiro: Tecnoprint, s.d. (Edição bilíngüe, contém os seguintes poemas: “The Black Mammy” e “To America”, de James Weldon Johnson; “If We Must Die” e “America”, de Claude McKay; “Let America Be America Again”, “I, Too, Sing America” e “Cross”, de Langston Hughes; “Yet Do I Marvel” e “Incident”, de Countee Cullen)

MARQUES, O. (Org.) *O livro de ouro da poesia dos Estados Unidos*. Rio de Janeiro: Tecnoprint, s.d. (Edição bilíngüe, contém os seguintes poemas: de Langston Hughes, “I, Too, Sing America”, traduzido por Orígenes Lessa, “Jazzonia”, traduzido por Guilherme de Almeida, e “The Negro”, traduzido por Domingos Carvalho da Silva; de Countee Cullen, “Incident”, traduzido por Ribeiro Couto, “A Brown Girl Dead” e “A Lady I Know”, ambos traduzidos por Guilherme de Almeida)

NUNES, C. *Norte-americanos*. São Paulo: Conselho estadual de Cultura, 1970 1970. (No ensaio intitulado “Poetas negros dos Estados Unidos”, o autor apresenta traduções para os seguintes poemas: de James Corrothers, “At the Closed Gate of Justice” (incompleto); de Langston Hughes, “Breath of a Rose”, “I, Too, Sing América”, “Negro”, “Minstrel Man”; de Countee Cullen, “Incident”.)

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Girl” e “The Negro”, de Langston Hughes; “We Wear the Mask”, de Paul Lawrence Dunbar; “No Images”, de Waring Cuney. A antologia contém ainda os seguintes poemas, sem os textos originais: “Poema”, de Gladys May Casely Hayford; “Poema” e “Negra”, de Lewis Alexander; “Poema”, de George Marion McCellan; “Sombra”, de Richard Bruce; e “Poema”, de Waring Cuney)

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