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APRESENTAÇÃO

Oferecemos à comunidade universitária e aos estudiosos em geral o quinto número da revista Estudos Germânicos.

Desta forma estamos dando continuidade à divulgação das pesquisas dos professores do Departamento de Letras Germânicas e dos alunos do Curso de Pós-Graduação em Letras da UFMG, assim como abrindo espaço para docentes de outras Instituições.

Agradecemos ao Consulado Geral da República Federal da Alemanha no Rio de Janeiro e ao Goethe Institut de Belo Horizonte pelo apoio financeiro que tornou possível essa publicação.

Fazemos votos de que a dotação orçamentária para a Educação e Pesquisa seja ampliada nos próximos anos, de modo que os estudos humanísticos se expandam significativamente.

Agradecemos, ainda, a contribuição de todos os autores, assim como os serviços de datilografia de Marilda Valéria Santos Azevedo, Secretária da Faculdade de Letras.

Thomas Laborie Burns

Veronika Benn-Ibler

THE WINDINGS OF DESTINY: The Tribal Image in Edith Wharton's
THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

Aimara da Cunha Resende

"There are moments when a man's imagination, so easily subdued to what it lives in, suddenly rises above its darkly level and surveys the long windings of destiny. Archer hung there and wondered..."¹

To analyse Edith Wharton's The Age of Innocence, two aspects must be taken into account: the obvious delineation of group behaviour in the New York society of the end of the nineteenth century, with its codes and rituals; and its subtler aspects of primitive attitudes and values, around which the author's own traditional beliefs play, perhaps, a very important part. In this study I will try to consider both though it is my aim to deal more deeply with the latter. I am well aware that very often the two levels are intermixed and the unconscious rises above the superficial narration.

Edith Wharton pictures the social system as a strong net of conventions that keeps the group together and strengthens the links among the members of the families of which New York FAMILY is made up. As Radcliffe Brown puts it:

Os valores sociais vigentes numa sociedade pri_

mitiva são mantidos mediante sua expressão nos costumes rituais ou cerimoniais. ²

This is true of the Mingotts, the Van der Luydens, the Selfridge Merrys, the Archers, the Wellands, and everybody in "the tribe", as she so often calls them in her novel. They follow the rites of "good form" blindly. They had their especial arrays to go out; women must wear their bridal dresses twice or three times in the first year following their wedding, just as they are expected to put on "proper" clothes when dining at home. Rich young men are not supposed to work hard, though they go into some profession — chiefly law — because it is "proper." They meet at their club to talk over the same subjects and are not allowed to go into politics, for propriety so forbids: "a gentleman couldn't go into politics" (p. 123). Marriage, as in ancient tribes, is a matter of material and social interests associated. It means an interchange of women (or men) and family possessions. Young ladies are unconsciously led to being "nice" so as to become perfectly controlling wives. They don't think; they keep on fulfilling their tasks as preservers of the tribal rites. This kind of life is empty but nobody notices it. People in the small aristocratic group go about their acquired pleasures and obligations in the same way savages follow the ever-renewed rites of religion and cyclic ceremonies: the winter Race Cup of the Beauforts; the annual Opera nights at the Academy; the Church Service on Sundays; the China and Silver ware for

great dinners with a hired chef, Roman punch and menus on gilt-edged cards; the flowers that young men send every day to their betrothed. These and every other detail prescribed and respected by society do not differ much from the unlearned behaviour of the primitive. Edith Wharton shows and criticizes that, though she is not entirely rid of its charm. The New York aristocracy that she lively recreates is the group where nobody can be authentic, where the goddess "Form" presides over everything and the unpleasant must be thoroughly ignored and avoided. Rites are performed with untainted perfection in the same way as the respect for the ancestors and the important elders (such as old Catherine Mingott and the Van der Luydens), is paid humbly and blindly in a state close to awe. She sees that society critically though with some sort of tenderness for the lost peace of the close of last century:

In reality they all lived in a kind of hieroglyphic world, where the real thing was never said or done or even thought, but only represented by a set of arbitrary signs. (p.42)

'... if we don't all stand together, there'll be no such thing as Society left.' (p. 48)

Youngsters are brought up to preserve the settled values of their ancestors, without even questioning them. They grow up and get married so as to rear their own children in such a way that the latter will duplicate the

puppets into which their parents, too, have been made. Men believe what they have been told about the ideal wife and perfect domesticity; they get married and are expected to do "their duty," to be loyal and keep up with the normal flow of life in their homes. Girls worry about the right clothes for every social event, put on placid attitudes that help ignore the unpleasant, learn how to rule over their homely kingdom and wear the unchangeable mask of undisturbed balance and happiness. Archer, too, has been taught to obey the social laws and accept that sort of life. But he sometimes feels that it is not quite what he wants. He is fond of May but he would like her to have her independent thoughts. So he tries to make her read and come in contact with art. He knows that their world is false but he has been thoroughly conditioned by it and is unable to change its values. The only thing is to keep pretending and feel dead:

That terrifying product of the social system he belonged to and believed in, the young girl who knew nothing and expected everything, looked back at him like a stranger through May Welland's familiar picture. (p. 40)

Conformity to the discipline of a small society had become almost his second nature. (p. 325)

Archer's New York is the closed group where the "foreigner" is not allowed and if he or she succeeds in entering there, it can only be by the hands of one of the

half-sacred idols. (That is how Beaufort manages to become one of them). People in the separate "clans" exchange their children so that the "tribe" remains composed of the same families. And these families will get together whenever it is necessary to back up their relatives. They have realized that their strength lies in their union and that their "Society" will be maintained only by their sticking to the rites and beliefs which the "initiated" are allowed to know and participate in. They cannot and will not intermix with people from other tribes, so as to avoid losing the very springs of their holy group needs and values, as Mrs. Archer states:

'... we belong here, and people should respect our ways when they come among us.' (p. 91)

Archer, too,

... thanked heaven that he was a New Yorker, and about to ally himself with one of his own kind.
(p. 29)

Life for them means simply being equal to the other members of the tribe. Marriage is a succession of dual submissive behaviour; it lacks communication except when communicating is necessary for tribal treasures to be saved. The individual is not important; it is the tribe that matters. When man and woman get together they have to go through the same sacrificial rites their ancestors have

performed. And everybody accepts that willingly, without questioning their own separate yearnings; if there are dreams they must remain in a dark corner of the soul while the faces evince the social smiles of those who are absolutely able to avoid "the unpleasant" because their society will never admit of individual feelings. That aristocratic place symbolized by Fifth Avenue means every sign of outward remonstrance just as it points out to you the degrees people are allowed to possess. Men and women belong in their clans and receive the respect due to their rank. They follow unconsciously the dogmas of their cult even though these dogmas go side by side with slavery to the social code.

Ellen Olenska, though a Mingott, is a "foreigner" and as such she realizes that that heaven is but the hell of pretences:

'Does no one want to know the truth here, Mr. Archer? The real loneliness is living among all these kind people who only ask one to pretend.'

(p. 75)

She can detect what lies beneath the surface of joyful acceptances:

'You never did ask each other anything, did you? And you never told each other anything! You just sat and watched each other, and guessed at what was going on underneath.'

(p. 359)

If someone like Ellen tries to shake the roots of society, he or she will absolutely be either banished or ignored — the members of the tribe will sacrifice him or her coldly and tacitly.

One aspect in The Age of Innocence cannot be passed by; and that is the author's intention of creating an Olympus-like New York. There is the appearance of peace and trust. Even the environment is that of Greek mythology, with the green fields, the special dinners with Jupiter/Van-der-Luyden presiding over them or May/Diana casting her arrow towards her goal. And Archer the hero is there, daring to love a dark goddess come from the unknown, a goddess who has looked the Gordon in the eye and acquired the wisdom owned by immortals only. May says that Countess Olenska seems to understand everything; and she does. On Olympus the gods would not permit any interference with their designs — in New York, the High Society will not allow anybody to go against their moral principles. When it comes to deciding between a member of the clan and a social tribute not paid, the sacrifice is certain: the infractor must be smitten. When the Beauforts affront the established financial morals, they die to the group. Old Catherine will not have their names spoken before her and society will never forgive them despite the fact that the parties they used to offer can never be substituted. And when Archer and Ellen fall in love with each other the whole tribe contrives to banish the "foreign" goddess and gather about the weak relative (May) whose domestic sanctuary has to be preserved at all costs:

... he saw all the harmless-looking people engaged upon May's canvass-backs as a band of dumb conspirators, and himself and the pale woman on his right as the centre of their conspiracy. (p. 338)

The age of innocence is the lost unconscious period of old New York which, to Edith Wharton, means much more than an object for criticism. She seems to miss the darkness synonymous with innocence and she betrays her tenderness despite the irony that she pours forth in her novel.

The rituals of the season, such as summer in Newport and winter full of balls and Opera nights, are sacredly performed and the same is true of other social tributes. The wedding-ring, the betrothal visits, the cigars in the library after dinner, the parading of gentlemen before the guest of honour, all of them are beautifully summarized as rituals in the chapter about Archer's and May's nuptials. That is one of the moments when the reader feels the intermixing of the two levels of tribal images — the obvious one, with Mrs. Wharton's allusion to sacred and everlasting ceremonies, and the deeper one, with Archer as the hero who has had a chance to be enlightened but who nevertheless remains bound, on account of his human condition, by the tribal chains which reflect his own destiny as a mythical hero: he has to endure suffering and bondage for the renewal of earthly life.

At this point I turn to the deep level of the novel. But before my doing so let us have a general look at some

aspects of tribal images. The first thing to attract one's attention is the word myth. Could The Age of Innocence be lined up with the primitive myths? I would say it could. The myth is a sequential story that seeks to organize chaos into accepted reality. To Mircea Eliade it provides models for human behaviour and confers significance and values to human life:

... os mitos descrevem as diversas, e algumas vezes dramáticas, irrupções do sagrado (ou do sobrenatural) no Mundo. É essa irrupção do sagrado que realmente fundamenta o Mundo e o converte no que é hoje. ³

The mythical hero is doomed to live between two realities: the worldly one and the one come from some remote past (which is felt as a dream by mankind). Throughout the sequence of events he has the apprehension of time as being simultaneously irrevocable (earthly) and ever renewed (primordial, indefinite, reversible), the sacred time. In his Le mythe de L'éternel retour⁴, Eliade states that the world was supposed by the primitive to have cyclic phases of chaos followed by renewal, and that renewal was achieved through the coming together of gods and man. But after the new cycle begins, the hero who has helped the gods recreate human life is not allowed to keep company with the deities. In the novel here studied the hero — Newland Archer — gets to communicate and come together with the *foreign goddess* who has brought chaos to the tribal life —

Ellen Olenska — but he is not able to prevail over his fate, as she won't have him leave his clan to return with her to her place beyond the sea; he remains in the world of human reality, but still has glimpses of the dreamland where his feelings for the goddess keep burning.

... once more Archer became aware of having been adrift far off in the unknown. What was it that had sent him there, he wondered? (p. 186)

... and suddenly the same black abyss yawned before him and he felt himself sinking into it, deeper and deeper in. (p. 187)

Newland experiences thus two kinds of reality:

- a) social: expressing the existing relationship between diverse aspects of social life and cultural codes;
- b) natural: reflecting the principles of the workings of the mind.

This double existence is in itself, according to Bradcock, the structure of myth.⁵

The second point to be considered is the formation and maintenance of the tribes. To Lévi-Strauss⁶ the tribes are formed from the inter-relationship of clans. They are limited to their members and won't accept people from other groups. As he puts it, in As Estruturas Elementares do Parentesco,

... as sociedades primitivas fixam as fronteiras

da humanidade nos limites do grupo tribal, fora do qual elas não vêm senão estranhos, isto é, sub-homens sujos e grosseiros, talvez mesmo não homens: feras perigosas ou fantasmas.⁷

As it has been already pointed out that was the behaviour of the clans, in The Age of Innocence, towards the "foreigners," "people who wrote" and other artists. To the French anthropologist the individual was formed according to his social position through conditioning experiences of action and self-denial. There are opposing structures of aggression and conciliation, war and peace, good and evil, order and disorder. As the events in Mrs. Wharton's novel take place, one is aware of the intermingling of the above mentioned oppositions. Ellen Olenska is subject to different attitudes from her relatives as she shakes the roots of their limited universe. They back her up when she comes from Europe but they manage to send her back after a period when they overtly ignore her presence. Some people try to avoid her at first, to crowd around her later on. They are good to her, and they make her suffer.

The origin of the tribe seems to rest on the system of marriages inside the clans. One has, then, an endogamic system (the tribe) made of an exogamic one (the clans). Lévi-Strauss points out that cousins get married so as to preserve the possession of lands and cattle as well as their original values:

Os casamentos entre as castas conduzem à consti-

tuição de novas castas e ao desenvolvimento do modelo inicial.⁸

To Radcliffe Brown,⁹ the essential characteristic of primitive society is the regulation of behaviour as the result of clan fixed patterns of conduct. The tribe thus constituted survives rigidly by observing all outward remonstrations of solidarity and social obligations. The cyclic rituals are rigorously performed so as to reassure the family gods of their worshippers' fidelity and to renew their blessings in order to maintain the security that men need, and retain the people's stability in what concerns living. Lévi-Strauss analyses some myths of American tribes in which these rites are performed and situations return to normality through the interference of a mediator who is very often half-god and half-man. This mediator, propped by human help and sacred symbols, can counteract evil and see the hero to his success, or he may help the gods in their penetration among men. I see the Van der Luydens as this kind of mediator. Mr. Van der Luyden opens the doors of the tribe to the *foreign* Countess Olenska. He is feared and respected and nobody dares to find any fault with him except Ellen, who can speak freely of their house and its coldness, because she does not belong to those people's limited circle, and comes from beyond the sea (a universal symbol for the unknown). In the moment of her departure Mr. Van der Luyden remains in town, so as to support the group in their final decision and he is the one who (very meaningfully) takes her away from Newland's view for good,

after the Archers' farewell dinner. The old man is really above the other mortals of the tribe and can dispense justice, as he does when asked to support Ellen on her arrival:

There was a silence during which the tick of the monumental ormolu clock on the white marble mantelpiece grew as loud as the boom of a minute-gun. Archer contemplated with awe the two slender faded figures, seated side by side in a kind of vice-regal rigidity, mouth-pieces of some remote ancestral authority which fate compelled them to wield, when they would so much rather have lived in simplicity and seclusion, digging invisible weeds out of the perfect lawns of Skuytercliff, and playing Patience together in the evenings. (p. 52)

The Countess, as the divine orphan come to bewilder and then reorganize the world, is helped by Mr. Van der Luyden, while she is necessary for the development of the myth:

She had Beaufort at her feet, Mr. Van der Luyden hovering above her like a protecting deity... (p. 63)

And it is at Skuytercliff that Ellen and Newland can communicate deeply for the first time.

To Lévi-Strauss and others the concept of marriage was closely linked to the existing relationship among the members of the family, in primitive tribes. Men married their

cousins on their mothers' side but were not allowed to marry their cousins on their fathers' side or vice-versa; there was formed, then, either the matriarchal or the patriarchal society. As they got married they moved to their new clan and started their lives with what the Romans called IUS IN PERSONAM (he or she had rights and duties towards his/her clan) and IUS IN REM (all the other people in the clan had duties towards that person). In matriarchies, when a young man married in the clan, he usually had the IUS IN PERSONAM but never IUS IN REM. His rights IN REM remained in the group he had come from. He was responsible for the birth rate but had no prominent rôle in the family, though he was very often loved by his wife and children and might become an object of affection with them. The main decisions were made by the women, not by the men. In The Age of Innocence matriarchy is quite obvious. The Mingott clan is ruled over by "cunning" old Catherine; in the beginning of the book she is represented at the Academy by her daughter and her sister-in-law. In the Welland family the father is a dismal figure while mother and daughter govern the house and feel responsible for the males in the "clan." This is clearly put by Edith Wharton as can be seen from the following instances:

Mr. Welland was a mild and silent man, with no opinions but with many habits. (p. 116)

Mrs. Welland says:

'Having an invalid to care for, I have to keep my mind bright and happy.' (p. 145),

though Mr. Welland is no invalid. Little by little May also assumes her ruling position in her new home; Archer realizes that

She became the tutelary divinity of all his old traditions and reverences. (p. 197)

When May tells Archer of her decision to offer Ellen a farewell dinner and as he tries to avoid it, she quite decisively states her having made up her mind:

'A dinner — why?' he interrogated.
Her colour rose. 'But you like Ellen — I thought you'd be pleased.'
'It's awfully nice — your putting it in that way. I really don't see —'
'I mean to do it, Newland, she said, quietly rising and going to her desk. 'Here are the invitations all written. Mother helped me — she agrees that we ought to.' She paused, embarrassed and yet smiling, and Archer suddenly saw before him the embodied image of the Family. 'Oh, all right', he said, staring with unseeing eyes at the list of guests that she had put in his hand. (p. 335)

Also Mrs. Archer, who loved her son, carefully looking after him, is the one to say the decisive words in almost everything at home; one sees, for instance, that the library, in the

Archers',

was the only room in the house where Mrs. Archer allowed smoking. (p. 2)

After all, the clans and consequently the tribe in the novel, constitute a perfect matriarchy:

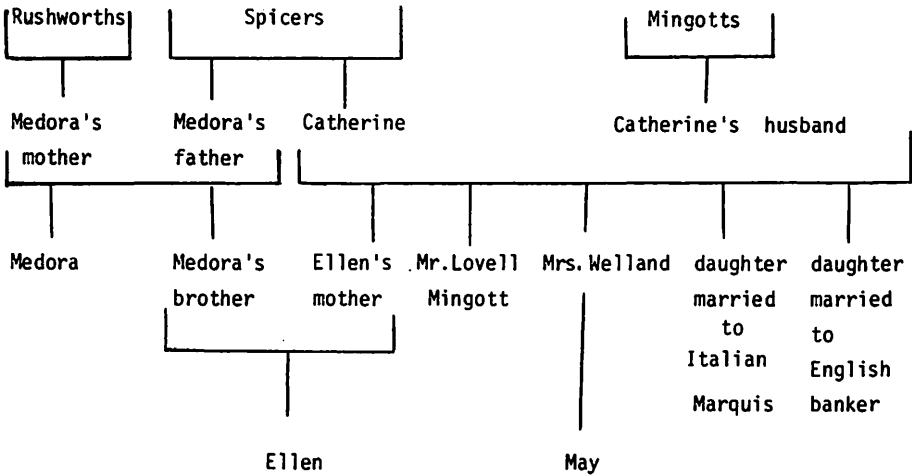
Archer felt himself oppressed by this creation of factitious purity, so cunningly manufactured by a conspiracy of mothers and aunts and long-dead ancestresses... (p. 43)

The book delineates the family branches and in it most characters are related to the two main groups which are on their turn inter-related themselves. The two main stems of the social aristocracy in Newland Archer's New York are:

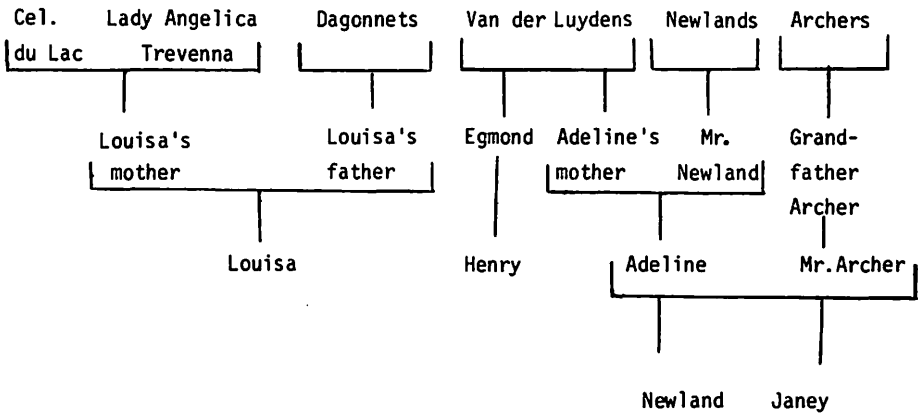
- a) The Mingotts and Masons (who cared for food, clothes and money)
- b) The Archer — Newland — Van der Luydens (who loved travelling, horticulture and reading)

The trees would be as follows:

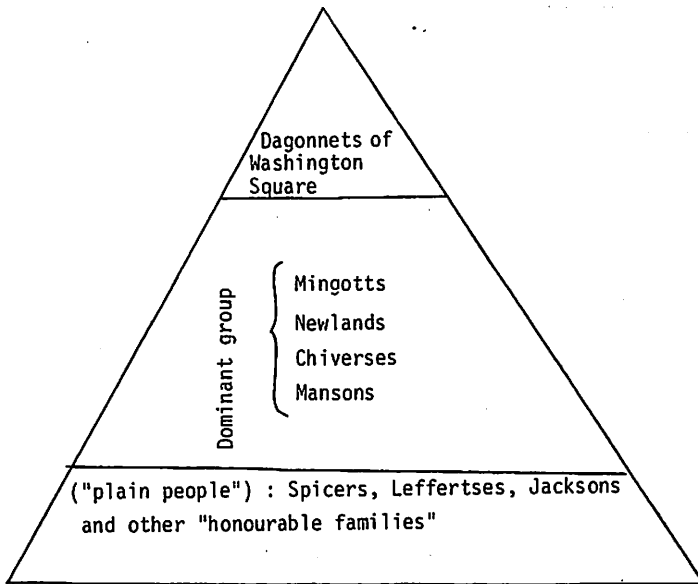
1.



2.



The great New York aristocratic tribe was, as Mrs. Archer used to say, formed by a triangle:



Ellen Olenska is sent into this closed tribe, where really she has never belonged, in order to shake it and start renewal. Ellen is the "dark lady" (as opposed to May who, Diana-like and unintelligent, is presented from beginning to end dressed in white, with her lovely blond hair brightened by the light of the environment) coming from the unknown and able to see beyond the common sight:

Evidently, she was always going to understand;
she was always going to say the right thing.

(p. 22)

... he was once more conscious of the curious way in which she reversed his values, and of the need of thinking himself into conditions incredibly different from any that he knew if he were to be of use in her present difficulty. (p. 102)

Once she says to him:

'I want to cast off all my old life, to become just like everybody else'.

Archer reddened. 'You'll never be like everybody else', he said. (p. 106)

In the mythical structure of the novel Ellen is the foreign goddess sent to re-establish the order, though at first she seems to bring about chaos. She is the divine orphan (as a matter of fact she is an orphan, in the book), the wandering deity who falls in love with a mortal. In myths of origins divine orphans appear in order to create the world from chaos:

El niño primordial, el divino niño de los mitos de los orígenes, el huérfano abandonado que vive la primera hora del mundo, afrenta precisamente (los) peligros y escucha (las) voces de la naturaleza. Ante él, privado de padre y madre, la naturaleza es simultáneamente maternal y peligrosa, auxiliadora y mortal. Esta criatura goza de excepcionales poderes sobre las fuerzas naturales, pero está también expuesta a toda suerte de amenazas: es Dionísio niño, que manda

a las fieras y a las potencias de la metamorphosis, pero que puede ser insidiado por los Titanes.¹⁰

Ellen comes to New York after having been a long time in lands beyond the sea. She seems to have some sort of magic power which makes everybody, even the mediator, surrender to her. Wherever she goes, her dark, natural being radiates warmth and enlightenment. Symbolically enough it is by the fire that she and Archer are able to see deep into each other's souls. Her little house in a forbidden place — West Twenty-third Street, where dress-makers, bird-stuffers and "people who wrote" are her neighbours — has that mystical atmosphere of the unfamiliar... She has the fire lit inside her temple and is offered its ritual:

... and a log broke in two and sent up a shower of sparks. The whole hushed and brooding room seemed to be waiting silently with Archer. (p.109)

When Archer is on the verge of asking Ellen to be his life's companion and is ready to leave his betrothed, Ellen seems to commune deeply with the fire:

Madame Olenska leaned toward the fire and gazed into it with fixed eyes. (p. 168)

She is the goddess who has lived since the primeval times; who has been, is and will ever be. Here again the mythical

structure is clearly set. It is a dual characteristic of myths to be irrevocable (the present) and reversible (the past), as has already been said. In The Age of Innocence the reader is aware that Ellen is someone living in the last decades of the nineteenth century but she is simultaneously from a far away past. Once in her little house, Newland feels that "she looked haggard and almost old" (p. 171). And she confesses to him, in a mixture of real present being and remote entity, as pointed out before, her wish (unattainable) of casting off her former self, and this she says, "looking away from him into remote dark distances" (p. 106). As a matter of fact, she had already put that to him, when they first met, at the Academy, and Archer talked of her having been away for a long time; her reply then was:

'Oh, centuries and centuries; so long, that I'm sure I'm dead and buried, and this dear old place is heaven'.(p. 15)

Later on, at the Van der Luydens' dinner, Archer notices that

... the Countess Olenska was the only young woman at the dinner; yet, as Archer scanned the smooth plump elderly faces between their necklaces and towering ostrich feathers, they struck him as curiously immature compared with hers. It frightened him to think what must have gone to the making of her eyes. (p. 60)

Finally, in Boston, when Newland is trying to see the Countess, he experiences the paradoxical sensation of living in the timeless. He knows he is alive and in Boston, but he feels closer to his goddess, and that nearness brings back to him, unconsciously, perhaps, the certainty of his living at that same hour in distant primeval times. Here the mythical structure is quite clear and the hero is seen throughout his experience, reversing the ages so as to live once more the moments that had been essential in his ancestors' existence:

It was the same world, after all, though he had such a queer sense of having slipped through the meshes of time and space. (p. 231)

The mythical hero goes through different moments of success and failure, happiness and suffering, as he moves circularly from — to his native land. In many myths all around the world, the hero's travellings can be found and they are structurally very similar. The human hero is supported by different elements both in his tribe and in the "foreign" kingdoms of the unknown. But he will finally settle down as a common human being, or a stone, or a tree, or any other natural element. See, for instance, Lévi-Strauss's "A Gesta de Asdival"¹¹ : Asdival's wanderings finally take him back to his tribe, where he is turned into stone. He was born of a heavenly father, a fact which gives him his extra-terrene features. He marries a goddess and as he does not belong in her world but in his tribe, he must come back to

it after going through victories and few defeats. In the end he is made not to act any more.) A closer look at Newland Archer's trips and life will show great resemblance to this and other myths — he also moves from New York in search of his goddess-love, to go back again; he has victories and defeats within his group (he is alternately Ellen's celebrated champion and lover left to oblivion by the "tribe"). He realizes more than once that he and the Countess don't belong in the same world:

... there they were, close together, and shut in; yet so chained to their separate destinies that they might as well have been half the world apart. (p. 245)

... he could only brood on the mystery of their remoteness and their proximity, which seemed to be symbolised by the fact of their sitting so close to each other, and yet being unable to see each other's faces. (p. 289)

He falls into various swirls of consciousness as if to realize that he was born to be the father of the new generation to come after the chaos he has helped start, though he is "... by nature a contemplative and dilettante" (p. 349). And that generation symbolized by Dallas and Fanny Beaufort, renewed, may set up different values and bring about a new Tribe. But he, Newland the hero, and she, Ellen the goddess, are to remain in their separate worlds

after witnessing the strength of his tribe and his Family. They realize that the power coming from the tribal rites will be the defense of the most absolute beliefs of the group (among these and excelling them, unity and the outwardly happy, stable family). The members of the "tribe" are ready to forgive provided that Ellen goes back to her world. In the final pages of the novel Archer is conscious of the tribal strength:

... he saw all the harmless-looking people engaged upon May's canvas-backs as a band of dumb conspirators, and himself and the pale woman on his right as the centre of their conspiracy. And then it came over him, in a vast flash made up of many broken gleams, that to all of them he and Madame Olenska were lovers, lovers in the extreme sense peculiar to "foreign" vocabularies. He guessed himself to have been, for months, the centre of countless silently observing eyes and patiently listening ears, he understood that, by means as yet unknown to him, the separation between himself and the partner of his guilt had been achieved, and that now the whole tribe had rallied about his wife on the tacit assumption that nobody knew anything, or had ever imagined anything, and that the occasion of the entertainment was simply May Archer's natural desire to take an affectionate leave of her friend and cousin. (p. 338)

How significant it is that their leave-taking is "celebrated" with eating, the long-lived manifestation of mythical worship,

from Homer's narratives to present-day savage offerings, not to say Calvinist American Thanksgiving Day. It was the old New York way of taking life without "effusion of blood": the way of people who dreaded scandal more than disease, who placed decency above courage, and who considered that nothing was more ill-bred than "scenes", except the behaviour of those who gave rise to them. Archer knows for sure that it won't do to struggle against his and Ellen's destiny, as

... one thing in the old New York code was the tribal rally around a kinswoman about to be eliminated from the tribe. (p. 337)

When the book ends Ellen stays in her world beyond and Newland remains apart, unable to move towards her, submissive to his fate. He can remember her and witness the coming up of the new world they have helped to create.

NOTES

¹Edith Wharton, The Age of Innocence (New York: Random House, 1948), p. 355. All quotes here transcribed are from this edition.

²S.R. Radcliffe Brown, Estrutura e Função na Sociedade Primitiva, trans. Nathaniel C. Caixeiro (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes Ltda, 1973), p. 42.

³Mircea Eliade, Mito e Realidade, trans. Pola Civelli (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva S.A., 1972), p. 11.

⁴Mircea Eliade, Le Mythe de l'Éternel Retour (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1975).

⁵C.R. Bradcock, Lévi-Strauss: Estruturalismo e Teoria Sociológica, trans. Maria Isabel da Silva Lopes (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores, 1976).

⁶Claude Lévi-Strauss, O Pensamento Selvagem, trans. Maria Celeste da Costa e Souza and Almir de Oliveira Aguiar (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1976).

⁷Claude Lévi-Strauss, As Estruturas Elementares do Parentesco, trans. Mariano Ferreira, (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes Ltda. 1976), p. 195.

⁸Lévi-Strauss, p. 462.

⁹ Brown, op. cit.

¹⁰ Furio Jesé , Literatura y Mito, trans. Antônio Pigrau Rodriguez (Barcelona: Barral Ed. S.A., 1972), pp. 12-13.

¹¹ Claude Lēvi-Strauss, "Gesta de Asdival", in Mito e Linguagem Social (Rio de Janeiro: Ediçōes Tempo Brasileiro Ltda, 1970), pp. 13-51.

IRONY AND REVERSAL IN MACBETH: THE QUESTION OF AMBIGUITY

Ana Lúcia Almeida Gazolla

"Words, words, they're all we've got to go on."¹ This is how Tom Stoppard, in his revision of Shakespeare's Hamlet, defines the ambiguous character of human experience, which is projected by means of a discourse necessarily subject to various interpretations. A discourse codified by the myths and fictional creations of the community, therefore carrying social and individual features. An enigma which requires the act of decoding, and whose interpretation is charged with Desire.

Theatre, because it continuously confronts the spectator with such a need for decoding implied in Stoppard's text, foregrounds precisely the enigmatic character of our discourse and of human experience itself. It brings into focus the relation between being and appearance, a relation which is ambiguous, fluctuating in each act of speech, carrying a multiplicity of meanings.

Operating basically on the principle of ambiguity, and with irony and reversal its main structural devices, Macbeth thus projects these essential questions, as it deals with the polysemic nature of the discourse and the connection between desire and interpretation.

The ascension of Macbeth to power is in itself

characterized by an irony which makes evident the ambiguity and the illusory character of that power. His trajectory upward is due to his apparent fulfillment of the value codes of his community, but it constitutes in reality a farce, since in the same ascension he is violating, without the knowledge of the group, the very codes he pretends to espouse. At first the saviour of the community, Macbeth will later be seen as an element of pollution. From king to pharmakōs, from friend to enemy, from support to threat, Macbeth is subject to a polarization of readings by the members of the community. This reveals that he is nothing more than a fictional creation of himself and of the social group, thus personifying the double character of human beings. The play, in this way, projects the polarities of the Absolute and the Relative, of the Objective and the Subjective, each thing containing its opposite, and revealing the paradoxical nature of reality.

The act of interpretation — "words, words, they're all we've got to go on" — is required from the characters at every step. Questions are asked, enigmatic answers are offered, the decoding of messages is carried out. From Macbeth's speeches to the opinions formulated by other characters, from his dialogues with the witches and the enigmatic answers given by the apparitions conjured up at his request, from the initial blindness to the gradual insight of the group in relation to the King's acts, everything is used to foreground the ambiguity of words and the relativity of interpretation. The discourse can be used to mask or unmask reality, it may be correctly or incorrectly interpreted, it may be given a partial

reading, it may constitute an instance of persuasive manipulation on the part of the enunciator which the enunciatee may perceive or ignore. At any rate, what is emphasized in every case is the complexity of the act of interpretation. From the very first speeches by the characters, different — and even opposed — types of reading are suggested: a systematic opposition of cognitive fields is established, be it in relation to the levels of knowledge of different characters, be it in relation to their knowledge and that of the audience. Statements carrying one particular meaning from the enunciator's viewpoint acquire another value and are interpreted as omens by the spectators — they become true, but not in the sense in which they were formulated by the enunciator. Or, in other cases, the spectator realizes the enunciator is consciously making a false statement — but the enunciatee ignores this fact and accepts the statement as true. Or, still, without the enunciator's knowledge, what is said is completely opposed to the facts presented. All of these oppositions thus constitute the basic form of organization of the text, and its most relevant structural components: irony and reversal. From the beginning of the play to its end, this will be constantly reëlaborated, pointing to the dominant themes of the text.

In the first scene of act I the witches announce: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair."² The use of alliteration and the equivalence of the signifiers fair/foul, as well as the parallelism of the construction, establish one of the most recurrent devices employed by Shakespeare in this play: the juxtaposition of contraries, a vehicle for the projection of

the theme of the paradoxical nature of reality. What is made evident is that each thing contains its opposite — the double character of phenomena — and there is a suggestion that an univocal reading will be necessarily flawed and incomplete. In addition, the possibility of identifying Macbeth and the witches is suggested as he, in his first speech, will use exactly the same words: "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (I.iii.38). This first reference to Macbeth's double nature will be reinforced by other statements which, with no such intention on the part of the enunciators, will be reversed so as to refer to him in a negative manner. Such is the case of the sergeant's description of the battle which has ended with Macbeth's victory: "As whence the sun 'gins his reflection/Shipwracking storms and direful thunders break, /So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come/ Discomfort swells" (I.ii.25-28). The statement as it is formulated aims only at praising Macbeth for having overcome all the obstacles up to his final victory but it may be interpreted as an omen. The irony becomes evident when the King decides to have the traitor Thane of Cawdor killed and transfer his title to Macbeth, stating that "no more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive our bosom interest" (I.ii.65-66). But it will be precisely the new Thane of Cawdor, associated in the description of the battle with the sun, who will inaugurate in Scotland a period of "discomfort," with "shipwracking storms and direful thunders." In scene IV, still referring to the first Thane of Cawdor, Duncan affirms that "there's no art to find the mind's construction in the face" (I.iv.11-12), for that had been "a gentleman on whom I built

an absolute trust" (I.iv.13-14) — the same blind trust he now transfers to Macbeth. Likewise, the praises Duncan addresses to his cousin acquire a meaning of prestage and are thus to be seen in their ironic implications: "More is thy due than more than all can pay" (I.iv.21); "I have begun to plant thee and will labour to make thee full of growing" (I.iv.28-29); "it is a peerless kinsman" (I.iv.58). These statements, as well as those in which Macbeth reaffirms his loyalty to the King, may be contrasted to his speeches in the scene with the witches. One realizes that Duncan's words are true, but in a sense contrary to that which he has conferred on them: Macbeth does believe he deserves more than the honors Duncan grants him; he will try to reach full growth; and, indeed, there is no kinsman like him, for he will murder his cousin in his own house, violating at the same time the rules of loyalty to the King, of hospitality, and of kinship.

Another form of irony used in the text is the creation of an opposition between cognitive fields. In most cases, the opposition occurs between what Macbeth knows and what the other characters do. In terms of the audience, the level of knowledge parallels Macbeth's, which decreases dramatic irony but still indicates that multiple possibilities of interpretation exist.

One of the devices used to deepen the audience's level of perception is Macbeth's asides, by means of which his thoughts are conveyed to the audience, without being heard by the other characters. Likewise, his letter to Lady Macbeth and the various monologues (his or Banquo's) have the same function: the characters interrupt the interpretation of their

O gentle lady!
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak;
The repetition in a woman's ear
Would murder as it fell.

(II.iii.90-93)

In several other instances, false statements are accepted as true by the other characters, such as Macbeth's words after the crime. However, it is even more ironic that these statements will be indeed revealed as true, but in a sense Macbeth does not suspect at this point:

Had I but died an hour before this chance
I had liv'd a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing serious in mortality,
All is but toys; renown and grace is dead,
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

(II.iii.98-103)

Macbeth's objective is to cover the fact that he has committed the crime. But without knowing he is making an affirmation which will be repeated at the end of the play, and this time he will really mean it — his famous monologue on the illusory character of human experience.

A similar instance of irony occurs in III.i. when Macbeth, already crowned as King, invites Banquo — his "chief guest" — to take part in the banquet he will offer that night. Banquo accepts the invitation, as his duties "are with a most indissoluble tie for ever knit" (III.i.18-19) to Macbeth. The reference to the ties, that can be interpreted as the secret both of them share, is in itself ironic; but even more so is the fact that Macbeth has already decided to eliminate Banquo, and the invitation is again a form of manipulation. After being murdered, however, Banquo indeed

becomes Macbeth's "chief guest": his ghost will come to the banquet, causing the King to lose control.

The opposite use of a false discourse constitutes an additional form of reversal. Such is the case of the dialogue between Macduff and Malcolm in which the latter, aware of the fact that an appearance of honesty may be the vehicle of treason, tests Macduff's loyalty to his cause and to Scotland. Malcolm, the real heir to the crown, describes himself as an oppressor potentially more destructive than Macbeth. As he receives proof that Macduff's loyalty is authentic, he then reverses what he had said about himself. The same dominant themes are thus restated — the ambiguous nature of human discourse, the opposition appearance/reality, and the role of the discourse in the projection of this duality.

To follow the same line of analysis, one of the most important scenes to reveal the complexity of the act of decoding and the connection between interpretation and desire is Macbeth's reading of the prophecies voiced by the witches or the apparitions. In his second encounter with the witches, the determining role of desire in the act of decoding will become evident. The apparitions conjured up by the witches do not give direct answers to the questions posed by Macbeth, but in an enigmatic manner announce the future. What the King fails to perceive is not only that the prophetic discourse announces his destruction, but also the fact that the apparitions themselves are signs to be decoded. The first apparition is an armed Head, who warns the King against Macduff. At the end of the play, Macduff will kill

Macbeth and cutoff this head. The second apparition is a bloody child, who announces he should

Be bloody, bold, and resolute;
laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

(IV.i.79-81)

The king interprets the prophecy as an announcement that no man will be capable of destroying him. At the end, however, it will become clear that the bloody child was a sign of Macduff himself, since he had been "from his mother's womb untimely ripp 'd" (V.vii.44-45), thus not having had a natural birth. The third apparition, a child crowned with a tree in his hand, announces:

Be lion-mettled , proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him.

(IV.i.90-94)

Macbeth interprets this prophecy as a sign of his invincibility, failing to grasp the fact that, on the contrary, it describes the stratagem used to destroy him: Malcolm, leading his troops in the siege of Dunsinane, will give this order:

Let every soldier hew him a bough
And bear't before him: thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.

(V.iv.5-8)

Malcolm, after Macbeth's death, is crowned King. Thus, the first apparition refers symbolically to Macbeth himself, the second to Macduff, the third to Malcolm. Macbeth, however, is as incapable of effecting a decoding of the symbolic nature of the figures as of perceiving the ambiguity of their language. This can be seen as an indication that Macbeth's capacity of decoding has been undermined by his desire, since, in his first encounter with the witches, both he and Banquo had realized that several interpretations were possible. "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (I.i.11), Macbeth already knew.

Banquo, for example, doubts the witches' existence: "I' the name of truth, are ye fantastical, or that indeed which outwardly ye show?" (I.iii.52-54); and

Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

(I.iii.83-85)

Later on, when Macbeth is already Cawdor, Banquo expresses his fear that

That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you into the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence.

(I.iii.120-26)

Macbeth here realizes the double possibilities of interpretation, but his choice will be made:

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good; if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings;
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

(I.iii.130-42)

The terms "yet" and "surmise" are indicators of the direction to be followed by Macbeth. On the other hand, the opposition and juxtaposition of contraries are emphasized in several ways, such as "nothing is but what is not," in the quotation above, and in the references to Banquo made by the witches:

- Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
- Not so happy, yet much happier.

- Thou shalt get kings, though thou
be none.

(I.iii.65-67)

Again, as in "foul" and "fair," the juxtaposition of contradictions reveals the transitory and ambivalent nature of reality and of the power for which Macbeth strives.

One other device used to reinforce ambiguity is the strange and mysterious mood in which the conflict unfolds. Time references are always to night, night with thunder and storms, or peopled by witches, in which images of blood and death recur. All the traditional formulas that evoke horror occur: spells, the enchantment of prophetic discourse, sounds associated with death (such as the bell tolling when Duncan is murdered or the women's cries announcing Lady Macbeth's suicide), the knocking at the gate, chimneys blowing down, lamentings and strange screams, the earth shaking, the clamours of birds, storms, a falcon killed by an owl, horses turning wild and eating each other. If all these elements tend to create an atmosphere of strangeness, in a paradoxical way they reduce the mystery. The use of such conventions of horror stories indicates that Macbeth's acts are contrary to the laws of Nature and Society and will have to lead to evil and destruction.

One last aspect to be discussed in terms of ironic construction is the relationship between the protagonist and the characteristic by means of which he ascends to power, and the fulfillment or reversal of the expectations of the community. Macbeth is defined, in his own eyes and in that

of others, by his strength and courage: "I dare do all that may become a man; who dares do more is none" (p.85). Since these are the qualities by means of which he establishes his identity, to Macbeth the relation between power and action is a necessary one. The alternatives, for him, are not between loyalty and ambition, but rather between passivity or dynamism. Confronted with the decision of yielding or not to the possibility of immediate ascension to power, Macbeth has indeed no real choice. He is a man of action, he is Power itself in process. He is active and dynamic. To deny the impulse to act to achieve the highest position in Scotland is to give up being Macbeth. His excess in the very quality which distinguishes him and makes him fulfill the expectations of the community is exactly what will lead to a reversal, when he violates the rules of the group and threatens the community. Mme. de Staël has pointed out that we have the defects of our own virtues, and it cannot be denied that here lies the tragedy of men: the same force that elevates a man to his full height may destroy him and undermine his greatness. Macbeth is excessive strength, and thus unable to remain in a position of waiting. Accumulating violence upon violence, he prepares his fall, which will be symbolically accompanied by the loss of the quality that defines him: Macbeth, man of action, characterized by strength, is reduced to passivity, decapitated, by Macduff, agent of his destruction. This, once again, reveals how the same quality can be simultaneously good and bad: "Foul is fair, and fair is foul." Nothing is just one thing, no univocal interpretation can be trusted. Power is transitory, as transitory as life itself. Human experience is ambiguous, an ambiguity carried

and expressed by the polysemic nature of our discourse.

As he is informed of his wife's suicide, Macbeth presents, in a perfect synthesis, his perception of that transitoriness:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time.
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

(V.iv.19-28)

Macbeth here asserts the illusory character of human experience and, by means of the theatrical metaphor, expresses the belief that life is a fiction, a meaningless tale. A tale which is told by an idiot, projected in words. And words, "they're all we've got to go on."

NOTES

¹Tom Stoppard, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), p. 31.

²Shakespeare, Macbeth, in Shakespeare. Complete Works (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 847. All quotations from the play were taken from this edition and indications are given in parentheses.

OF MEN AND ANGELS: The Role of the Icon in Iris Murdoch's
THE TIME OF THE ANGELS

'Sweet love, renew thy force —'
(Sonnet LVI)

Astrid Masetti Lobo Costa

In her novel The Time of the Angels, Iris Murdoch makes use of a visual device - a painting - that not only reflects, as a mirror, the situation of conflict and tension between the characters, but also functions as a vital element driving forward the plot.

The present study aims at analysing the novel from the point of view of this dual role of the device: that of oblique illustrator and that of structural agent.

The picture is an icon representing three angels round a table. It belongs to Eugene Peshkov, a Russian porter at the rectory where father Carel has just moved to. Eugene's relation with his only son Leo is painful, though he cannot explain why. One of the problems is Eugene's cult of his 'Russianness', reassured by the icon, and Leo's disdain for it. The icon reminds him of the paradise he lost in Russia when he was a child — a time of wealth, love and happiness. Later it accompanied him in refugee camps, where it continued to give him the feeling of property. The sense of permanence, totally beyond human suffering, kept something of crystallized beauty for him. It is a link between his glorious past, the time in the camps and the present in England. As a kind of detached reality, more real than Eugene's in the camps, it has preserved goodness from the fall that he experienced in his own life.

When Pattie, the ignorant black servant, sees the icon, she feels reassured by the fact that Eugene must believe in God. She accepts God as a taken-for-granted idea, acquired at the orphanage, that there is a kind of love between Him and herself. As Carel was the only person ever to show any affection for her when she came to work for his family, she immediately identified him with God, and physical contact, when they later became lovers, naturally replaced divine devotion. The fact that Carel was a priest did not awaken her guilt, on the contrary, it only reinforced her faith. But when Carel's wife Clara died, guilt began to take hold of Pattie: Clara was a white woman, and innocent, too. And when one day Carel left her bed with no explanation, her insecurity developed. She felt he was gradually losing his faith, and realized he had always seemed to her a damned soul. The meeting with Eugene now is a renewal of faith: he represents the goodness. Pattie feels she has lost forever, the innocent world she has withdrawn from.

On the other hand, Eugene feels Pattie as an outsider like himself, and therefore as an ally. She and the icon are the only things he relies on now. He fears Carel in some vague way, as if a contagious, mysterious fear emanated from the Rector.

Muriel, Carel's daughter, and Elizabeth, her semi-invalid cousin, also feel that Carel is a damned soul. Muriel has an inexplicable sensation of loss of innocence, and a vague fear of menacing evil, which she unconsciously manifests in a long poem she is writing. She often has nightmares about it. It makes her long for a change, whose nature she cannot explain, either. Eugene's presence, the

antithesis of fear, is the only thing that brings her peace.

The girls are engaged in a jigsaw puzzle representing a sea battle, which they haven't been able to identify yet. It is being formed in Elizabeth's room, where a big French mirror reflects the sick girl, who represents for Muriel beauty and innocence, as a sleeping beauty secluded in her enchanted castle.

Carel's brother Marcus Fisher is writing a book on Morality, in which he contrasts pure morals to religion, and he discusses the matter with a retired head-mistress called Norah Shadox-Brown and the Bishop. According to Marcus, an absolute in morals, to be inferred from Man's inherent ethics, must resist the destroying power of logic on the one side, and the inadequacy of myth on the other. Beauty is set as 'a revelation of the spiritual,'¹ thus having an ethical as well as an aesthetic function. The book denies God's existence but paradoxically confirms it by juxtaposing it to the existence of Absolute Good. It analyses the nature of good. Since an absolute Good would be an imposition on human freedom, and, on the other hand, a relative Good determined by human laws would run the risk of being corrupted, Will would be the solution for the establishment of moral values. But Marcus opposes such a theory, in so far as he considers 'will' as a category within human laws, therefore relative and ambiguous. Moreover, he considers Good as intrinsically perfect, transcendently authoritative. What Marcus fears in Carel is precisely, although he fails to grasp it, his awareness of the non-existence of such Absolute Good. Carel's loss of

faith indirectly shakes his own faith and reflects the fallacy of his own theory. The whole discussion upsets Marcus, as he feels that concepts such as that of the Holy Trinity are not to be questioned. Belief in such entities reassures him of the stability of moral order, just as happened with Pattie when she first saw the icon.

Eugene has also lost his faith, but he believes the icon has a miraculous power of breaking loose things. And one day, when it disappears mysteriously, things are set going, and tension runs its course towards tragedy. The keeping of the icon maintained Eugene's illusion that he possessed something, that some goodness had been preserved after all despite all evil. Leo's confession of the theft destroys what goodness had remained, and now Eugene feels he doesn't want it any more. The difference between father and son becomes more evident, since the painting is the linking point between past and present, Russia and England, which Eugene cherishes so desperately and Leo hates so deeply. A Russian box Muriel gives him as a present strangely reinforces the feeling of deprivation, instead of consoling him. When Leo begins to tell him about the theft, he feels the boy already knows he is going to be upset, as if he felt some pleasure in hurting his father. His own evil begins to show itself to him: he knows that he owes Leo something, that he has somehow failed as a father.

The scene with Leo forces him out of his passive endurance, makes him, as it were, take part in the wrong deed. It revives the deadened grief he experienced in the past.

and Muriel's intervention only increases his humiliation and awakens his hate.

On the other hand, when Leo tells Muriel about it, she feels astonished at the total lack of moral sense and guilt in him. She is partly responsible for the theft, once she suggested it to him indirectly. That was when her fall began, and the more tragic because she was unconscious of it. A promise that she will introduce him to Elizabeth makes him say he will try to recover the painting. She confronts Leo's vitality with Elizabeth's inertia, and concludes their meeting will be profitable for the latter, since the boy's behaviour is, after all, harmless and even pure in its vital force. Although, after overhearing his quarrel with Eugene, she is persuaded he has been wicked and she herself has contributed to his wickedness Muriel feels she must use Leo to shake their enclosed world, where Carel's evil paralyses any manifestation of the will. Leo's relative misbehaviour consists merely of little white lies, and he has still got his will, whereas Carel seems to be guided by an overpowering force beyond his control.

Pattie is also influenced by Carel's strange power. Her will is numbed in such a way that, although she foresees innocent happiness with Eugene, she knows this is an impossible dream, an already unsuccessful attempt to escape from Carel, so that his absurd fantasy of living isolated from the world is, to her, much more real than the perspective of an 'ordinary' life as Eugene's wife. Carel tries to feed his faith on Pattie's absolute love for him, turning her into another Christ to replace the one whom he doesn't believe in any more. Their love-making is a profession of anti-faith

preceded by a mock-religious ritual in which he calls her his 'dark angel ', 'black goddess ', 'counter-virgin' and 'Anti-maria '². Once more Pattie's colour, dubious origin and immoral conduct are indirectly set against his white legitimate innocent wife Clara.

The atmosphere of tension is but for a moment relieved by Norah's rational, self-confident words to Muriel assuring her that there is no real cause for fear, only to be intensified soon afterwards. Muriel foresees the fall of her established world when she is about to introduce Leo to Elizabeth. What she sees in her cousin's room is much worse than anything she could ever have conceived of, or anything poor Leo could ever have done in his naive wickedness. Muriel and Leo are then described as angels falling down from their innocent world. The inevitability of the scene imposes itself on her through a crack in the linen room beside Elizabeth's bedroom. It is reflected in the mirror which protects the lovers, Elizabeth and Carel, with 'a faint concealing veil,'³ so unreal and impossible it first seems to her; and yet, 'it was like looking into clear water,'⁴ like seeing reality for the first time with 'perfect clarity.'⁵

In the meantime, Marcus's concern for Leo has made him buy the icon back at an antique shop. He then takes it to the Rectory, where he tells Carel of his apprehension for Elizabeth, and they discuss Carel's faith. The rector tries to explain the truth he has had a glimpse of, the truth that there is no God. But it is not simply atheism: the negation of God's existence leads on to the confirmation of the existence of evil, but not as such, since the absence of God

as a point of reference annuls the dualism good-evil. The only reality he perceives is man's subjection to chance and his consequent unattainable spirituality. That is when he sees the icon and feels fascinated by the three angels, God's thoughts, even more unattainable to man than God Himself. Marcus realizes he must change his book now. Instead of proving the existence of Goodness for nothing, he will write about the existence of Love, the only way to human salvation.

While Carel is waiting for the consummation of his destiny, Muriel's fate has also started its way towards the end. Her last hope lies in Eugene's power to purge her of the sin of having violated the secret of Carel and Elizabeth and thus revealed the horrifying truth. Seeing the icon in Carel's desk increases her sensation of imminent tragedy, as if there were still things he could do. As Carel compels her to leave the Rectory, she tells him she hates him and runs away with the icon, which she believes to be her salvation. But she leaves it on the hall table and it is Pattie who takes it back to Eugene. This infuriates Muriel and a consequent quarrel with Pattie expresses their mutual hate.

The recovery of the icon gives Eugene a perspective of happiness. It has all been a miracle for him and Pattie, the way it has come back. Now he is convinced it is really miraculous, and relies entirely on it as a good omen, a renewal of faith. Muriel's sudden appearance brings his fear back, and then she tells him the truth about the return of the painting, and Pattie's liaison with Carel, which Pattie painfully confirms as something inevitable. Evil follows evil:

the girl tells Pattie about Elizabeth and Carel, which Pattie seems to have expected somehow as inevitable, too. Muriel still believes there is a way out of the whole mess, but total destruction is the only thing left, and Pattie pours down the last drop of evil telling her that Elizabeth is Carel's own daughter. This places Elizabeth as the counterpoint of Pattie in relation to Carel: she is his white, young and beautiful Anti-maria. It is evident to Muriel now that she must follow her own fate, see the jigsaw finished. She waits for Carel's death without calling for help because she knows it has been his choice, maybe even his fate to make such a choice. The non-existence of God is clear to her now, chance being the only absolute entity before which there is no will, no choice. She feels that his suicide is the only escape from his unbearable awareness of that. Letting him go is what is left of her love for him. Only now is she given to understand his desperate eagerness for redeeming love, which no one would ever be able to give. Pattie leaves him not as an escape towards 'normal' life, but due to her awareness of the ultimate impossibility of such absolute love.

Marcus apprehends Carel's death as a matter of chance and his conscience of such chance as the cause of the suicide. But he doubts whether what Carel envisaged is really the truth.

Muriel and Elizabeth's fate is to be together now, without ever being able to love each other absolutely. Their look when they leave the Rectory reminds one of the angels in the icon.

And the last terrible act of **chance** finally comes out: Mrs Barlow, the psychiatric social worker from the pastorate who has called so many times at the Rectory and been sent away every time, is the cause of the whole tragedy, the woman whom Carel, Marcus and their third brother Julian had been in love with in the past. Had Carel known it, had he seen her and talked to her, that could perhaps have made all the difference.

* * *

The icon as a source of light illuminates to the characters their own reality and that of those around them. Eugene, Marcus, Pattie, Muriel and Carel all suffer from moral blindness, and the development of plot consists of their gradual perception of reality. The icon works not only as a mirror reflecting at the same time appearance and reality, but as a structural device contributing to the development of a process in which those two ideas are opposed and appearance finally collapses to show the reality that lies behind.

Let us begin with Eugene, its owner, and whom it influences more deeply and more directly than the other characters. What Eugene fails to understand is the fact that the permanent beauty of the icon exists totally apart from his life, and that it can never replace what he has lost. The icon is not a linking point between past and present, but precisely a warning that such a link cannot exist in human life, by nature fragmented and chaotic. Its preserved beauty is a reality, but Eugene's belief in its miraculous powers is an illusion. It really is a visual representation of

goodness, but as such it simply cannot be touched or possessed, just contemplated. This leads on to his second illusion: the icon suggests a feeling of property, and only when it is stolen does Eugene realize the precariousness of such possession, indeed of any human possession. The theft awakens in him a greater feeling of loss, which started when he was a boy and his English terrier died. The fact that this is recalled by means of a gift — the Russian box Muriel gives him — is significant: instead of representing something given, it reminds him of something taken, teaching him that nothing is really 'possessed.'

Having to accept not only the theft, but the fact that it has been Leo's deed, is even more painful to Eugene. He remembers sad things of the past, which he'd rather remained forgotten, and feels he has lost not only the icon, but the belief in its magic power.

The recovery of the painting has a connotation similar to that of the receiving of the box: together with it Eugene gains a vision of the whole truth about Pattie and Carel. Being deprived of Pattie's love is a suffering far deeper than the pleasure of recovering the icon. Losing it and getting it back are not two opposite stages of a temporal evolution, one after the other, but two apparently contradictory aspects of the same truth. Eugene loses on the one side and gains on the other: the momentary loss and recovery occasion a permanent acquisition of truth. The sameness of the image only emphasizes the mutability of human life, which Eugene finally understands:

The milky blue angels were infinitely sad. They had travelled a long way. When Eugene was gone they would still travel on and on, until one day no one knew who they were any more. There was only this travelling. (p. 233)

No possible happiness will ever greet him. The sacredness of the icon is sadly suffocated with a tablecloth and packed with his oddments and newspapers.

Simple-minded Pattie also deludes herself, drawing the conclusion that Eugene must believe in God just because he owns an icon. She knows Carel has lost his faith, and that is perhaps why she wants to believe in Eugene's. She hides her guilt from him, sure that the goodness that emanates from him (and from the painting) can efface it. But things cannot be undone: confronting her relationship with Carel and comparing it with Eugene's pure love, she realizes her loss of innocence. Taking the icon back to him, instead of being a good omen, provokes Muriel's rage and the consequent revelation of her own truth: 'She was unclean, she was unworthy, she was black, and she belonged to another, it was all true.'⁶ When Pattie finally learns of Carel and Elizabeth being lovers, she sees her love for him, for the first time, as it really is: human, therefore fallible. The vision is so painful that she runs away.

Muriel's illusions are also destroyed by the painting. She too hastily compensates for her fear of Carel with the peace of mind brought by Eugene's presence. Falling in love

with him is almost inevitable, and she maintains the illusion, similar to Pattie's in that respect, that Eugene is the way out of danger. Their involvement leads her, not out of danger, but, on the contrary, into the awareness of the nature of such danger: the truth about her father and Elizabeth.

Here two other illuminating devices come out in the novel: the jigsaw puzzle and the mirror in Elizabeth's room. The figure the puzzle forms is vague in the beginning, but it is there like a warning to Muriel that she is to face a much more difficult puzzle, not one of a sea battle, but of her own battle with the truth. As it is little by little revealed to her, more and more pieces fit in, until the last one, Carel's death, is placed and the game is over.

As to the mirror, it works in a much more subtle way. The first time, it reflects Elizabeth, to Muriel's deluded eyes, with a halo of fairy-like beauty and innocence, as 'a magical archway in whose glossy depths one might see suddenly shimmering into form the apparition of a supernatural princess'.⁷ The image is false, perhaps that is why it seems dream-like, but neither Muriel nor the reader perceive it. (In the case of Elizabeth, we see her through Muriel's eyes. Considering Pattie's image, for example, our knowledge antecedes Eugene's, so that we are able to observe his illusion from the outside and anticipate his suffering, whereas here we suffer with Muriel the same impact of discovery, with the same intensity). Muriel cherishes this image of Elizabeth as the incarnation of purity, and looks at it as a way of deviating her eyes from the tempting spy-hole in the linen-room beside.

The clarity and size of the mirror are obviously contrasted with the obscurity of the linen-room and the smallness of the spy-hole. The L-shape of the room itself is a trick, since it hides the bed far back in a recess. Appearance imposes itself upon a reality that Muriel intuitively foresees but tries to avoid. On the second occasion, reality shows itself reflected in the same (no more deceiving) mirror, but from a different perspective: through the spy-hole which frightened and attracted Muriel so much. The contrast between dark and light is again emphasized: from the dark room she sees into light (and so does the reader). Here the icon and the mirror become linked not only as truth-revealers, but also as elements of the plot, since it was a vision of Elizabeth in the mirror that Leo asked for in exchange for the painting. This is Muriel's first contact with reality: 'It was like looking into clear water (...) Light seemed to fall like a faint concealing veil between her and the mirror.'⁸ almost blinding her with such a significant revelation. The 'small circle of perfect clarity' (it is 'small' and yet perfect) enables her to see Elizabeth 'clear and yet unlocated like an apparition.'⁹ Reality is so astonishing that Muriel at first sight mistakes it for appearance, just as she has always mistaken appearance for reality. And it is so difficult for her to bear it, that the icon comes out as the only spark of illusion left: returning it to Eugene seems like a redeeming act; but, like the Russian box, it fails, ironically serving to increase Eugene's hostility. There is no way of overcoming the basic difference between them: her un-

friendly (though unconscious) superiority. She represents to Eugene what he hates most of all, the evidence of his social displacement: 'Englishness' is played by her as opposed to 'Russianness' played by the icon and used by him in defence against the hostility of the environment. The hate aroused in Muriel by a series of conflicts — which the icon does have the power of bringing out — is followed by her apprehension of love as the only, and never completely achieved human goal. She is described in the bedroom scene like a falling angel. In the end, when she leaves the Rectory carrying Elizabeth, they both have a similar look.

Marcus shares the illuminating power of the icon on quite a different level. Puzzled by the question of God's existence and, on the other hand, limited by his own intellectual approach and the practical nature of his own temperament, he holds on to concepts such as that of the Holy Trinity, a remote but always certain belief:

He wanted the old structure to continue there beside him, near by, something he could occasionally reach out and touch with his hand. (p. 94)

He fails to communicate with Carel because each one's mind operates on different levels. Their talking is not a dialogue, but two isolated monologues, with Marcus's speeches invariably ending in a dash indicating incomplete utterances. In bringing the painting back to the Rectory he involuntarily precipitates a crisis. The Trinity represented by the three

angels in the icon, in which he wants so much to believe, when examined by Carel , depicts the void left by God's absence: the unattained angels. Marcus says, 'It represents the Trinity, *of course*'¹⁰ (italics mine), in a vain attempt to maintain the established values of his world. But when he leaves he is unable to get the icon from Carel, subjugated by his brother's authority. In losing hold of it, he also loses his illusion concerning the certainty of the concept of the Trinity. However, in the end of the novel, he simply dismisses the subject, deciding that a holiday will do him good.

Marcus and Carel are counterpointed characters not only in what concerns their different forms of apprehension and the problem of faith, but in relation to the icon as well. Marcus buys it and brings it back intentionally, thus re-introducing into the Rectory, and into the plot, the vital element, the image of truth, that reveals the characters to themselves and to the others, thus releasing the whole tragedy. Yet, Marcus fails to perceive the range of his action. For him, the icon depicts only the Trinity. He evaluates it in terms of the three hundred pounds he has to pay for it, and of the weakness in him that makes him pay so much, his weakness for Leo. He may eventually have looked at the image, but he is unable to see it properly. Carel's only contact with the icon, on the other hand, is when he sees it in Marcus's hands. But one single moment is enough for him to grasp the meaning of the angels, to see through it and understand its full significance. For Carel, there is no separation between physical, mental and spiritual levels, only one global consciousness:

Carel had lived this, perhaps been maddened by it and perhaps died of it. Marcus had felt its faint touch (...) only just enough to know the falsity of what he had written in his book. (p. 226)

The mystery of multiplicity in unity — represented by the Trinity in the icon — only reinforces Carel's loss of faith. He says,

If there is goodness it must be one (...) Multiplicity is not paganism, it is the triumph of evil (...) The death of God has set the angels free (...) Now he (God) has been dissolved into his thoughts which are beyond our conception in their nature and their multiplicity and their power (...) We are the prey of the angels.
(pp. 172-74)

This is the only thing he believes in now, and when he sees the icon he feels it is confirmed by the image. If the painting has failed to ratify the power of the Trinity to Marcus (that is why he is so eager to call it the Trinity), now it succeeds in illustrating the power of evil to Carel, and that is why it looks so clear and substantial. Carel unwraps it, revealing its image under a bright lamplight. The paper contrasted with the lamp once more suggests the chiaroscuro of revelation and blindness, like Muriel's vision of the mirror from the linen-room. The painting is described as a 'solid wooden rectangle (that) glowed golden

and blue' ¹¹ in the splendour of its truthfulness. The angels are infinitely helpless and, because of that, infinitely beautiful:

The three bronzed angels, weary with humility and failure, sat in their conclave holding their slender rods of office, graceful and remote, bowing their small heads to each other under their huge creamy haloes, floating upon their thrones in an empyrean of milky brightness. (p. 175)

This echoes the first description in chapter one, but only now can one see it so clearly. So that, although it is obviously the same image, it strikes one as being somehow different now, as if it had been wrapped up all the time and one were looking at it for the first time. Only now do their heads look so small, and their haloes so huge, and their helplessness so evident and so touching.

Marcus is perhaps the most alienated of all characters (for the others, though for some time under the veil of illusion, are finally forced to face the truth and change their lives because of it). He does have a glimpse of the truth, but he certainly forgets all about it too quickly with the illusion of a holiday. In this respect, he counterpoints Leo. Leo is practical too, the range of his apprehension is also narrow but, young and naïve as he may be, he conceives of illusion as a destructive power, and of man as a helpless creature. Leo is the practical result, and

Carel is the philosophical one, of the same awareness of man's subjection to chance. He represents the outdoor vital energy (opposing Carel's indoor inactivity) which, in an inconsequent manner, steals the icon, thus removing Eugene's point of reference for his dreamy fantasy. He is able to see the icon as it really is for Eugene, a kind of escape from reality. He is always trying to tell his father about their new country, but the basic difference between their points of view hinders communication. The theft of the icon does not really mean much to him, since the icon itself doesn't. He tells Muriel of the uselessness of morality in a world which may be 'just frogspawn in somebody's pond'.¹² It is he, also, who tells Muriel to look at Elizabeth through the spy-hole. He needn't undergo a process of discovery, so he does not change during the novel. His figure is as static as that of the angels in the painting, and, in fact, Muriel once feels, looking at him, that he resembles a work of art.

Elizabeth is the only major character who has no direct contact with the icon. As a matter of fact, she acts like a painting herself, when her image in the mirror discloses the truth to Muriel. Like Leo, her physical beauty is described in terms of detached radiance, as if she, too, belonged to the world of art:

(...) and yet continued to have the slightly :
exotic feathered appearance of a favourite page.
Her straight pale yellow hair fell in even
pointed locks to her shoulders, metallic and
decorative as a medieval head-dress. Her long

narrow face was pale too (...) Only her large eyes, a dark-grey blue, glowed more richly.
(pp.36-37)

One must notice the similarity to a Byzantine painting: paleness, halo-like hair, narrow face and huge eyes. She is sharply contrasted with Leo in their situation in the plot — her confinement and his exposure — but not in relation to illusion and reality: they know the truth about themselves, and Leo is always lying to maintain the others' false hope that he is adapting himself to a decent life, while Elizabeth keeps up her false innocence before the household. She does not change, either: it is the other characters that change once they come to know of her true position.

The icon as a source of light must illuminate all the characters, and its theft is a device in the plot that favours its passing from hand to hand: Leo steals it, Marcus buys it back, Carel sees it, Muriel tries to take it to Eugene, Pattie succeeds in doing so, and Eugene recovers it. These comings and goings are actually described by means of verbs indicating visually the act of holding or letting go: steal, take, get, sell, hold, snatch, hug, lay down, pick up, give, buy, leave, find, bring, wrap, pack, and so on. When touching the icon physically they touch the truth spiritually. And ironically what causes this passing from one to another character are trivial coincidences of time and space. If Muriel had not left it on the side table in the hall, for example, and if Pattie had not seen it by chance

and given it back to Eugene, part of the tragedy would not have taken place.

In The Time of the Angels Iris Murdoch has achieved personal detachment and economy of symbolism, since the authority of the icon derives not from the author's manipulation of it, but from its own artistic and religious values. On the other hand, the exploitation of the icon as a symbol is limited by the nature of the painting and of the novel itself. The anonymity of expression peculiar to Byzantine art conveys a kind of mysticism well suited to the atmosphere of mystery that dominates the novel. The icon is to remain in its apparently elementary form, always remote and obscure, as inexplicable as the meaning of life that puzzles the characters so much.

The world of transiency and circumstance inhabited by Miss Murdoch's characters finds its momentary significance in the contemplation of a form which, by providing it with an insight into the cosmic order, both reveals the burden of its own contingency, and acts as a relief to it.

NOTES

¹Iris Murdoch, The Time of the Angels (Harmonds-Worth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 72.

²Murdoch, p. 157.

³Murdoch, p. 165.

⁴Murdoch, p. 164.

⁵Murdoch, p. 165.

⁶Murdoch, p. 208.

⁷Murdoch, p. 45.

⁸Murdoch, pp. 164-65.

⁹Murdoch, p. 165.

¹⁰Murdoch, p. 175.

¹¹Murdoch, p. 175.

¹²Murdoch, p. 108.

MISS FOTHERGILL AS MIRROR-IMAGE: AMBIVALENCE
AND INCEST IN L.P. HARTLEY'S TRILOGY*

Elisa Cristina de Proença Rodrigues Gallo

L.P. Hartley's Eustace and Hilda Trilogy constituted by The Shrimp and the Anemone (1944), The Sixth Heaven (1946) and Eustace and Hilda (1947) traces the development of the protagonist, Eustace, from a nine-year-old boy to a grown-up man, focusing essentially on the problem brought about by a life-time repression leading to frustrated incest and his relationship with his sister Hilda.

In a very perceptive manner, the critic Peter Bien has reached the core of the question: "It's toward Hilda that Eustace's incestuous desires are chiefly directed. This is the aspect of his neurosis with which she is concerned, but neither she nor Eustace consciously knows it. Nor does the reader, unless he examines symbols and interprets dreams. There are several open hints... but they nowhere convey the gruesome seriousness of the situation.

Incest, or rather frustrated incest, is the basis of Eustace's difficulty. Readers who feel that all the emphasis is on the domination of Hilda have missed the point.

/...

* This essay is a version of Chapter 3 of my dissertation L.P. Hartley's— The Eustace and Hilda Trilogy— A Study of Symbolic Structure, presented in August 1981 to the Graduate School of FALE-UFMG in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Mestre em Inglês.

The real trouble is that Eustace unconsciously wants to be dominated, wants masochistically to satisfy his sexual needs in this way, and most strangely and perversely of all, feels guilty for anything his natural vitality may do to challenge Hilda's domination or to put himself out of its clutches.

Eustace's sexual attraction towards Hilda and his attempts to indulge it, are presented by Mr. Hartley in several different ways: by actions which serve as symbols, by dreams, and by combinations of actions and dreams. The symbolic actions which suggest the incestuous relationship between Eustace and Hilda are many and all of a pattern. Each one is an epitome of the whole book, since each includes an ecstatic union of Eustace and Hilda, followed by deflation, tragedy and failure—either presented or implied."¹

In fact, the pattern is drawn in such a way that other characters will re-enact the neurotic elements of the brother/sister relationship, contributing to a clarification of its implications.

This is the function performed by Miss Fothergill, a character second in importance only to the protagonists. She is a half-paralysed old lady who leaves Eustace an £ 18 000 legacy and thus completely changes the course of his life.

One may say that the old lady brings a many-faceted, even contradictory influence to bear upon Eustace's life, and that the relationship between them constitutes a synthesis of the total sum of experiences he will undergo. It is she who tries to reveal him to himself, and prepare him for a confident launching into the world.

This is shown in several passages of the first book of the trilogy, The Shrimp and the Anemone, when the old lady makes pointed remarks on Eustace's self-effacing, self-denying habits.

On playing cards Eustace makes a mistake to which Miss Fothergill observes: "No good. Now you can see what comes of throwing away your opportunities."²

And again:

"...You know how you're pleased really."

"I suppose I am."

"You certainly ought to be. It's a great mistake not to feel pleased when you have the chance.

Remember that, Eustace." (p. 112)

There is still another instance, a straightforward remark on the submissive and passive Eustace who totally lacks confidence in himself, for appearances and public opinion are, in his mind, far more important than his own beliefs.

He is always worried about hurting people unintentionally and incapable of violent or gruff attitudes even if they might in context protect his own self. His guiding principle is to please everybody everywhere every time.

As this is humanly impossible Eustace is always struggling with his guilt complex: incapable of satisfying everybody at the same time he consequently cannot be at peace with his conscience.

All this becomes apparent to Miss Fothergill through her sensitivity and her experience of life. She has already detected this flaw in the boy's character, a flaw he will never be able to overcome. She clearly calls his attention to the fact through a wise piece of advice.

She points out to him that the repression of his inner life, that is, the annihilation of his own ego, would not give him peace either with himself or with the world in general.

Her advice associates her own observations with those of Dr. Speedwell who had assisted the boy during a peculiarly acute period of his heart disease:

"He [Dr Speedwell] said you had a lot in you, and it only needed bringing out. Don't forget that, Eustace, don't forget that... He said... that you can't please everyone- nobody can- and that if you minded less about disappointing people you wouldn't disappoint them. Do you see what I mean?"

"You mean Hilda and Aunt Sarah and Daddy and Minney and-."

"And me too, if you like. We are all designing women. you mustn't let yourself be sucked in by us." (pp. 118-119)

The expression 'sucked in' suggests the shrimp as an image of Eustace himself, and all his mother-surrogates—Hilda, Minney and Miss Fothergill— as devouring women, and castrating mothers.

Miss Fothergill herself admits being so and here she has associated herself with the people closest to Eustace; three of them—the boy's aunt, the family servant, and his sister— playing the role of mother-surrogates.

That is the reason why, on one hand, the old lady tries to

prepare the young boy for a successful launching into the outside world as any good mother should.

We shall see, on the other hand, that again like most mothers, she cannot fail to try to hold his affections and thus thwart her liberating influence, then assuming a phallic role.

The ambivalent relationship between Miss Fothergill and Eustace is clearly shown by the fact that, mother-surrogate as she is, Miss Fothergill paradoxically also stands for the boy's — indeed any child's— fear of the outside world. Her witchlike appearance and mysterious life introduce a note of threat which justifies this symbolic association.

This explains Eustace's reluctance in talking to her the first time he meets her on the beach and in going to tea with her for the first time:

[Hilda] "Remember what Aunt Sarah said. She said, 'Eustace, next time you see Miss Fothergill I want you to speak to her.'

'But next time was last time!'
.....

'Go at once Eustace.'

'I can't. I can't,' Eustace wailed, beginning to throw himself about. 'She frightens me, she's so ugly! If you make me go, I shall be sick at dinner!'" (p. 25)

In fact, the boy had strange fantasies about the old lady.

Before he finally accepted her invitation for tea, he imagines her as a monster, only half-human, with the paws of a lion—a sphinx-like figure standing for the fearful mysteries of the world.

It requires of him a great effort to overcome such fantasies:

"Without too much mental suffering, Eustace was able to make a visual image of himself shaking hands (only the phrase wouldn't fit) with Miss Fothergill. He almost brought himself to believe—what his aunt and Minney with varying degrees of patience continually told him—that Miss Fothergill's hands were not really the hands of a lion, they were just very much swollen by rheumatism...

But neither of his comforters could say she had ever seen the hands in question, and lacking this confirmation Eustace's mind was never quite at rest.

But it was sufficiently swept and garnished to let in (as in the way of minds) other devils worse than the first. With his fears concentrated on Miss Fothergill's hands, Eustace had not thought of speculating on her face.

On Monday night this new bogey appeared, and even Hilda's presence was at first powerless to banish it." (p. 63)

In fact Miss Fothergill was a half-paralysed old lady who went about in a bath-chair, always careful to half conceal her face and hands wearing a hat, a veil and gloves.

Living in a solitary house, and having withdrawn herself from social affairs she can thus hardly be spoken to. People

were not able to form a consistent opinion about this peculiar person.

The visual image of that strange and solitary figure who did not belong to their daily world made them resort to the supernatural: they came to think of her as a witch. This partly set their mind at rest. It explained the old lady's seclusion and also provided an exciting answer to their curiosity.

Thus for a long time Eustace keeps the witch image of the old lady. Well aware of that, Miss Fothergill takes severe precautions.

The first time the boy goes to have tea with her she carefully chooses their places at the tea table. She is wearing neither hat nor veil and her fingers are visible peeping out of black mittens curiously humped.

"He'd better sit there," said Miss Fothergill, 'so as to be near the cakes.'

Eustace was too young to notice that, as a result of this arrangement, Miss Fothergill had her back to the light." (p. 109)

Miss Fothergill's strategical position leads the boy to have a better impression of her mishappen face and hands and "that afternoon marked more than one change in Eustace's attitude towards life. Physical ugliness ceased to repel him and conversely physical beauty lost some of its appeal" (p. 109).

It is significant that Eustace's lovely schoolmate, his beloved Nancy Steptoe, is now going to be removed from his path almost completely. The fairy is replaced by the witch. From that day on the path of Eustace's life will take such a

direction that Miss Fothergill will come to mean everything to him.

It is also remarkable that Nancy Steptoe—the charming and beautiful girl who is interested in Eustace—is the person who mostly talks of the old lady as a witch. She obviously senses the rival in her. This rivalry shows up in many ways.

On one occasion, for example Eustace declines Nancy's invitation to a paper-chase because of a former promise to have tea with Miss Fothergill. His remaining fears are renewed by Nancy's comments on the old lady:

"'But she's old and ugly, and I suppose you know she's a witch?'

Eustace's face stiffened. He had never thought of this. 'Are you sure?'

'Everyone says so, and it must be true. You know about her hands?' Eustace nodded. 'Well, they're not really hands at all but steel claws and they curve inwards like this, see! ... And, once they get hold of anything they can't leave go, because you see they are made like that. You'd have to have an operation to get loose.'" (p. 71)

This anticipates Eustace's fear of getting caught in the old lady's spell, which is prophetic and symbolic.

One is immediately reminded of the image of a shrimp caught by an anemone in the beach scene between Eustace and Hilda in chapter I, and which constitutes the core of the symbolic construction of this novel.

That image with its implications of castration and destruction is recalled through Nancy's reference to Miss Fothergill's "claws." To be released from them Eustace would need an operation. There is a hint at the possibility of mutilation—which projects the dominant theme to be unfolded in the trilogy and contributes to establish thematic unity.

Eustace, the shrimp, is in a symbolic way seized upon by Miss Fothergill, the anemone, which is also an anticipation of the destructive incestuous relation between the protagonists Eustace and Hilda, brother and sister.

Eustace became so attached to the old lady that, as time passed by she

"had come to mean to him all those aspirations that overflowed the established affection and routine employments of his life at Cambo; she was the outside world to him and the friends he had in it; its pioneering eye looked no further than Laburnum Lodge, the magnetic needle of his being fixed itself on Miss Fothergill." (p. 128)

The word 'magnetic' clearly hints at Miss Fothergill's charms. Eustace is in fact 'charmed,' completely subdued by Miss Fothergill's spell, reinforcing the idea of bewitchment and Nancy's prophetic image.

In the relation Miss Fothergill—Eustace there is no need however for physical operation as in the case of the shrimp and the anemone at the beach. Fate provides the operation, the rupture: Miss Fothergill's abrupt death. But, as the disembowelled anemone which leaves a part of its body attached to the shrimp, Miss Fothergill leaves an everlasting mark on Eustace's

personality.

Death— the operation brought about by fate— will mean just a partial separation, for Miss Fothergill's influence upon the boy will be much deeper than at first expected. It is the money left to Eustace in her legacy that enables the boy to go to Oxford. It is also this amount of money which will make things too easy for Eustace. It gives him a position where most struggles for an ordinary existence become unnecessary. This makes him finally unable to fight, face up to or cope with life. He is to be eternally submissive, passive, incapable of taking decisions. The lion claws will never actually leave him. Once started, the relationship with old Miss Fothergill will never really be broken.

Another aspect of this relationship will now be broached: the double nature of the mother figure, which in fact includes the good mother, represented by the fairy- godmother in children's tales, and the bad stepmother or witch.

Miss Fothergill, like most real mothers, plays both roles in Eustace's life. From one point of view, she paves the way for a fuller and easier life. From another she also stands for frustration, for the fear of the unknown.

Miss Fothergill knows that, and even while trying to liberate Eustace she frustrates the boy trying to keep him in that kind of relationship. As selfish mother-surrogate she, in turn, appreciates him precisely because of his childish passivity and dependence.

When playing cards with him she bribes the boy offering him money if he wins but demanding kisses no matter whether he

wins or loses. She manoeuvres the situation in such a way that the boy himself is led to say: "But you'll let me kiss you all the same? Once if I lose, twice if I win." (p. 116)

If the agreement suited the boy, much more did it suit the old lady: he would get money from her some times, that is, when he won, while she would always be kissed, no matter what happened.

Bribing Eustace in order to get his affection and companionship, Miss Fothergill realizes, in the meantime, as any reasonable person, that it was bad for the boy to be lost in that unique and private relationship with her.

That's why she tells him:

"'You mustn't come so often... if that's the way your father and your aunt feel about it. I shan't be hurt, you understand!'

Eustace's face fell.

'But I wish you had some... some other friends...'

'You mustn't spend too long playing cards with an old woman!

'It's what I like doing best,' said Eustace lugubriously.'" (pp. 115-116)

The word 'lugubriously', on the other hand, ambiguously hints at Eustace's unconscious awareness of the harm that is being done to him: he really wanted to kiss his partner. But he also unconsciously knows the morbid character of his affection.

Miss Fothergill, on the other hand, is conscious of her

role as a castrating mother and tries to overcome it, but the mark of her ownership upon Eustace is going to outlast her life. Events however take another turn. She perpetuates the symbolic castration through her legacy. It handicaps Eustace in such a way that he will remain forever submissive, restrained and passive.

It is then not to be wondered at that the fairy -witch's death leaves an indelible mark on Eustace's mind.

This appears very clearly in the episode when Minnie, the devoted family servant, bathes the boy and gently tells him about his benefactress's funeral.

In this episode, prompted by conscious and unconscious associations with the dead, the crucially symbolic episode of the mutual destruction of the shrimp and the anemone which opens the book is re-lived once more through Eustace's fantasies.

This scene has a multiple significance. Probably as a compensation for his submission and weakness, Eustace has a liking for powerful and grand things as well as for destructive games. This is explicitly mentioned in the

"cone of Cotopaxi, for which he had a romantic affection, as he had for all volcanoes, earthquakes and vilent manifestations of Nature... In his progress he conceived himself to be the Angel of Death, a delicious pretence, for it involved flying and the exercise of supernatural powers." (p. 20)

In the bath episode the threat of Eustace's fantasies is taken up again. In his imagination the bathtub appears as a

place of danger, terror and destruction.

The description starts factually enough, but soon takes another turn.

"The taps were of a kind that would turn interminably either way without appreciably affecting the flow of water. Even grown-up people threatened with a scalding or a mortal chill, lost their heads, distrusted the evidence of their senses, and applied to the all-too-responsive taps a frantic system of trial and error. And there were many other things that might go wrong. Eustace no longer feared that he would be washed down the waste-pipe when the plug was pulled out, but he had once put his foot over the hole and the memory of the sudden venomous tug it gave still alarmed him. If his whole leg were sucked in he might be torn in two.

The fear that the bath water might overflow, sink into the floor and dissolve it, and let him down into the drawing room, the accident costing his father several hundred pounds, was too rational to scare Eustace much, though it sometimes occurred to him; but he had conceived another terror more congenial to his temperament. The whitish enamel of the bath was chipped in places, disclosing patches of a livid blue. These spots represented cities destined for inundation.

... Sometimes a single submersion satisfied his lust for destruction, but certain cities seemed almost waterproof and could be washed out time after time without losing their virtue. Those he cared about least came lowest in the bath,

and as the upper strata of sacrifice were reached so Eustace's ecstasy mounted. When at last,... the water rose to Rome, his favourite victim, the spirit of the tidal wave possessed him utterly. But he rarely allowed himself this indulgence, for above Rome, not much above... there was another spot, the Death-Spot. If the water so much as licked the Death-Spot Eustace was doomed." (p. 125)

Eustace fears his death—for he knows he is doomed to destruction—even when he himself is in control of things. But he imagines somebody else, particularly Hilda, to be the tidal wave. Then his destruction and death are not only just a possibility: they seem to be imminent.

Eustace comments:

"'Supposing I was the city of Rome,' he thought, 'and the tidal wave, was really somebody else, perhaps Hilda, then it would kill me and without ever touching the Death-Spot at all.'" (p. 128)

To this Peter Bien remarks: "In the case of the bath which is the Death-Spot scene, it is clear that though Eustace may be the destroying force, the object of his destructions is himself. This is consistent with his masochism."³

It is also meaningful that Rome is Eustace's favourite victim. As one of the main symbols of Christianity Rome means to Eustace the rigid religion which oppresses and suffocates him, the Scarlet Woman of Protestant polemic.

It's significant that soon after Miss Fothergill's death

Eustace should be depicted as having a bath.

Water, in this case, conveys one of its most universal symbolic meanings, that of purification.

The bath becomes a ritual: Eustace is to be purified from Miss Fothergill's inhibiting influences, but, paradoxically, the bath is also to be his baptism—his initiation into another life which is going to begin with the old lady's legacy.

On the other hand the bath-scene is basically a repetition of the first image of the book: the mutual destruction of the shrimp and the anemone is clearly re-lived here, through Eustace's fantasies. Instead of a ritual liberation, the bath reveals his fears and indicates he will never be free. The bath then acquires an ironic meaning. Eustace as once the shrimp did, now lies in the water. Hilda associated to the anemone becomes an equally destructive tidal wave, which will symbolically fuse the bath and beach scenes.

The image of the half-eaten shrimp is re-created through Eustace's morbid fantasies: the fear of his leg being 'sucked in' by water down the waste-pipe and of his being torn into two.

The bath and the initial scene of the mutual destruction of the shrimp and the anemone are deeply connected through the use of similar imagery. In addition the same verb of action 'to suck in' is used to convey the destruction of both the shrimp at the beach and of Eustace in the bath. Both are killed by being 'eaten' — sucked in—by someone stronger. Two quotations, one from the initial scene and the other from the ritual bath fit in here: "It was a shrimp, Eustace decided, and the anemone

was eating it, sucking it in." (p. 9) "If his whole leg were sucked in he might be torn into two." (p. 125).

What is revealed is the perfect symbolic construction of the trilogy: characters and images mingle together forming a web by means of which the relationship between incest, castration, and destruction is unfolded.

NOTES

¹ Peter Bien, L.P. Hartley (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), pp. 84-85.

² L.P. Hartley, The Shrimp and the Anemone (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1969), p. 111. All other quotations from the novel were taken from this edition and are indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

³ Peter Bien, op. cit., p. 77.

LEITURA CRÍTICA DE UM TEXTO CIENTÍFICO*

Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira

V.L.Casa Nova em "Elementos retóricos e ideológicos no discurso do pai-de-santo" (1982:11-3), examinando o código retórico da doutrinação dos médiums, observa que a persuasão, neste caso consciente, é a categoria central do discurso do pai-de-santo:

Na simbologia do poder/saber, a figura do pai-de-santo é centralizadora... O conhecimento das leis de Umbanda e a melhor manipulação das técnicas de santo instituem seu poder... Pela necessidade de manter o poder, o pai-de-santo, durante a doutrina, recalca os questionamentos, afasta as posições perigosas... O médium concorda com o pai-de-santo em todas as situações. Daí a repercussão ideológica. O ideológico se fecunda na concordância e se irradia dentro e fora do terreiro. Assim é que a umbanda surge como emissor e receptor de elementos ideológicos... "Pai-de-santo disse, tã dito".

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Como professores de leitura de textos científicos, temos agido quase sempre como médiuns doutrinados -- "cientista disse, tã dito". Normalmente, não verificamos nem mesmo se ele recalca questionamentos ou afasta posições perigosas, (o que, obviamente, gera tendenciosidade em seu texto). Holmes (1983:134), com pertinência, explica o limitado papel do professor, decorrente de uma atitude de extrema reverência pelo texto científico:

Usamos todos os recursos à nossa disposição... para identificar e extrair as informações contidas, sem nunca termos adentrado o texto... De muitas formas, temos sido humildes demais, atordoadíssimos pelo aterrorizante papel do texto científico como um veículo de verdade objetiva.

Tal atitude acrítica não traria maiores conseqüências se todos os textos científicos fossem de fato objetivos, neutros e racionais. Seria impraticável enumerarmos todos os casos de tendenciosidade de um texto científico ou de irracionalidade da ciência. No entanto, destacaria dois dos interessantes exemplos de irracionalidade da ciência citados por Holmes (1983:136) — os gastos com transplantes de coração ao invés de se fomentar campanhas publicitárias para a prevenção de doenças cardíacas, bem como o maior desenvolvimento da produção de eletricidade a partir da energia nuclear em detrimento da solar.

Essa irracionalidade sugere também a possibilidade de a ciência se colocar, às vezes, a serviço de jogos de interesses econômicos e políticos, um aspecto que retomarei mais

adiante. Todavia, seja qual for o caso — tendenciosidade, irracionalidade, jogo de interesses — se mantivermos uma posição acrítica no ensino de leitura científica, agindo como "mēdiuns doutrinados", estaremos contribuindo para que o "ideológico, fecundado na concordância, se irradie dentro e fora do meio acadêmico e para que a ciência surja como emissor e receptor de elementos ideológicos".

Partindo da premissa da sociologia da cultura de que não há textos neutros, o presente trabalho reúne contribuições diversas, inclusive da crítica literária, para uma leitura do ideológico no texto científico, concebendo a ideologia num sentido amplo (a expressão de um ponto de vista pessoal do autor, a expressão do autor como ser histórica e socialmente determinado, ou mesmo a expressão de interesses de dominação). Primeiramente, baseando-me em Vigner (1979), farei uma distinção entre o texto objetivo — o discurso "sem sujeito" — e o texto "objetivado" — no qual uma prática discursiva objetiva, neutra e impessoal "disfarça" o sujeito ideológico. Em seguida é analisado o fenômeno da intertextualidade no discurso científico, pois este leva não apenas as marcas do sujeito/emissor, mas é também um discurso polifônico, no sentido de conter uma multiplicidade de vozes. Posteriormente, esboça-se uma tipologia do discurso científico, usando como critério os veículos de difusão e recepção, que imprimem ao texto uma configuração específica, também vinculada à questão da presença em maior ou menor grau do sujeito ideológico em seu discurso. Segue-se uma proposta didática que inclui um exame prospectivo do texto e a análise dos três principais componentes semântico-funcionais — o ideacional (conteúdo

e l gica), o interpessoal e o textual (Halliday e Hasan, 1976). Finalmente   abordada a valiosa contribui o de um estudo comparativo de textos para uma leitura do ideol gico.

I. O texto cient fico objetivo

Como bem observa Vigner (1979:97-9), o discurso cient fico se beneficia de um estatuto semi tico particular que o distingue de todas as outras modalidades de discurso. Assim esclarece ele a rela o entre m todo e discurso cient fico:

A fun o do discurso cient fico   transmitir um conhecimento constru do segundo um protocolo heur stico rigoroso, compartilhado por uma determinada comunidade de pesquisadores, com os objetivos de explicar ou prever pela descoberta de constantes as regularidades, as leis e/ou a elabora o de modelos.   pr prio da atividade cient fica que o sujeito se abstraia do processo de pesquisa, que neutralize no ato de percep o e interpreta o toda a avalia o pessoal, objetiva, contingente, de tal forma que haja uma identidade de resultados seja qual for o autor da pesquisa, o lugar e o momento de sua atividade... O discurso cient fico ter  ent o a miss o de transmitir um conte do... sem perda de informa es, sem risco, mesmo que m nimo, de ambiguidade na interpreta o da mensagem, apagando todas as marcas do emissor para dar prioridade   exposi o de dados, das etapas da pesquisa e do resultado. Por outro lado, a atividade de pesquisa visa   determina o de princ pios, de teorias, de leis. O discurso cient fico dever  fazer desaparecer do seu enunciado toda refer ncia a um caso particular, a um momento determinado

e situar-se no impessoal e no universal.

Constituem exemplos bem conhecidos de recursos de impersonalização o uso da voz passiva e de nominalizações no discurso científico. Todavia, a leitura do texto científico requer mais do que uma leitura do código lingüístico. O discurso científico utiliza, geralmente, três dispositivos semióticos distintos (Vide Vigner, 1979:61):

- a linguagem natural, constituída pela lingüística do texto;
- a linguagem formal, constituída por fórmulas;
- a linguagem gráfica — gráficos, curvas, tudo o que permite apresentar os dados através de outros dispositivos que não sejam verbais ou formais.

Hã, entre estes três dispositivos semióticos, uma relação de complementação e o efeito global do sentido é o resultado da soma desta multiplicidade de códigos. Pode haver, contudo, uma comprometedora relação de redundância entre estes três códigos, como veremos mais adiante. No momento, podemos afirmar que a redundância fere os cânones do estilo científico na sua objetividade, concisão e exatidão.

II. A parcialidade e o texto "objetivado"

Como mencionamos anteriormente, um dos postulados da sociologia da cultura é de que não existe o texto neutro. De fato, observa-se recentemente um movimento de questionamento da neutralidade da própria atividade científica. Nada mais esclarecedor neste sentido do que o título do livro de Hilton Japiassu, O mito da neutralidade científica. P.

Georgen (1981:78) corrobora esta posição em seu artigo sobre a pesquisa em Educação:

A sociedade apresenta-se como um todo orgânico, interligado em todos os seus aspectos. Lembrando que "a ciência é uma forma de ação humana e social..., integrante da prática vital da sociedade", facilmente podemos concluir que a reflexão desta prática social é condição "sine qua non" para qualquer ciência, pois é esta complexa realidade que determina a situação do cientista, a seleção dos seus temas e a escolha do método por ele usado.

Esta reconquista da dimensão histórica também se faz sentir na crítica literária recente. Após um período de predominância da crítica estruturalista, com a crença subjacente na imanência do texto, aflorou novamente a importante consideração do contexto social na produção literária. Com o suporte teórico de Voloshinov Bakhtin, afirma M.H. Campos em seu artigo "Para ler as letras" (1982:17):

Ler as mensagens produzidas por uma sociedade é ler essa mesma sociedade. A compreensão crítica dos textos leva a uma compreensão crítica da própria sociedade que os produz e que neles se inscreve... "O signo não pode ser separado da situação social sem ver alterada sua natureza semiótica"... Vistos dessa perspectiva, os fenômenos de sentido trazem em si as marcas do sistema produtivo que os engendrou... Estabelece-se a partir daí uma relação entre produção, produto, circulação e consumo somente apreensível a partir de uma análise que se concentre sobre o produto e remeta às condições de sua

produção que são também aquelas que regem simultaneamente a organização de sua distribuição e consumo.

Tendo em vista esta configuração social e histórica da produção, bem a propósito afirma M. H. Campos (1982:16) que "a leitura do mundo precede à leitura das palavras". Se a realidade determina a situação do autor ou do cientista e sua seleção de temas, é compreensível que surja uma pesquisa sobre os efeitos da superalimentação nos Estados Unidos, mas não em Biafra ou no Brasil. Por outro lado, a percepção do mundo pelo autor ou cientista é necessariamente parcial e vinculada a uma questão de ótica. I. Walty (1982:26), ao discorrer sobre as diversas formas de se perceber o mundo, cita dois casos que muito bem exemplificam nossa colocação da parcialidade inerente à captação da realidade:

... como aquela criança que, diante de um túnel, cisma e pergunta: — "Por que será que sempre constroem um morro em cima dos túneis?", ou da outra que diante de uma casa em demolição, observa: — "Olha, pai! Estão fazendo um terreno!"

A percepção do mundo sob determinada ótica confere ao trabalho científico um elemento de subjetividade e conseqüente parcialidade. Assim sendo, a constatação da sociologia da cultura sobre a inexistência do texto neutro, há que se acrescentar a dimensão psicológica do autor/cientista. Esta nova dimensão remete-nos a uma outra questão: existirá o dis-

curso científico "sem sujeito"? Consideremos a seguinte colocação de Vigner (1979:103) sobre a necessidade psicológica de gratificação do cientista:

O discurso científico... é... impessoal, quer dizer que o autor não tem dentro do seu texto o estatuto de pessoa, de indivíduo diferente e original. Escritor anônimo, ele se esconde por trás do objeto do seu discurso, ávido de descrever, antes de tudo e com grande exatidão, os resultados de suas pesquisas, o método adotado, tudo sem perda de informação. Mas tal não quer dizer que o cientista queira permanecer no anonimato. É normal que ele queira usufruir do prestígio ligado à sua descoberta, consolidar seu estatuto no interior da comunidade científica, em suma, ter reconhecimento. O primeiro meio é anunciar que ele é o primeiro a haver descoberto tal procedimento ou idéia.

As dimensões psicológicas e histórico-sociais levam-nos, conseqüentemente, à postulação da inexistência do texto científico sem sujeito e axiologicamente neutro. Torna-se necessário, então, reconsiderar a propalada objetividade e impersonalidade do texto científico que, na realidade, adota, segundo Vigner (1979:99 e 103), "uma prática discursiva que visa a camuflar o sujeito ideológico... daí a produção de um discurso objetivado e não objetivo".

Alguns dos marcadores da presença do sujeito emissor no discurso objetivado serão enumerados na proposta didática ao final deste trabalho.

III. O discurso científico polifônico: O fenômeno da intertextualidade

O discurso científico, na sua concepção objetivada, leva não só as marcas do "eu" inscrito num espaço mental histórica e socialmente determinado. O discurso científico é também um discurso polifônico, no sentido de que uma multiplicidade de vozes nele se faz ouvir. É o caso específico das notas, das referências bibliográficas e das citações. Além do mais, o texto científico se apóia também em um conhecimento já consolidado, o que assinala a presença no novo texto de uma voz "arquetípica".

M.Z. Cury (1982:117 e 122) com o suporte teórico de Júlia Kristeva e Bakhtin (teóricos que abordam o fenômeno da intertextualidade em literatura), fornece intravisiões significativas à nossa colocação:

Todo texto se constrói como um mosaico de citações, absorvendo e transformando outras produções... Na estrutura de uma obra literária convivem em tensão dialética, o eminentemente novo, o inédito e sua relação com os arquétipos que formam a série literária. Frente aos modelos arquetípicos, a obra literária... entra sempre numa relação de transformação ou rejeição, imitação ou paródia. Mesmo quando a obra se apresenta como algo que difere inteiramente dos códigos e padrões estabelecidos, sua própria estrutura de negação leva-os em conta, mesmo que para ne-

gã-los radicalmente.

A prática intertextual, no discurso literário ou científico, remete-nos ao que já foi dito. No discurso científico, como afirma Vigner (1979:64), "a citação, como a referência bibliográfica, têm por função estabelecer um tipo de convivência, de inserir o discurso recém-produzido dentro do discurso científico geral". Por outro lado, pode haver uma relação de negação entre o discurso recém-produzido e os que o antecederam: todavia, ao negar os discursos anteriores, as vozes "arquetípicas" estarão sendo ouvidas de qualquer forma.

Podemos então concluir que, como o discurso literário, o discurso científico é também um intertexto, é um discurso polifônico onde se fazem ouvir as vozes do eu/autor e dos "outros" que o antecederam, seja essa relação de absorção ou negação. Assim sendo, o discurso científico não é um discurso sem sujeito; embora use recursos de impersonalização, ele leva as marcas não só do emissor, mas também de outros emissores inseridos no discurso recém-produzido. É, pois, um discurso subjetivo e coletivo.

Cumpre ainda estabelecer uma relação entre o fenômeno da intertextualidade e a leitura crítica. O cientista precisa de evidência empírica e teórica para justificar suas afirmações. Mas há nesta escolha de evidências um traço de subjetividade; além disto, podemos usar as evidências de forma a que haja uma adequação entre elas e o que desejamos provar.

Assim como o pai-de-santo recalca os questionamentos, o cientista, segundo Holmes (1983:135), "protege sua teoria!". Assim sendo, a análise da intertextualidade no discurso científico

pode revelar um manancial de subjetividade e tendenciosidade, na medida em que o cientista "usa e salienta aquilo que apóia suas idéias, esquecendo e desprezando aquilo que não as apóia" (Carragher, 1983:30).

A consideração do discurso científico como um intertexto leva-nos também a uma análise qualitativa do texto recém-produzido — a bibliografia citada, as referências e as citações revelam não só o status quo da pesquisa em andamento, mas também a fidedignidade da evidência teórica — em suma, se o pesquisador revela-se bem informado ou não.

A voz do eu/autor, ser temporal, histórica e socialmente determinado, e as vozes dos "outros" que o antecederam, estarão presentes em graus variáveis no "intertexto científico objetivado", o que nos remete a uma taxonomia do texto científico.

IV. Tipologia do discurso científico

A tipologia que se segue é baseada em Vigner (1979: 100-6) que usa o critério de difusão (produção e circulação) que, por sua vez, está relacionado ao público-alvo (receptor). Argumenta Vigner que os circuitos de informação científica imprimem aos textos uma configuração específica, como teremos oportunidade de verificar.

1. O livro clássico

Tratados, obras de referência e manuais constituem exemplos de livros clássicos impressos. Geralmente, são obras de publicação lenta — por não versarem sobre a atualidade científica imediata, a pesquisa em andamento, não há necessi-

dade de rapidez na publicação. Via de regra, são obras didáticas, tendo alunos e estudantes como público-alvo.

A impressão de um livro clássico representa um investimento muito alto e, para que tal investimento seja justificado, é necessário que a obra possa ser lida durante anos consecutivos e ser re-editada sem maiores modificações no texto. Ancora-se, então, em um conhecimento já consolidado, daí sua validade em qualquer época, ou, pelo menos, por um período de tempo longo. Podemos depreender, daí, que esta "atemporalidade", a sua inscrição em menor grau no espaço histórico-social, confere-lhe uma maior objetividade.

2. O periódico

O periódico é o veículo principal de transmissão dos conhecimentos científicos. Publicado em intervalos relativamente regulares, ele reúne um certo número de artigos de pesquisadores para um público também homogêneo de pesquisadores e especialistas.

Qual o estatuto do autor no discurso científico do periódico? Esta questão vincula-se ao fator de rapidez de publicação e difusão do periódico. É a publicação imediata que garante ao cientista o reconhecimento da prioridade de sua descoberta. Como o periódico está fortemente associado ao fator tempo, a neutralidade e o impessoal não são suas características marcantes. O condicionamento histórico-social e a gratificação psicológica, advinda do reconhecimento do trabalho original e inédito, contribuem para que o eu/autor esteja bastante presente em seu trabalho. Trata-se então, geralmente, de um texto objetivado e não objetivo, onde o cientista em algum lugar garante seu estatuto de pessoa, de indivi-

duo diferente e original.

Esta presença menos "camuflada" do autor, associada à premência de publicação do artigo, pode também suscitar dúvidas quanto ao grau de amadurecimento das idéias nele contidas. Torna-se necessário, então, verificar até que ponto o autor apresenta fatos e leis científicas ou uma opinião pessoal encoberta sob uma capa objetiva de verdade científica. Ao contrário do que ocorre com o livro clássico, a leitura do periódico requer uma posição mais crítica. Nem todos os periódicos gozam do mesmo prestígio, ligado ao grau de credibilidade da informação por eles veiculada. Assim sendo, há que se considerar primeiramente a qualidade e credibilidade do periódico. É também necessário fazer um exame prospectivo do volume e qualidade das citações e bibliografia — um número pequeno pode ser indício de informação insuficiente por parte do autor. Citaria, como exemplo, o comentário irônico do Prof. Affonso B. Tarantino no "Jornal Brasileiro de Medicina" (46:63,1984):

"No Chest de abril de 1979, o Dr. Jeffrey R. Whiteside, do Centro Médico da Universidade de Indiana, usou a expressão target sign para traduzir uma pequena elevação bilateral, avermelhada, de aproximadamente 1,5cm, na face anterior das coxas, próxima à rótula. Essa área de edema resultava do traumatismo causado pelos cotovelos do paciente que, durante as crises de dispnéia, ao dobrar o tronco para a frente, apoiava a cabeça nas mãos e os cotovelos nos joelhos. Chamo a atenção de nossos leitores para o seguinte: esse sinal foi observado, há mais de quinze anos, pelo nosso colega, Ismar C. da Silveira, que o designou "sinal do cotovelo"... Portanto, o target sign for emphysema nada mais é do que o "sinal

do cotovelo", de Ismar Chaves da Silveira, já bem conhecido entre nós, e para aqueles que são acreditam na medicina em inglês, eu o denominaria elbow sign, de Ismar Chaves da Silveira.

Em outras palavras, não podemos aqui falar de intertextualidade, pois o autor americano ignora outras vozes.

A leitura crítica do periódico envolve também a consideração de sua data de publicação. Como os artigos de periódicos geralmente versam sobre assuntos ou abordagens inéditas, o ano de aparição do mesmo indicará se se trata de um artigo ultrapassado, relegado a um mero interesse histórico. A estimativa é de que a média de vida ou período de validade de um artigo seja de 8 anos (Vigner, 1979:103).

Uma outra consideração importante no caso de artigos de periódicos são os motivos do autor ao fazer sua pesquisa e publicá-la. A pressão em torno de publicações nos meios acadêmicos atuais é um fato notório; a permanência e a progressão funcional do professor/pesquisador estão diretamente ligadas à sua produção científica. Como dizem os americanos, a questão é "to publish or perish". Sob esta ótica, a análise do motivo do autor é fundamental. Trata-se de um trabalho de consciência ou de sobrevivência? Na ausência de informações objetivas sobre os motivos do autor, a própria credibilidade do periódico poderá preencher esta lacuna.

3. O documento de pesquisa

Embora os periódicos publiquem e difundam trabalhos num ritmo bem acelerado, muitos cientistas ainda os consideram lentos. Daí a prática de troca pessoal de informações, uma vez que a transmissão não se efetua pelos circuitos convencionais

de edição e difusão. Podem também ser incluídas nessa categoria as comunicações feitas durante colóquios, seminários, congressos, etc. Tais documentos apresentam um estágio provisório da pesquisa, uma informação mais fluida e mais problemática. São geralmente pré-impressões, pré-artigos, de dados provisórios da pesquisa. Mesmo assim, exercem um papel fundamental na difusão científica. Trata-se, todavia, de uma difusão restrita a uma comunidade constituída por pesquisadores de certo nível.

Como o fator tempo é ainda mais crucial no documento de pesquisa do que no periódico, as considerações feitas sobre a crítica geral do periódico devem aqui ser aplicadas ainda com maior intensidade.

4. Relatórios Científicos e Técnicos

Estes trabalhos constituem uma fonte inestimável de dados, embora de acesso difícil. Pelo caráter restrito e geralmente particular dos relatórios, não entraremos no mérito dos mesmos.

5. A vulgarização científica

A vulgarização científica (como por exemplo "The American Scientist", "The New Scientist", seções especializadas do "Time", "Veja", etc.) goza de estatuto ambíguo nos meios científicos. Tendo como alvo o grande público, a vulgarização científica apresenta um discurso sui generis em alguns aspectos:

- como o leitor leigo geralmente não tem a formação específica necessária à compreensão do texto, o trabalho visa a formar e informar;

- também em decorrência do fato de serem os leitores leigos, não é possível uma exposição completa e exaustiva do trabalho, que pressupõe um embasamento na área; assim, certos aspectos fundamentais do trabalho são omitidos;

- além da perda, há uma modificação na informação, quando o jornalista dá ao trabalho um tom sensacionalista. O resultado é então uma combinação do discurso heurístico e do discurso jornalístico;

- a descoberta, além de tratada como um acontecimento sensacional, "é geralmente vista na sua relação com o autor, o que lhe confere um caráter anedótico e contingente, quando o discurso deveria ser normalmente atemporal" (Vigner, 1979:105).

- os diversos códigos, ao invés de se complementarem, como no discurso científico, são geralmente redundantes, pois o jornalista apela para todos os tipos de recursos (tipografia, lay-out, ilustrações) para tornar o texto acessível ao grande público. Por outro lado, se esses recursos facilitam a compreensão, eles atuam também como elementos de dispersão da atenção;

- é um discurso que faz uso abusivo de linguagem figurada, principalmente metáforas e hipérboles ("o maravilhoso espetáculo da ciência").

Embora nem sempre reconhecido ou pelo menos visto com reticência pela comunidade científica, o fenômeno da vulgarização científica existe e não pode passar despercebido. A vulgarização científica tem ainda o inegável mérito de ter publicação e difusão ainda mais rápidas do que o periódico. Há também de se lembrar que a vulgarização científica não usa

apenas o texto impresso como veículo de difusão, pois atuam neste sentido todos os meios de comunicação de massa. Gozando ou não de um estatuto científico definido, a vulgarização científica existe e se inscreve na consciência coletiva, à qual o cientista não está imune.

O entrelaçamento ciência — vulgarização científica — publicidade subliminar é também bastante freqüente para ser considerado apenas uma coincidência fortuita. Embora eu não tenha dados concretos suficientes para comprovar minha assertiva, este entrelaçamento é bastante sugestivo de a ciência se colocar a serviço de um jogo de interesses econômicos. O caso mais flagrante parece ser o da indústria farmacológica internacional.

O artigo "A Double Standard on Drugs?" publicado pela revista "Time" (28-6-62, pág. 44), baseado no livro Prescriptions for death de Milton Silverman, denuncia a aguda irresponsabilidade social da indústria farmacológica internacional. Os produtos que são banidos ou altamente controlados no mundo ocidental (como por exemplo, cloranfenicol, clioquinol — nome comercial: Entero-Viofórmio — e a aminopirina) são jogados nos mercados menos controlados do terceiro mundo e, sobretudo, com publicidade altamente elaborada. Silverman denuncia também que as precauções sobre os efeitos colaterais desses produtos não são mencionadas nas bulas ou nos guias médicos distribuídos no terceiro mundo, onde os médicos, por não terem fácil acesso a periódicos, são muito dependentes da informação recebida da indústria farmacológica. O autor relata também que vitaminas e tônicos são promovidos como "curas" para a subnutrição no terceiro mundo, cuja população precisa

de alimentos, não de vitaminas. Neste sentido parece bastante pertinente a colocação de V.L. Casa Nova em seu artigo "Almanaques de Farmácia" (1982:59): "O laboratório farmacêutico e a farmácia promovem e divulgam a doença e sua subsequente cura". Em caso de dúvida, basta ligar a televisão e ver a campanha de esclarecimento sobre o diabetes, "gentilmente" patrocinada pelo Laboratório Pfizer.

Essa irresponsabilidade social das multinacionais no terceiro mundo não constitui novidade para nós. "O escândalo da Nestlé" é muito recente para que dele nos tenhamos esquecido. A vasta difusão, através de diversos meios, dos malefícios da amamentação materna, tinha, como se constatou posteriormente, o objetivo de incentivar a venda do leite industrializado. Analogamente à ampla difusão, por diversos canais, dos problemas decorrentes do uso do DIU (seus efeitos cancerígenos e aspectos morais), seguiu-se a constatação posterior de que houve, na realidade, uma tentativa por parte da indústria farmacêutica internacional de recuperar o mercado de anticoncepcionais orais (Vide E. Vieira, 1984).

Aflora novamente aqui o problema da literatura científica. É fato bastante comentado no meio médico que as multinacionais patrocinam e financiam pesquisas de testagem de seus produtos, sendo essa pesquisa direcionada a um universo pouco representativo. Todavia, os resultados são publicados como generalizações — "eficaz em 90% dos casos". Mas o número de casos também não é mencionado, o que nos remete ao problema da tendenciosidade mencionado anteriormente.

Apesar do estatuto ambíguo da vulgarização científica, não podemos deixar de levá-la em consideração ao propormos uma

leitura crítica do texto científico. Além dessa literatura "científica" tendenciosa patrocinada por grupos econômicos poderosos, há que se considerar o efeito cumulativo da repetição do mesmo tema em meios de difusão diversos, pois ele acaba se inscrevendo na consciência coletiva.

As considerações acima nos remetem à necessidade de uma outra dimensão da leitura crítica do texto científico, ou seja, a leitura do ideológico. O ideológico é aqui entendido não só como os "pressupostos sociais, culturais, políticos ou individuais escondidos sob a enganadora aparência de fatos objetivos... mas [como] puras doutrinas de interesses apregoadas em nome de uma ciência neutra" (P. Georgen, 1981:65-91).

V. Proposta Didática

Sugerimos que uma leitura crítica de um texto científico englobe duas etapas:

- Exame prospectivo do texto (Vide Vigner, 1979:115).

- Análise dos 3 principais componentes semântico-funcionais (Vide Halliday & Hasan, 1976):

1. Componente ideacional { Expressão de conteúdo
Relações lógicas
2. Componente interpessoal
3. Componente textual

Exame prospectivo do texto

- o que se sabe sobre o autor e seus motivos?

- o que se sabe sobre o periódico/revista e sua credibilidade?

- o que se sabe sobre a pesquisa em andamento através da bibliografia citada, referências, citações — o pesquisador revela-se bem informado?

- o que se sabe sobre as condições de produção, circulação e recepção do texto?

Análise dos componentes semântico-funcionais

1.1. Leitura e análise do componente ideacional a nível de conteúdo.

1.1.1. Análise exploratória (Vide Vigner, 1979:115)

- leitura do título (se ele é bem redigido, deverá conter o essencial do conteúdo do texto)

- leitura da bibliografia (o autor dispõe de fontes fidedignas?)

- leitura da conclusão (é na conclusão que o autor, após expor os resultados, os avaliará; é uma informação valiosa para o leitor, pois contém o julgamento do autor sobre seu próprio trabalho)

- leitura da parte consagrada à exposição

- re-leitura da conclusão, detectando as orações ou segmentos de orações que constituem elementos de respostas à questão colocada no título e na exposição

- exame do conjunto de linguagens (natural, formal e gráfica) uma vez que o efeito global do sentido é o resultado da combinação dos 3 dispositivos semióticos. Eles se completam ou há uma relação de redundância?

1.1.2. Análise da objetividade do texto (Vide Holmes, 1983:143)

- o autor está realmente relatando uma verdade objetiva?
- o que ele selecionou como evidência ou fatos?
- seus desvios do racional, da objetividade se justificam?

1.1.3. Análise de informações não dadas

a. "Todo texto requer que o leitor forneça algumas informações não dadas. Algumas informações podem ser omitidas, pelo autor, sem problema, confiante que ele está de que seu leitor irá extraí-las, porque a informação está "obviamente" ali, no campo de referência" (Scott, 1983:106).

- Enumere algumas das informações não dadas que não comprometem a compreensão do texto.

b. Às vezes a informação não é dada por outros motivos. Geralmente os autores fazem um uso seletivo de fatos. Nesse caso, trata-se de omissão e, como resultado, o texto pode ser tendencioso.

- Hã omissões de fatos relevantes no texto? Essas omissões comprometem o raciocínio como um todo?

Por outro lado, o autor pode enfatizar elementos relativamente irrelevantes. Hã casos de ênfase excessiva?

c. Muitas vezes o autor, por motivos diversos, sugere alguma coisa, ao invés de afirmá-la categoricamente. Ocorre que o leitor interpreta e, posteriormente, recorda o que esta-

va implícito como um fato (Vide Harris; 1982). É necessário, portanto, fazer uma distinção clara entre o que está implícito ou explícito no texto.

São vários os recursos que os autores usam para expressar alguma coisa parcialmente verdadeira sem afirmações categóricas. Os anúncios publicitários usam freqüentemente tais recursos:

*Uso de palavras ou expressões vagas ("O produto X é espetacular"), que pouco ou nada esclarecem.

*Uso de comparativos não qualificados ("O produto X é melhor"), isto é, o segundo elemento da comparação não está presente e nem tampouco a justificativa da superioridade.

*Justaposição de dois imperativos ou duas orações ("Não adoeça neste inverno. Tome nossas pílulas"). A omissão de uma conjunção leva o leitor a inferir uma relação de causa e efeito, sem que o autor a tenha explicitado.

*Uma pergunta negativa pode implicar uma resposta afirmativa, que pode ou não ser verdade. ("Não é uma ótima opção para sua família passar um fim de semana no Rio?")

*Uso de dados estatísticos incompletos ("95% dos dentistas recomendam o dentifrício X"); pois não há a informação sobre o universo pesquisado.

- O autor usa recursos semelhantes aos descritos acima? Analise-os.

1.1.4. Análise da linguagem figurada

"As analogias [podem ser] uma maneira clara de apresentar as idéias... mas também são, reconhecidamente, formas de apresentar idéias meio cruas" (Holmes, 1983:140).

- O autor usa analogias? Elas são esclarecedoras ou encobrem idéias meio cruas?

O autor, às vezes, usa também outros tipos de linguagem figurada (metáforas, símiles, etc.). Como ocorre com as analogias, a linguagem figurada, que é um recurso literário, pode ser mais esclarecedora do que um termo científico. Por outro lado, a linguagem poética tem um efeito encantatório e gera uma cadeia associativa de valores que podem desviar a atenção do leitor do raciocínio.

- O autor usa linguagem figurada? Seu efeito é esclarecedor ou a linguagem figurada é usada para desviar a atenção de um raciocínio cambaleante?

1.2. Leitura e análise do componente ideacional a nível da lógica

(Questionamento do poder explicativo dos textos, adaptado de Holmes, 1983:137-8).

Considere os exemplos abaixo:

- Todos os gases se expandem quando aquecidos (lei científica).

- Todos os membros da Academia Brasileira de Letras são carecas (generalização baseada em evidência estatística).

Esses exemplos têm a mesma estrutura, inclusive o verbo no presente simples, geralmente usado para expressar leis científicas e verdades absolutas, como "Todos os homens são mortais". Apesar da semelhança estrutural, nem todos expressam uma lei científica. É necessário, então, distinguir as generalizações estatísticas disfarçadas em leis. Há dois processos.

Primeiramente, se se tratar de lei, ela comportará uma explicação; o mesmo não ocorrerá no outro caso.

- O gás se expandiu porque foi aquecido sobre pressão constante.

*Ele é careca por ser um membro da Academia Brasileira de Letras.

Em segundo lugar, podemos prever eventos futuros no caso de uma lei, mas não no caso de uma generalização estatística disfarçada em lei:

- Se este volume de oxigênio for aquecido sob pressão constante, expandirá.

- Se o Chacrinha se tornar um membro da Academia Brasileira de Letras, ficará careca.

- Teste o poder explicativo das afirmações do texto, não se esquecendo de que opiniões pessoais também podem ser apresentadas como verdade científica.

2. Análise do Componente Interpessoal

(Verificação das representações das "marcas" do emissor em seu discurso — suas escolhas, atitudes, julgamento, etc).

Embora o texto pareça objetivo, ele manifesta de alguma forma a presença de seu autor. Às vezes, essa manifestação é explícita, por exemplo, se ele disser "não concordo", "corroboro a opinião...", "concluo", "considero tais afirmações irrelevantes", etc. Outras vezes a presença do autor é camuflada, mas se faz sentir.

- Verifique se o autor sutilmente marca sua presença no texto através de alguns dos meios abaixo (a lista não é exaus

tiva):

*a primeira pessoa ê usada no texto, apesar da omissão do sujeito eu ou nôs?

*o autor utiliza termos subjetivos ou emotivos, por exemplo, inconcebível, perplexo, etc?

*ele usa palavras que sugerem dúvida, por exemplo, talvez, parece, etc.?

*ele introduz comentários e avaliações pessoais no texto ou nas notas?

*hã comentários irônicos? A ironia pode ser uma forma de recalcar questionamentos.

*ele usa auxiliares que expressam atitudes e julgamentos pessoais, como poder, dever, etc.?

*hã alguma referência à prioridade da descoberta?

*o autor usa eufemismos?

*hã redundância no texto? A informação contida nas fôrmulas e/ou gráficos complementa o texto ou repete o que ê exposto verbalmente? A redundância pode ser indício da presença do autor no texto, através do julgamento implícito de que seu leitor ê incapaz de entender a informação, a menos que ela seja repetida.

- Qual o efeito da presença do autor no texto?

3. Componente Textual

Em se tratando de uma leitura crítica, que pressupõe uma leitura anterior para extração de informação que, por sua vez, está vinculada à referência endofórica, considerarei aqui apenas a referência exofórica no seu sentido mais amplo (Vide Halliday & Hasan:1976). A referência exofórica ê vista aqui

na sua função de remeter à situação extra-textual.

A referência exofórica está diretamente ligada à intertextualidade e às condições de produção, publicação, difusão e recepção do texto. Como esses aspectos já foram considerados no exame prospectivo do texto e na análise do conteúdo ideacional, julgo desnecessário repeti-los aqui.

VI. Contribuição de um estudo comparativo de textos para uma leitura do ideológico

M. Scott (1983:115-20), ao discorrer sobre as sete habilidades de raciocínio necessárias à "leitura nas entrelinhas", refere-se à habilidade de distanciamento do texto:

Esta... habilidade de raciocínio significa "ver a floresta em vez das árvores" (o significado global do texto e não o das palavras)... O leitor precisa distanciar-se do texto para levantar questões como:

Por que o autor está me dizendo isso?

A quem interessa que esta informação se torne pública?

De fato, se o ato de ler se tornar automático, "a automatização levará à inconsciência, ao esvaziamento da percepção dos objetos" (M.H. Campos, 1981:27). Além da proposição de perguntas que levem o leitor a distanciar-se do texto, há outra prática interessante para se ampliar a percepção e "desvelar" o oculto nas entrelinhas. Trata-se do estudo comparativo de textos sobre o mesmo tema. Esta prática tem sido comum nos cursos de Teoria da Literatura da Faculdade de Letras da

UFMG, onde o estudo se inicia com uma análise comparativa de jornais. Nesta abordagem "a realidade camuflada emerge complexa e contraditória e o trabalho se revela uma prática de leitura extremamente rica e fecunda" (M.H. Campos, 1982:20). Por que uns autores omitem certos aspectos e enfatizam outros? A leitura do ideológico, às vezes um pouco abstrata, torna-se palpável, concreta.

Elaborei, neste sentido, uma proposta didática para alunos principiantes de inglês instrumental (Vide Vieira, 1984), baseando-me na colocação de Bakhtin (1981) de que a ideologia determina a linguagem. Meu propósito nesse trabalho é sensibilizar o aluno para a interação autor/leitor e para a detecção da intencionalidade do autor e dos efeitos persuasivos por ele usados. Em se tratando de alunos principiantes, sugeri a análise contrastiva de material da mídia, pois além de utilizar linguagem acessível, seu uso seletivo de fatos, de omissões, etc., torna-a o exemplo por excelência de tendenciosidade. A maioria das atividades, subjaz uma comparação entre material mais objetivo e outros mais tendenciosos. Sugiro também a utilização de textos sobre o mesmo assunto, mas sob perspectivas contrastantes, por exemplo, remédios para emagrecer sob a perspectiva do fabricante e do médico. Ao utilizar esta abordagem em sala de aula, observo que os resultados são bons, tornando a aula agradável e gratificante não só para os alunos como também para o professor.

VII. Conclusão

Adams-Smith (1981:18) conclui seu trabalho sobre as habilidades de raciocínio inerentes à leitura crítica dizendo

que espera ter fornecido um instrumento que auxilie futuros médicos a dar diagnósticos precisos e futuros engenheiros a projetar pontes que permanecerão de pé além do próximo século.

Situando-me numa prática intertextual, e sabendo-me ser histórica e socialmente determinado pelas contingências do terceiro mundo, espero ter fornecido aos alunos brasileiros um instrumento que lhes permita também analisar a validade e repercussões da difusão, no Brasil, de uma pesquisa sobre os efeitos da superalimentação nos Estados Unidos, enquanto metade de nossa população morre à míngua.

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UBER DAS HÖRSPIEL

Hedwig Kux

"Hörspiel" heißt eine Literaturgattung unseres Zeitalters. Sie entstand etwa zugleich mit der Erfindung des Rundfunks. Das erste Hörspiel wurde 1925 im August in Hamburg gesendet: "Danger" von Richard Hughes, in deutscher Übersetzung: "Gefahr". Die Kunstform "Hörspiel" wird gegenwärtig im Kulturprogramm von 10 Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland gesendet, von 7 Sendern Österreichs und der Schweiz. Alle Sender haben eigene Hörspielabteilungen. Anfangs übertrug man dramatische Dichtungen oder auch Bearbeitungen, im Studio vorgelesen. Bald stellte sich heraus, daß damit die Möglichkeiten des Mediums nicht ausgenutzt wurden. Man begann, Hörspieltexte für den Rundfunk in Auftrag zu geben.

Im Vergleich zum Film, der ja auch als Kunstform die modernen Möglichkeiten der Technik benutzt und zum Theater, arbeitet das Hörspiel mit ganz anderen Mitteln. Zum Schauspiel gehört das Sichtbare, das Theater, die Menschen — nicht nur die Schauspieler auf der Bühne — auch das Publikum: "Die Damen zeigen ihren Putz und spielen ohne Gage mit" — sagte Goethe. Im Theater will man doch sehen, wer in der Ehrenloge sitzt und was die Gattin des Ministers trägt und wer das ist, der immer so laut applaudiert, und anderes mehr. Das Hörspiel hat ein sehr viel größeres Publikum als

das Theater oder irgendein gedrucktes literarisches Werk. Die erste Auflage von Werken berühmter Autoren beträgt vielleicht 10 000 bis 20 000 Exemplare. Ein Hörspiel erreicht durch die Ursendung schon Millionen von Hörern.

Die Zeitdauer eines Hörspiels ist 30 bis 40 mitunter 75 Minuten. Die Sendezeiten sind abends, auch nachts und eventuell sonntags nachmittags. Man hat die Wahl zwischen mehreren Hörspielen pro Woche, dazu mindestens eine oder zwei Ursendungen.

1951 wurde der "Ehrenpreis der Kriegsblinden" gestiftet vom "Bund der Kriegsblinden Deutschlands e.V." Diese Auszeichnung, sehr begehrt, ist nicht mit einer Gelddotation verbunden. Der Preis wird für ein ursesendetes Hörspiel des jeweiligen Vorjahres verliehen. Für 1980 erhielt Walter Kempowski und für 1981 Peter Steinbuch den Preis. Seit 1951 also seit 33 Jahren besteht diese Einrichtung. Sie hat sehr anregend gewirkt. Die Jury des Bundes der Kriegsblinden besteht aus 9 Kriegsblinden und 9 Kritikern. Damit ist schon klar, daß man während eines Hörspiels nichts sieht. Das Wort allein baut die Szene auf. Technische Mittel helfen, den Raum zu charakterisieren, besonders seit es die Stereophonie gibt. Man kann eine Stimme in einer Halle, auf einem Flugplatz, in einer Kirche oder im Zimmer ertönen lassen. Es gibt auch den sogenannten "schalltoten" Raum ohne Echo oder ein freies Feld.

Eine andere Möglichkeit, die das Hörspiel ausnutzt, bietet die Blende. Während einer Szene kann man einen Vorgang aus der Vergangenheit einblenden, oder etwa während eines Dialogs die Gedanken des einen oder anderen Sprechers. Zur

Begrenzung der Blende greift man zur Veränderung des Schallraums. Diese technischen Voraussetzungen erleichtern die Wiedergabe des inneren Monologs und der sogenannten inneren Handlung bis hin zum Traum. Heißen nicht die ersten Hörspiele Günter Eichs "Träume"?

Besonders bedeutsam ist für das Hörspiel die Gestaltung des Spielbeginns. Es ist unbedingt wichtig, den Hörer in den ersten Minuten für das Spiel zu interessieren. Die ersten Minuten werden daher oft vom Autor und dem Intendanten gemeinsam gestaltet. Das Wort allein ist für die richtige Einstimmung verantwortlich (!). Das Wort errichtet eine Vorstellungswelt. Diese ersten Worte müssen also optisch sein. Geben die ersten gesprochenen Sätze nicht genügend Anstoß zum Aufbau eigener Vorstellung, stellt der Hörer seinen Apparat ab.

Einige Beispiele zum Spielbeginn:

Beispiel 1: "Die Panne" von Friedrich Dürrenmatt,
Ursendung 1956

"Leichte Schlagermusik, ein fahrendes Automobil.

Traps: Dieser Wildholz! Der soll was erleben. Junge, Junge! Rücksichtslos gehe ich nun vor, rücksichtslos. Dem drehe ich mal den Hals um. Wird sich wundern. Unnachsichtlich! Kein Pardon, keine Gnade Nee. Mir nicht. Meint wohl, ich sei bei der Heilsarmee. Fünf Prozent will er mir abkippen. Fünf Prozent! Ich rieche den Braten. Zum Glück, daß es mit Stürler klappte. Das ist ein Gewinnchen, den habe ich schön hereingelegt. - Nanu, was ist denn auf einmal mit dem Wagen los?

Wagengeräusche.

Traps: Weiß. Nichts zu machen. Wenigstens eine Garage in der Nähe. He, Sie da!

Garagist: Was ist denn mit Ihrem Studebaker los?

Traps: Weiß der Teufel. Wollte eben diese kleine Steigung nehmen, da rührt er sich nicht mehr von der Stelle."

Die Handlung beginnt mit einer Situation, in die Jeder kommen kann, ob mit Studebaker oder VW. Vielleicht gibt es deshalb in Dörfern gute Reparaturwerkstätten? Die Umstände sind leicht mit wenigen Geräuschen darzustellen. Der Monolog der Hauptfigur läßt kaum einen Zweifel über den Charakter des Sprechers.

Beispiel 2: "Das Schiff Esperanza" von Fred von Hoenschelmann
Unrsendung 1953, Hamburg

"Zimmer. Eine Schreibmaschine tickt: Von draußen gelegentlich das Tuten der Hafenschlepper.

Mann: Name?

Axel: Axel Grove.

Mann: Alter?

Axel: Dreiundzwanzig.

Mann: Sie suchen eine Heuer als - ?

Axel: Leichtmatrose.

Mann blättert: Sie sind auch als Heizer gefahren?

Axel: Ja, auf der "Batavia".

Mann: Wenn Sie drei Wochen warten -

Axel: Das ist lange.

Mann: —könnten Sie auf die "Aurora" gehen. Belgisches Schiff.

liegt gerade auf Dock. Als Heizer -

Axel: Drei Wochen...

Mann: ... oder eigentlich als Aschenmann. Ich würde Ihnen raten, auf die "Aurora" zu warten. Sonst ist da nämlich nichts für Sie. Allenfalls die "Esperanza".

Axel: Spanien?

Mann: Panama.

Axel: Oh, je.

Mann: Dafür geht die heute Nacht in See. Stückgut nach Wilmington, USA. Sucht einen Leichtmatrosen. Sofort.

Axel: Das ist mein Schiff! Panama? Egal!

Mann: Hier unterschreiben. Aber an Ihrer Stelle würde ich -

Axel: Geben Sie her!

(Federkratzen).

Mann. Würde ich auf die "Aurora" warten.

Axel liest: "Esperanza" Kapitän Grove ... Was? (liest nochmals): Capitän Grove. Das ist mein Name.

Mann: Kennen Sie Kapitän Grove? Ein Verwandter von Ihnen?

Axel aufgeschreckt: Was sagen Sie?

Mann: Ob Sie mit dem Kapitän verwandt sind?

Axel: Wahrscheinlich nicht. Ich weiß nicht. Aber... möglich wäre es schon. Es gab einen Korvettenkapitän Grove. Das war mein Vater. Ich habe seit dreizehn Jahren nichts von ihm gehört. Erst kam der Krieg. Dann ging alles bei uns kaputt. Dreizehn Jahre... Ich habe immer gedacht, er lebt nicht mehr.

Mann: Es gibt viele Leute, die Grove heißen.

Axel : Aber merkwürdig ist es.

Mann: Übrigens, was ich vorhin von der "Esperanza" gesagt habe —

Axel: Ja, was sagten Sie doch?

Mann: Nichts, Jedenfalls nichts Nachteiliges. Ein altes Schiff, sehr alt sogar, und etwas verbaut. Hat schon einen krummen Rücken bekommen... Wissen Sie, wenn über so ein Schiff die Jahre hindbergestrichen sind die Stürme... Das ist wie bei einer Katze, die macht auch einen krummen Buckel, wenn man ihr über den Rücken streicht... bei einem Schiff sieht das vielleicht etwas komisch aus, zugegeben, aber -

Axel: Wenn es wirklich mein Vater ist, der die "Esperanza" fährt, dann ist sie ein prima Schiff.

Mann: Natürlich.

Das Heuerbüro wird durch das Geräusch einer Schreibmaschine charakterisiert. Das Tuten der Hafenschlepper löst Fernweh aus. Das Gespräch ist bewußt sachlich, nur auf das Notwendigste beschränkt und doch wird damit die wichtigste Person vorgestellt. Der Konflikt des Stückes wird erst durch den Namen des Kapitäns und des Schiffes angedeutet. Die kurzen Bemerkungen über das Schiff "Esperanza" erwecken die Spannung. Sie entsteht aber erst, als der sachliche Dialog aufgelockert wird.

Bispiel 3: "Allah hat hundert Namen" von Günter Eich, Ursendung 1957.

"Im Treppenhaus der Ägyptischen Botschaft zu Damaskus."

Jüngling: Euer Wort, Vater der Weisheit!

Hakim: Nicht Vater der Weisheit! Ich bin Hausmeister der

"agyptischen Botschaft in Damaskus. Stört mich nicht, junger Herr, ich habe die Treppe zu fegen.

Jüngling: Weist mich nicht ab! Ich komme von weit her, meine Füße sind wund .

Hakim: Zu Fuß? Wie unsinning! Es gibt Schiffe, Autos, Flugzeuge.

Jüngling: Der Prophet sagte zu mir: Geh! Er sagte nicht: Fahre!

Hakim: Mohammed starb im zehnten Jahr unserer Zeitrechnung.

Jüngling: Er erschien mir und sagte -

Hakim: Er erschien Euch? Das ist etwas anderes! Setzt Euch hier neben mich auf die Stufen!

Jüngling: Er sagte: Mache dich auf und gehe nach Damaskus zu Hakim dem Agypter. Er wird dir sagen, wie er den hundertsten Namen Allahs erfuhr.

Hakim: Ist Euch der Prophet oft erschienen?

Jüngling: Dieses eine Mal."

Die Apostrophierung "Vater der Weisheit" läßt schon an eine Begebenheit im Orient denken. Als Hakim die modernen Verkehrsmittel aufzählt, ist auch die Zeit bestimmt. Der Prophet ist verantwortlich für die Handlung, aber nur als Stimme!

Beispiel 4 : "Biedermann und die Brandstifter", Max Frisch
Ursendung 1953, Bayerischer Rundfunk.

"Liebe Hörerinnen und Hörer! Herr Biedermann, der Held unserer unwahrscheinlichen Geschichte, wartet bereits im

Nebenzimmer, ich sehe ihn hier durch die große Scheibe, aber er kann mich nicht hören... Sie alle, liebe Hörerinnen und Hörer, kennen Herrn Biedermann, wenn auch vielleicht unter anderem Namen."

Die Hauptfigur wird vorgestellt, kommt aber noch nicht gleich ins Spiel. Mit den Worten des Ansagers oder gar des Autors ist auch zugleich eine gewisse Distanz zur Hauptfigur geschaffen. Die Sprache kann eben auch Distanz schaffen im Hörspiel. Der Ansager ist am Spiel meistens unbeteiligt, will aber den Hörer interessieren: "Sie alle kennen Herrn Biedermann."

Nach der Einstimmung in unser erstes Beispiel, "Die Panne" erlebt der Hörer ein hartes Psycho-Spiel. Sein Fall ist klar, Mord, Todesurteil. Am Schluß sitzt der "Held" wieder in einem Studebaker und monologisiert über seine Absichten mit der Konkurrenz: Halsumdrehen, rücksichtslos — . Oder ist es eine Parodie auf die Justiz? Hier mag der Hörer nachdenken. Dasselbe gilt für den Ausgang von Herschels "Das Schiff Esperanza." Nachdem Axels Vaterideal gänzlich zerstört ist, läßt er sich freiwillig mit den Auswanderern aussetzen. Er rettet damit einem von sieben das Leben. Weiß er, daß er ertrinken wird? Weiß er, was das für ein Mensch ist dessen Leben er rettet? Damit mag sich der Hörer auseinandersetzen, genug, daß er den Denkanstoß bekam. Günter Eichs Spiel, "Allah hat hundert Namen" ist ebenso wie "Die Panne" zyklisch angeordnet. Hakim erzählt dem Jüngling mit ihm auf der Treppe sitzend seine Irrfahrten. Die einzelnen Szenen werden eingeblendet: Paris, Dmaskus u.a. Es

gibt ihn wirklich, den hundertsten Namen Allahs. Man kann ihn aber nur übersetzen, wie Hakim meint, zum Beispiel in dem Glanz einer gefegten Treppe. Nebenbei bekommt man eine Serie von Schimpfwörtern zu hören aus dem Munde des Botschafters, Die sind ja wohl eher bekannt als die Beinamen Allahs, Günter Eichs Humor als Ausklang!

Max Frisch beendet sein Hörspiel "Biedermann und die Brandstifter mit der Absage des Autors, die immer wieder von Detonationen unterbrochen wird. Dieses Hörspiel läßt viele Interpretationen zu, historische, allgemeine und ist wie kaum eines wieder aktuell!

Die vier angeführten Beispiele belegen die Bedeutung des optischen Wortes für das Hörspiel. Das Wort führt ein, es kann aber auch Distanz schaffen. Geräusche untermalen eine Szene, Stimmen im Verlauf des Spiels motivieren die Handlung. Wichtig ist, daß die Anzahl der Stimmen begrenzt ist, zwei höchstens drei kann ein Hörer gleichzeitig unterscheiden. Kamps sagt in seinen Ausführungen "Aspekte des Hörspiels": "Je weniger real und um so unbestimmter die Szene, desto höher fällt im allgemeinen die Wertschätzung des Stücks als Hörspiel aus."

Sicher ist berechtigt, was Walter Jens sagte, daß unsere jüngeren Autoren nicht im Roman sondern auf anderen Gebieten das Höchste geleistet hätten, dabei auch im Hörspiel.

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ABORDAGEM CRÍTICA DE UM TEXTO FANTÁSTICO: "A QUEDA DA
CASA DE USHER"

Julio César Jeha

O objetivo deste trabalho é examinar um texto fantástico segundo o pensamento de alguns teóricos do século XX. A omissão de vários nomes se justifica tanto pela inadequação de sua abordagem teórica ao texto escolhido, quanto pela necessidade de se limitar o escopo do trabalho proposto.

A obra a ser estudada é "A queda da Casa de Usher", de E.A. Poe.¹ Eis a história: o narrador é chamado por um amigo de infância, Roderick Usher, para auxiliá-lo a sair de um estado depressivo. Durante sua estada na Casa de Usher, Madeline, irmã de Roderick, sofre um ataque cataléptico e é enterrada viva pelos dois amigos. Uma semana mais tarde, ela volta e sua aparição causa a morte de Roderick e dela própria.

Poe articula esta fábula em uma trama que se tornou um dos clássicos da ficção fantástica. Este ramo de ficção caracteriza-se por (re)velar um desejo proibido, um interdito. Freud definiu o fantástico como sendo o 'Unheimliche', isto é, uma sensação de estranhamento de algo no entanto vagamente familiar.² O discurso fantástico seria, assim, uma revelação de desejos e medos reprimidos pelos diversos códigos de controle a que o homem está submetido.

Tal fantasmagoria se realiza em duas instâncias no texto: na linguagem e na estrutura. Chklovski considera o trabalho poético nada "mais que a acumulação e revelação de novos procedimentos para dispor e elaborar o material verbal, e este consiste antes na disposição das imagens que na sua criação."³ É a 'dispositio' de Horácio, que há mais de dois mil anos já dava ênfase ao arranjo das imagens no discurso. Tal arranjo não visa, segundo Chklovski, a um reconhecimento imediato, mas antes, a uma visão do objeto. A arte seria, então, o obscurecimento da forma, o aumento da dificuldade e da duração da percepção.⁴

O narrador de Poe compartilha dessa opinião ao relatar suas sensações diante da Casa de Usher:

Fui obrigado a recorrer à conclusão insatisfatória de que existem, sem a menor dúvida, combinações de objetos naturais muito simples que têm o poder de afetar-nos desse modo, embora a análise desse poder se baseie em considerações que ficam além da nossa apreensão. Era possível, refleti, que um arranjo simplesmente diferente de particularidades da cena, dos detalhes do quadro, fosse o bastante para modificar, ou, talvez, para aniquilar aquela impressão dolorosa. (p. 4)

É essa noção quase matemática de arranjos e combinações que faz Eikhenbaum dizer que "a 'differentia específica' da arte não se exprime através dos elementos que constituem a obra, mas através da utilização particular que se faz deles."⁵ O texto é, então, um tabuleiro de xadrez onde o narrador move as peças de

acordo com as infinitas possibilidades que lhe permite a posição de 'master ludi'.

O jogo é (des)velar o 'eu' numa narrativa que é um misto de confissão, contrição e, também, deleite. É (re)viver um passado que não quer se mostrar como passado: a impossibilidade de definição é o traço que o marca:

Não sei como foi (...) Que era aquilo — detive-me a pensar — que era aquilo (...)? (p. 3)

A entrada do jogo/texto é o lago, ponto focal de uma paisagem extrema, de uma geografia de fantasmas. Contemplá-lo é fruir o movimento, a vertigem, a antecipação de um deslocamento sensorial feroz, num universo onde não há outro Tempo, mas uma outra dimensão regida por leis espaciais e temporais próprias.⁶

O narrador é Narciso que se descobre ao ver-se refletido na água e não sobrevive ao espelhamento fatal:

Contemplei a cena que tinha diante de mim (...) com uma completa depressão de alma, que não posso comparar, apropriadamente, a nenhuma outra sensação terrena, exceto com a que sente, ao despertar, o viciado em ópio, com a amarga volta à vida cotidiana, com a atroz descida do vêu. (p. 3)

Vêu de māyā, a ilusão, que é rasgado em frangalhos revelando a unidade primordial do 'eu' com o universo. Do choque dialético entre o apolíneo e o dionisíaco renasce o indivíduo, nauseado com a intrusão da realidade. Náusea que é o efeito do conhecimento e o conhecimento inibe a ação, pois, a ação do indivíduo não mudará jamais a ordem eterna das coisas.⁷ Resta-lhe o pa-

pel de espectador no 'theatrum mundi', onde se desenrola o "corpo a corpo de Eros e Tanatos onde Eros tende em direção a Tanatos e onde a morte é mais viva que o vivente. Donde o horror. Serã necessário então matar a morte."⁸

O olhar do narrador é uma infração à ordem natural do lago/espelho, que vai detonar uma narrativa estruturada em círculos concêntricos.⁹ Sua viagem ao centro do círculo é a descida de Dante ao Inferno em busca de Beatriz, é a provação que o herói deve sofrer antes de ascender aos céus, é a dolorosa busca de si mesmo.

O primeiro círculo é o da casa antropomórfica de estabilidade precária:

Aquilo me lembrava muito a enganadora integridade das estruturas de madeira apodrecidas, durante longos anos, em alguma abóboda esquecida, sem contato com o sopro do ar exterior. (p. 6)

A casa/túmulo esconde o morto incriminador mas não por muito tempo:

Talvez o olhar de um observador metuculoso pudes- se ter descoberto uma fenda mal perceptível, que, estendendo-se desde o telhado da fachada descia em zigue-zague até perder-se nas águas sombrias do lago. (p. 6)

É a fenda que separa o discurso consciente do discurso incons- ciente.

Uma vez dentro da Casa, o narrador encontra-se com seu fantasma: Roderick, que por sua vez tem seu próprio fantasma: Madeline, sua irmã. É o segundo círculo, onde Eros e Tanatos tomam nomes interditos: incesto e fratricídio. A relação entre os irmãos é de vida-morte, amor-ódio. Madeline é o oposto de Roderick: o que lhe falta para adquirir o equilíbrio: a hiperestesia dele se contrapõe a catalepsia dela. Donde a atração/repulsão.

Outra vez o olhar infringe a ordem, penetrando e matando. Medusa cúmplice que petrifica o fantasma do fantasma. Roderick não vê a irmã; é o narrador que serve de 'relayeur' entre o fantasma e o texto:

Enquanto falava, Lady Madeline (...) passou, lentamente, pela parte mais distante do aposento e, sem ter notado minha presença, desapareceu. Olhei-a tomado de profundo assombro, não destituído de terror — (...) e soube que o olhar que dirigi a sua pessoa seria, provavelmente, o último, pelo menos enquanto vivesse, já não seria vista. (p. 9-10)

É esta mulher muito próxima muito distante que subverte o texto ao usurpar o lugar da Mulher e se oferecer ao olhar do narrador. Ela é, em todos os sentidos, estranha ao narrador. E no entanto, ela é o fantasma de Roderick, que é o fantasma do narrador:

... sinto que logo chegará o momento em que deverei abandonar, ao mesmo tempo, a vida e a razão, em alguma luta com o horrendo fantasma — o MEDO. (p. 9)

O fantasma é tão horrendo que é inominável: o 'MEDO' é o medo de ser enterrado vivo, é o medo de enfrentar seus fantasmas e assumir a vida. E "a vida é o nome impronunciável da morte."¹⁰

A acumulação de marcas indiciais colabora para criar o cenário do enterro em vida:

As janelas, compridas, estreitas e ogivais, achavam-se a tal distância do negro assoalho de carvalho que se tornavam inteiramente inacessíveis por dentro. (...) O olhar, no entanto, esforçava-se em vão para alcançar os cantos mais distantes do aposento, ou os recessos do teto abobadado e trabalhado a cinzel.)p. 6-7)

Um pequeno quadro representava o interior de uma abóbada ou túnel imensamente longo e retangular, de muros baixos, lisos, brancos e sem interrupção ou adorno. (p. 6-7)

Este cenário de dúvidas, trevas e impotência paralisa o 'eu': o fantasma do sepultamento envolve de maneira imprecisa porém avassaladora aquele que exuma seus mortos. Roderick escreve 'O palácio assombrado' para exorcizar seus fantasmas mas é inútil, a exumação só serviu para fortalecê-los. Ele realiza a metáfora e enterra Madeline viva, sem se aperceber do erro fatal. Não há Casa/túmulo que possa aprisionar um fantasma. A ressurreição de Madeline é a imagem perfeita do estranho familiar de Freud. Ao se deparar com o interdito Roderick sucumbe, arrastando a Casa consigo para dentro do lago. Dessa vez, o lago/espelho é a saída do jogo/texto, a morte de Narciso, a libertação do narrador. Com um último olhar, o narra-

dor devolve o texto à ordem do mundo exterior.

Esta leitura do texto fantástico como fantasmático, isto é, articulado como um fantasma, é, provavelmente, a mais adequada a tal tipo de texto. O que não exclui a possibilidade de várias outras leituras serem viáveis e mesmo aconselháveis. Por exemplo, pode-se chegar à poética e à cosmogonia de Poe partindo deste mesmo texto, sem que uma leitura inválida de a outra. Se não, vejamos.

Ao se atentar para o fato de que os irmãos Usher "eram gêmeos, e que sempre existira entre ambos certa simpatia de natureza quase inexplicável" (p. 16), pode-se considerá-los como uma unidade antes de nascer. Ao virem à luz, foram movidos por forças de atração e repulsão, até se re-unirem num abraço final. Esta, em poucas linhas, é uma metáfora da cosmogonia de Poe, onde a unidade inicial só é reconquistada após uma relação dialética de atração e repulsão e, mesmo assim, através da destruição. Aqui talvez esteja a chave para se entender o porque de Poe escrever textos tão macabros: ele não vê saída a não ser através da aniquilação material. O que nos leva à sua poética: se de um lado temos Roderick/Madeline, de outro temos a Casa/túmulo, que se confundem. Igualando-se a segunda parte ao mundo material, à forma, tem-se por oposição o espírito, o conteúdo, na primeira parte. Onde que para Poe o espírito só se liberta do material pela decadência física, pela aniquilação total. Com respeito ao conteúdo e à forma há uma diferença: do divórcio de ambos não resta criação poética, não resta literatura digna de tal nome.

O fantástico, então, serve indubitavelmente de caminho

de acesso ao 'eu' e também ao social, uma vez que ele espelha não sō os fantasmas de um indiv́duo como ainda os de uma cultura. Funciona igualmente como soluçāo para o mist́rio do prōprio processo literário: "tudo se passa como se a literatura tivesse esgotado ou ultrapassado os recursos de seu modo representativo, e quisesse refletir sobre seu prōprio discurso."¹

NOTAS

¹POE, E.A. "A queda da Casa de Usher". In: _____. Histórias extraordinárias. Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 1970. p. 3-22. Todas as citações subseqüentes se referem a esta edição e serão indicadas no texto entre parênteses.

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⁴Id. Ibid. p. 45.

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MISS HELLMAN'S MOOD PLAYS: The Autumn Garden AND
Toys in the Attic

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The Autumn Garden and Toys in the Attic are probably the most mature plays ever written by Miss Hellman. They, as well as The Little Foxes and Another Part of the Forest, belong to the Southern cycle family dramas and, as such, deal specifically with the Southern background and way of life.

The Autumn Garden intertwines the lives of several couples, long-time "guests" at Constance Tuckerman's summer resort home, her living. Sophie, Constance's French niece, helps her with the housework. Among the guests are Nick Denery (Constance's girlhood love) and his wife Nina, General Ben Griggs and his wife Rose, Carrie Ellis (her mother Mrs. Mary Ellis) and her son Frederick, Sophie's fiancé. No alliance is entirely successful, Nina despises Nick for his philandering, but need his company. Ben does not love Rose, but decides to go on living with her because it is easier and because he pities her. Frederick relies on an homosexual relationship with a man called Payson in order to escape from his mother Carrie's possessiveness. Sophie blackmails Nick after the neighbors find out that he has slept in her room. She wants the money to return to Europe. Constance discovers that she should have married Crossman, but that it is now too late. Little changes: the characters only become more aware of their realities. Toys in the Attic is set in the Berniers house in New Orleans. As the action begins Julian Berniers is returning back home with his

wife, Lily. Anna and Carrie, his sisters, receive them effusively, but the fact that he is now rich disappoints them. They would rather have him dependent upon them for the rest of their lives. Lily suspects that he has married her for her family's money. Only Albertine Prine, Lily's mother, rejoices over Julian's success. The climax comes when Lily learns that Julian has extorted money from a powerful lawyer, whose wife had been Julian's lover. In a fit of jealousy and despair she informs against her husband. Warkins, the lawyer, has Julian spanked and robbed. As the play ends Julian is again dependent upon Lily and his sisters' money.

These plays differ from the Hubbard sequence in that they stress mood. In their own ways they show the social phenomena of their time more through characters than through plot and action. The Little Foxes and Another Part of the Forest present Miss Hellman's protest against the exploitation of man and land. She now changes her thesis to the more personal theme that existence is only meaningful in action. The psychological atmosphere carries the message. The scene and the season suggest the tension which manifests itself in the conflicts between the characters. Situations are shown, nothing is explained, nothing is proved. The dynamics of plot and action gives way to the statics of mood and idea. The change in method and theme provokes an equally meaningful change in language. The dialogues are less abrupt, more subtle, less obvious, more loosely constructed. There is a tendency to lyricism and, as a consequence, a movement from the objective to the symbolic, as, for example, when Lily remembers her wedding day and her feelings connected with it: "(smiling, suddenly uplifted, happy). Did it rain? I don't remember. It was all days

to me: Cold and hot days, fog and light, and I was on a high hill running down with the top of me, and flying with the left of me, and singing with the right of me—(Softly) I was doing everything nice anybody had ever done nice"¹ (p. 699). The characters gain a third dimension. Unlike the previous plays where Miss Hellman takes sides, here she exposes facts and feelings without judging them. Mood, without judgement, finds its most natural expression in setting and scene.

The scene of The Autumn Garden and Toys in the Attic is the Deep South. The first play is set in a summer vacation town on the Gulf of Mexico, about a hundred miles from New Orleans, a place and situation Lillian Hellman knows from her childhood. Born in New Orleans, she moved to New York when she was six. But she kept coming back to her native town to stay at her aunts' boarding house for six months each year. There she observed the life of the boarders, although she, at the time, "did not connect the grown men and women in literature with the grown men and women"² she saw around her. The second play also draws on her experience, perhaps more so. It is set in New Orleans, not in a vacation house, but still people come and go. Miss Hellman had meant to make Julian the center of her play. She could not. She explains: "I don't think characters turn out the way you think they are going to turn out. They don't always go your way. At least they don't go my way,"³ "I can write about men, but I can't write a play that centers on a man."⁴ The result of her efforts was a play focusing on women and place. The women were Julian's sisters, his wife,

her mother. The place was the same "solid middle class" (p. 685) New Orleans house she had known in her childhood.

In both plays the setting shows a house once luxurious, but now becoming old and shabby and decadent, like its inhabitants. In both plays the season is summer. The characters are lethargic. Heat affects them as it does the crops. Hellman is not alone as a Southerner writer in expressing this environmental influence. Such influence is, for example, the particular hallmark of Tennessee Williams' plays. He too uses heat as a metaphor for the oppressive human condition of the Southerner. It is not simply a fictional device. The Southern economy and life traditionally relied upon agriculture. Produce is dependent upon the weather: too wet, too dry, too hot, too cold. It can make the difference between eating and starving, between success and failure. The Southerner has always related his happiness to his environment. When the environment reacts unkindly, as when it is too hot, the people, rooted to their land like the plants, can only stay and suffer. So it is with Miss Hellman's characters. The oppressive heat of Toys in the Attic wilts the characters. It also expresses their depression. The opening dialogue (Act One) establishes the mood and prepares for the violence to come:

Carrie (as she hears Anna moving about in the kitchen).

That you, Anna?

Anna (her voice). Just got home.

Carrie. Hot.

Anna. Paper says a storm.

Carrie. I know. I'll take the plants in.

Anna. I just put them out. Let them have a little storm air.

Carrie. I don't like them out in a storm. Worries me. I don't like storms. I don't believe plants do, either (p. 685).

Carrie transfers her feelings to the plants.

People and vegetables are exposed to the same natural laws and subject to the same catastrophes. Carrie, as her name suggests, is as passive as the plants and so are several characters in the play. They moan and groan and suffer, but have no control over their deeds, no capacity to change.

This passage from Toys in the Attic as well as the title The Autumn Garden emphasize the influence of weather and season on living beings and convey Miss Hellman's intention to relate mankind with nature, characters with setting.

In these plays the archetypal motif is that man's life is a natural life. Mankind is translated into nature. The garden functions as the microcosmos for the world of humans. The end of summer equals the end of growth, be it plant or human. The symbolic meaning attached to the plant-man metaphor is not new. This basic archetypal motif is particularly appropriate to the South, where one's fate as a human is directly affected by the fate of the vegetable kingdom of crops, of plants, of the Southern climate, of long hot summers and dreary winters.

Two connections can be made. One, as the economy goes, so goes the happiness of the characters. And two, as climate, setting, and weather must be endured, attempts to surmount them do not succeed. The truth is that the characters only

approach greatness as they try to get rid of the environmental influence. The greater their failure to break out of the grip of circumstance, the greater they take on tragic characteristics. This is the closest that Miss Hellman comes to dramatizing the tragic condition, and that, in the twentieth century, is more successful than the attempts of most dramatists. Still Miss Hellman suggests that the characters are no more responsible for their misfortunes than they are for the heat or for the condition of nature in general. So Carrie relates to Anna her conversation with her boss:

Carrie. He let me leave the office after lunch.
"You're looking a little peaked, Miss Berniers, from the heat." "I said I've been looking a little peaked for years in heat, in cold, in rain, when I was young and now" (p. 686).

Such psychological, rather than economic or environmental determinism, recurs throughout the play. Later Carrie mentions: "Oh, it's too hot tonight," and, when Lily remarks "My, it's awfully hot to go to work" (p. 713), Carrie replies: "Yes. And sometimes it's awfully cold" (p. 713).

Lillian Hellman makes good use of the antithesis cold-heat. She contrasts Albertine's aloofness and self-reliance with Anna, Carrie and Lily's emotional dependence. When the eccentric lady comes to inform the two sisters about Julian's arrival, she makes a movement to enter the house, then hesitates and says to Henry: "Perhaps it would be best if you went in. I'm not good at seeing people anymore, and there will be much

chatter. (He doesn't answer her. She laughs). Very well. But I'm sure it's hot in there. Would you tell them I'm out here?" (p. 692). Heat here stultifies people into a lack of action and incapability.

This same opposition of heat to cold recurs meaningfully throughout the plays, and is an important device to convey the mood. Heat and cold support life when well used—destroy it if abused. Both can be measured scientifically, but in the mind of the individual they have subjective connotations. They can express one's degree of emotional balance, dependence, and self-reliance. In Toys in the Attic Lily "toils not." She—like Anna and especially like Carrie—is weak, inactive and emotionally dependent. She calls for Albertine: "Where's Mama?" (p. 742) and not finding her turns to Carrie, as impotent as herself: "Don't you want to help me? It's hot" (p.742).

The notion of heat is also implied in the very title of the play. The attic is a room in the top of the house, immediately under the roof. No insulation is used in attics and consequently they are very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. The attic, moreover, is a place where things are put away for being either useless or infrequently used. As they are things they are passive and as they are passive they must suffer both heat or cold according to the season. There are two different levels of interpretation for the word "toys" in the title. In a first level the characters are living playthings. They are submissive, dependent, and unable to control their feelings even though they can tell right from wrong. They lack self-assurance and self-control and so are

driven by their emotions—too hot, too cold. A second interpretation is that the "toys" stand for mementos of past happiness or past life, future wishes and future dreams. Toys are objects which stimulate the imagination of the child, but they do not intrinsically have the quality to fulfill its necessities. Toys beget illusions and not reality.

The same change from hot to cold is implied in the title of The Autumn Garden. Here again the metaphor is plants. In this play Lillian Hellman moves a step along in the season and instead of having toys in a hot summer attic she focuses on an autumn garden somewhere between the end of summer and winter as the middle-aged characters are somewhere between ripe and rot. Once more she evokes heat to convey the psychological tension of her characters. Rose Griggs tries to start a conversation with her husband about their impending divorce and so she says: "It was not so hot in town. Henry's got that wonderful air conditioning, of course, but it's never like your own air. I think Sunday's the hottest day of the year anyway" (p. 539). This disjointed speech is symbolic of her equally disjointed state of mind. Rose hates the idea of losing her husband's affection, and her emotional unstableness is expressed by means of the antithesis heat/cold, as it appears in the form of hot weather/air conditioning. Heat is connected with Rose, her anxieties, her insecurity, her desire to be young again or at least to look young, her need to lure General Griggs back to her. The air conditioning represents the artificiality

of town life, its coldness and impersonality. In both plays the heat is oppressive. It has slightly different connotations in different contexts, but the basic meaning is that life vanishes and people will achieve very little. The equation is: heat equals emotional dependence and inaction, cold equals aloofness and artificiality. And people equal toys and plants. People and plants must achieve ripeness, but it will only come after a continuous process of maturation. They need warmth and water, but not heat and cold and storm.

The philosophical problem of relating being, growing, and doing is what Miss Hellman attempts to present in her Mood Plays. For that reason she creates her characters and lets them, like unstable compounds, wander from one mode of existence to another. Some of them revert to what they had always been but others evolve from toys into plants and from plants into individuals, who are, as Lorena R. Holmin says, "forced simultaneously into self-confrontation."⁵

This self-confrontation results in the characters' recognition of their failure in life and their responsibility for it. It comes suddenly through the unexpected influence of a catalyst. He is Nick in The Autumn Garden and Julian in Toys in the Attic. There are obvious similarities. Nick and Julian are Southerners who had been away in Europe and Chicago, respectively, and were anxiously expected back. They are superficial, simple-minded, emotionally dependent and psychologically weak. Their wives Nina and Lily, are both rich women. They recognize their husbands' flaws and yet cultivate them. The reason for such an apparent contradiction is that these very

flaws keep husband and wife together. Nick tells Nina that she hates herself for loving him because she has contempt for his inconstancy, his shallowness, his ostentation and his lies. And when she mentions she would not have married him if she had known him well, he replies: "You would have married me. Or somebody like me. You've needed to look down on me. And to be ashamed of yourself for doing it" (p. 531). The relationship between Nick and Nina is described as that of a weak and superficial man, unfaithful but dependent on his wife, whose unconscious sadomasochism needs the company of such an immature husband.

Julian is incapable of earning money and keeping it. His sisters are aware of that, and when he suddenly comes back home without even a short notice, they wonder what might have happened to the shoe factory business he had started with Lily's money:

Carrie."... What do you think?

Anna. I think it's happened again. And he feels bad and doesn't want to tell us.

Carrie. Well, that's natural enough. Who wants to come home and say they've failed? (p. 695).

Lily and Carrie want Julian to remain poor and consequently dependent on them. Lily suffers when he succeeds. She says to his sister: "I feel most bad and sad, Miss Carrie, because what he married me for, he doesn't need anymore" (p. 740). Albertine, Lily's mother, is shocked and advises her:"Are you really saying that if Julian stayed dependent on you, all would be safe"(p.719),

"... be happy that Julian has finally had a little luck. Lily, he would have come to hate your money" (p. 719).

Nick is basically indifferent to the feelings of his companions and too superficial to care. Julian, in turn, unconsciously unbalances the apparent harmony of the family, bringing its hatred, frustrations, complexes and inertia into the open. Nick and Julian function in these plays as catalysts that bring on action in a chemical compound, but it is Griggs who has vision, and like the Greek chorus, echoes, in the last act of The Autumn Garden, Miss Helman's thesis that existence is only meaningful in our daily acts: "So at any given moment you're only the sum of your life up to then. There are no big moments you can reach unless you've a pile of smaller moments to stand on. That big hour of decision, the turning point in your life, the some day you've counted on when you'd suddenly wipe out your past mistakes, do the work you'd never done, think the way you'd never thought, have what you'd never had—it just doesn't come suddenly. You've trained yourself for it while you waited-or you've frittered yourself away, Crossman" (pp. 541-42). The symbolic meaning of the plant-man metaphor can be extended here. Both plant and man grow slowly. Their movement from birth to maturation and then to age is gradual though imperceptible to the eye. Its result, obvious. A plant needs everyday care to yield good fruit. A man's successful life is not made of one heroic moment. It is the sum of everyday, simple, positive good deeds. Men, like plants, cannot easily change their place, situation, condition. They may be destroyed. Even Sophie shows that her strength comes from her natural habitat and must go back to Europe at war, where she belongs. Carrie, like

Griggs, feels the inefficacy of her existence, empty of smaller but firm moments for her to stand on. She, like Griggs, recognizes the tragedy of her life, of Anna's life, hers and Anna's hubris. They also frittered themselves away waiting for that big hour of wealth, power, self-reliance. They have dreamed of getting rich and making Julian rich, of going to Europe, of family love, and when their dreams come true they hate those dreams and they hate themselves most.

Carrie wants to be rich to increase Julian's dependence on her. She wants to pet and spoil him. But it is Julian who contrives to acquire a fortune. Carrie's revolt unmasks her. She turns her anger against her house and the trip to Europe, now the symbols of Julian's wealth: "This house. This awful house, always, always, always" (p.708). "Go to Europe. What are you talking about. ... Well, you go to Europe and I'll go to work" (p. 713). She turns her anger against the symbols of Julian's status: "I hate caviar. The one time I ever ate it, I hated it. Just hated it" (p. 707), and against her sister, who had perceived her incestuous love for Julian: "I told you I didn't love you anymore. Now I tell you that I hate you" (p. 737).

Carrie is too sensitive for the world she lives in. She, like Griggs and most of the characters of Miss Hellman's Mood Plays, is a symbolic representation of the longings and frustrations of a society that is past its power, a lost and frightened society, whose feelings of incompleteness, boredom and fear are apparent in various dialogues throughout the plays:

Carrie. There is no need to worry about me anymore.
Lily. Oh, I do. And I will. I'm frightened of you.
Carrie (angrily). Your favorite word. Did it ever
occur to you that other people are frightened
too?

Lily. You? No. No, indeed. Of what, Miss Carrie?

Carrie. Of my hair which isn't nice anymore, of my
job which isn't there anymore, of praying for
small things and knowing just how small they
are of walking by a mirror when I didn't know it
would be there — (She gasps) People say "Those
Berniers girls, so devoted. That Carrie was
pretty, and then one day she wasn't; just an
old maid, working for her brother". They are
right. An old maid with candied oranges as a
right proper treat each Saturday night. We
didn't see people anymore, I guess, because
we were frightened of saying or hearing more
than we could stand. (Very angrily) There are
lives that are shut and should stay shut, you
hear me, and people who should not talk about
themselves, and that was us (p. 739).

Carrie's nice hair, her pretty figure, her youth, her job are
past and gone. She has lost her sister and her brother's
affection. She may never have had them. Nothing is left to
Carrie but her incestuous desires disguised in fraternal love, her
fancy dreams — those candied oranges she had been sick of for so
long. Carrie's big moment has not arrived, will not arrive.
She has no smaller moments to stand on. Carrie is afraid.

Griggs takes life seriously. He dreams of starting it again,
of basing it on meaningful everyday action. Griggs shudders as he
recognizes that, like everybody else, he will take the easier path
of giving up wishes and ideals. In his weakness he dreams of
seeing his sister again because she looks like his mother — a

psychological regression in search of support. Griggs notices people's daily faults- Rose's faults, his own faults. He knows it is difficult to assume them, but cannot forgive his wife's pretense. He hates simulation and is afraid of lies:

Griggs. What point did you come to about my decision?

Rose. Decision? Your decision-

Griggs (tensely). Please stop playing the fool. I'm afraid of you when you start playing that game.

Rose. You afraid of me?

Griggs. Yes, me afraid of you (p. 540).

Rose and Lily are insecure. Lily is a child-wife who cannot tell love from sex. She cuts her hand and hits her leg against a table on purpose to lure her husband to bed. She says to him: "Make me cured, Julian. Let's go to bed and maybe you'll be pleased with me- Maybe. (She puts his hand on her breast. Anna turns away, Carrie stands staring at them) And if you're pleased with me, then all the bad will go away..." (p. 730). Rose is even more pathetic. Griggs does not actually love her and she fights desperately to prove him to the contrary. Her weapons are ineffectual, phony. She pretends to be younger than she is, uses extravagant clothes, tells him about her love affair with his cousin, Ralph Sommers.

Rose. ... I'm frightened, Ben. I play the fool, but I'm not so big a fool that I don't know I haven't got anybody to help me.... I've got nobody and I'm scared. Awful scared (pp. 540-41).

Lily and Rose are afraid of losing their husbands. They are afraid of loneliness.

And Anna is afraid of telling the truth- of bringing to the surface Carrie's desires and the family hatred:

Carrie. ...You used to tell us that when you love, truly love, you take your chances on being hated by speaking out the truth. (Points inside) Go in and do it.

Anna. All right. I'll take that chance now and tell you that you want to sleep with him and always have. Years ago I used to be frightened that you would try and I would watch you and suffer for you.

Carrie (after a second, in a whisper). You never said those words. Tell me I never heard those words.

Tell me, Anna. (When there is no answer) you were all I ever had. I don't love you anymore.

Anna. That was the chance I took (p. 732).

Both plays, The Autumn Garden and Toys in the Attic contain a collection of twentieth century middle-class Southern types who might well be descendants of the Hubbards, without their energy, their strength and their drive for power.

Lily is a modern blend of Birdie and Lavinia. The combination of the two personalities produces another rather bad outcast. Like Birdie she is insecure: "Mama, don't go. Please. I need help. Your help" (p. 714). Like Birdie she is bewildered in her romantic simplicity: "Did you sell me to Julian, Mama?" (p. 718). Like Birdie she is too apologetic: "I'm sorry you don't like me. I wanted you to" (p. 738), "I'm sorry I spoke that way" (p. 714). "Well, tell him. I'm sorry." (p.715), "Are you angry with me?"(p. 701), "Tell me you're not angry with me" (p. 701). Like Lavinia she sometimes acts insane and seeks refuge in the supernatural:

Lily (sits down, speaks quietly). Everyboby left and there I was. The woman said, "You want me, child?" And I said, "Could I buy your knife?" "No," she said. "The knife is not for sale." But I wanted it more than I ever wanted anyting and, well- (Smiles, slyly)—finally, we swapped something—And when it was in my hand, for the first time in life, I just said everything, and asked. The lady said the knife of truth would dress me as in a jacket of iron flowers and though I would do battle, I would march from the battle cleansed. Then I fell asleep—
Albertine. Your many religious experiences have always made me uneasy, Lily—(pp. 717-18).

Lavinia's and Lily's fanaticism is connected with "truth." Lily calls her mother at two in the morning to speak about struggling "up the mountain of truth" (p. 718). Lavinia talks to "God" and hears his voice compelling her "to tell the awful truth" (p.382). Lily in a fit of jealousy informs against Julian provoking his financial ruin. Lavinia in her insanity reveals Marcus' crimes against the South causing him to fall from his comfortable position of pater familias. . Both Lily and Lavinia ignore the range of their acts and because of this they harm their husbands most.

Lily, Birdie and Lavinia are fragile, dependent, too sensitive, neurotic, naïve. They need protection and ask for it— they are lonely. Lily is one more plant responsive to the heat of summer. She consciously despises her mother's fortune: "Did you sell me to Julian, Mama?"(p. 718), Julian's expensive gifts: "I want my ring, I was married in my ring. (She holds up her hand) This is a vulgar ring" (p. 708); and her own money: "My money? Doesn't matter about my money. I don't want money" (p. 699). "I'm

not worried about money, Miss Carrie" (p. 699). Birdie and Lavinia's names also relate them to their environment and circumstances. Birdie is a delicate, light and restless fowl, trapped and caged within the Hubbard family. Lavinia senses her people's sins and longs to purify them.

Gus and Henry are the representatives of the Southern black race of the twentieth century. Like Addie and Coralee they are patient and self-reliant. Although still the servants they have gained more prestige and exercise more control over their masters.

Julian. Gus, my old friend Gus. You're going to have that farm, kid. Go find it and start with this.
(He hands Gus several large bills. Gus looks at them, but doesn't take them).

Gus. You at that again?

Julian. This time I made it. Throw the ice away—
(He shoves the money into Gus's hand).

Gus. Julian, I don't want that kind of trouble again.

Julian. Nobody'll come for it this time. I'm telling you the truth. And there's as much more as you want. Now get going and find the farm.

Gus. Who the hell wants a farm? Got enough trouble. Where'd you make up the farm from? (p. 724).

Henry is both the chauffeur and lover of Albertine, Lily's mother. Albertine is a rich and eccentric lady. She represents democracy of feeling, inviolability of personal whim, intense and self-asserting Southern individualism. She has Regina's strong personality and nearly becomes the center of the play, as Lillian Hellman felt while writing it. She said in an interview at the University of Chicago: "I've left out telling you about the second

most important character— who almost dominates the play now. She's just going to have to stop dominating it or the play's not going to be done."⁶ But Henry seems to be even stronger than Albertine. He is her support and adviser. He helps her in her relationship with Lily.

Henry. You are not wise with Lily.

Albertine. No. I never was. Well, it's been a good year, hasn't it? The best I ever had.

Henry. Nothing has happened.

Albertine. I know Lily. You do, too.

Henry. She's jealous and scared- (p. 728).

The connection between Henry and Albertine provides Miss Hellman with the means to deal with the theme of miscigenation in the South. Lily has no alternative but to accept her mother's association with a black man, even though she doesn't approve of it. She says to Albertine in a fit of rage: "You have talked this way about my friend because you want to bring me pain. Henry makes plans to pain me—(Outside the fence, Henry turns). As you lie in bed with him, Henry makes the plans and tells you what to do"(p. 747). And when Albertine offers her to come back home if she ever needs it she retorts: "Thank you, Mama. Nice of you. But I couldn't go home to you anymore, as long as—" (p. 748), and of course she means as long as Henry is there.

There are still some other notable parallels among the characters of Miss Hellman's Southern Plays. John Bagtry is as weak as Nick and Julian, and he also functions as a catalyst. His presence prompts the action of Another Part of the Forest.

It is because of John that Regina fights Ben and disobeys Marcus. John's chivalric dreams establish the difference between him, Nick, and Julian. These idealistic dreams place John within the social-philosophical context of the Reconstruction. He is, because of these dreams, bigger than the other characters.

The last outstanding similarity is between Alexandra and Sophie. In the early stages of the Mood Plays they are both characterized as naïve, young and obedient. They have both Greek names meaningful when related to their personalities in the plays and to Miss Hellman's conception of altruism and wisdom. One minor dramatic question that arises during the course of their plays is whether Alexandra and Sophie will be capable of awakening to the evil and deceit around them. This question is directly connected with Miss Hellman's main thesis: the immorality of those who "stand around and watch" (p. 199), "of those who fritter themselves away" (p. 542). At the denouement Alexandra and Sophie suffer a radical change. Miss Hellman makes this change too abrupt to be convincing. There is, in the development of the action, no concrete evidence of strength in the girls to justify their rebellion against the Southern family life patterns and their break from that to a more meaningful life. The parallel between Alexandra and Sophie is still evident in the outcome of their loveless engagements. Although Alexandra's marriage is planned by her family and Sophie decides hers by herself, neither marriage takes place. The different times are responsible for the situational differences. Alexandra is a nineteenth century young lady: pure, uncorrupted: an American revival of the Greek defender of man. Sophie is her modern paraphrase: a realistic twentieth century version of the

European common sense both influencing and suffering influence from the American way of life. Sophie is a mixture of good and evil, reminding us that the human personality is round and composed of aggressive as well as tender impulses in an organized equilibrium. Although often prudent and sensible, she does not hesitate to blackmail and lie in order to achieve her aims. Alexandra is idealistic and romantic. Her character retraces the Southern aristocratic modes of living. Sophie is materialistic and pragmatic, prepared to face the hardships of a modern and depersonalized society. Both girls have in common the one quality that Lillian Hellman most admires: the capacity to stand up and do- be it right or wrong. In her book of memoirs, Scoundrel Time⁷, Miss Hellman shows her disappointment towards people, particularly intellectuals, who think but do not act. When Hammet, her "closest" and "most beloved friend,"⁹ was called before McCarthy's House Committee on UnAmerican Activities, not one intellectual, as Miss Hellman recalls, testified on his behalf, a fact which shocked the British editor, Richard Crossman.

Coincidentally Lillian Hellman has given the name Crossman to a peculiarly lonely character, her spokesman in The Autumn Garden. Crossman, like the other characters in the Mood Plays, is mainly concerned with his own problems. He is nostalgic for the past and skeptical in his frustrating search for the meaning of life. He says: "I've often thought that if I started all over again, I'd go right back to where I started and start from there. Otherwise, it wouldn't prove anything" (p. 477). And then he asks: "Does anybody improve with age? Just tell me that, Sophie, and I'll have something to lie awake and think about" (p.490). Crossman's remarks convey one of Miss Hellman's central themes: that an aimless life is not a life, but a burden and a tragedy. She also uses his words ironically, to show the Southerner's narrow conception of honor

and gentility: "Nick is still a Southerner. With us every well-born lady sacrifices her life for something: a man, a house, sometimes a gardenia bush" (p. 482), and to criticize the comfortable position of those who label environment and society as responsible for both collective and individual action. He says first to Griggs: "Haven't you lived in the South long enough to know that nothing is ever anybody's fault?" (p. 477), and then to Constance: "Remarkable the things that make people nervous: coffee, brandy, relatives, running water, too much sun, too little sun. Never anything in themselves. ..." (p. 478). Crossman's words illustrate the thesis that actions are not determined by external forces alone, that genes and will also influence the behavior of a person, a group, a nation—mankind.

Miss Hellman brings to the theatre not only her art, but also a study of the people, place and time she knows. The Hubbard Plays had questioned the social, political, religious and economic trends of the Southern Reconstruction. They had pointed out the corrupt life of a new rich Dixie aristocracy and analysed its origins in human evil. The Mood Plays similarly describe a certain people and a certain era, not by means of local color, but by showing the sterility and emptiness of a decadent society trying to justify itself. Miss Hellman uses the inductive method to prove her points. Her arguments move from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract. Her character's personal situation reflects the national one. There is no conclusive solution. In the end of the plays Constance, Carrie and Anna are left alone— as they had been before the arrival of their guests. Few people change. Many moments of crisis and decision were past

and missed. It is true that the characters recognize their lies and rationalizations, but only to admit that it is too late for them to look for a new and satisfactory answer. Nick and Nina, Rose and Ben, Carrie and Anna decide to stay together, not because they care for each other, but because it will be easier for them.

The Autumn Garden and Toys in the Attic are, like the Hubbard Plays, set in the American South. But in this latter pair, Miss Hellman displays more maturity and detachment in dramatizing controversial facts—in her mode of emphasizing setting, relating character and action. The Mood Plays mark a step forward in Lillian Hellman's craftsmanship. She displays a Chekhovian grasp for unconscious motivations, not previously achieved in the Hubbard sequence.

NOTES

- 1 Lillian Hellman, Another Part of the Forest, in her The Collected Plays (Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 699. All the quotations from Miss Hellman's plays are taken from this edition. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically in the text.
- 2 Lillian Hellman, An Unfinished Woman (Boston: Bantam, 1974), p.8.
- 3 John Phillips and Anne Hollander, "The Art of the Theatre: Lillian Hellman; An Interview", Paris Review, 33 (Winter-Spring, 1965), p.71.
- 4 Lillian Hellman, Pentimento: A Book of Portraits (New York: Signet, 1973), p. 170.
- 5 Lorena Ross Holmin, The Dramatic Works of Lillian Hellman (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1973), p. 135.
- 6 Richard C. Stern, "Lillian Hellman on Her Plays," Contact, 3 (1959), p. 117
- 7 Lillian Hellman, Scoundrel Time (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1976), pp. 153-55.
- 8 Hellman, An Unfinished Woman, p. 224.
- 9 Op.cit., p. 224.

TRAGEDY AND TRAGIC ELEMENTS IN MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

Magda Veloso Fernandes de Tolentino

The word Tragedy comes from the Greek — TRAGŌIDIA, and is thus subdivided:

TRAGOS = goat
ŌIDE = ode, song

According to Aristotle, the origin of the tragedy is in Dionysus' rite, when the song was accompanied by the sacrifice of a goat, which might explain the origin of the name.

Although various dramatic games had been played before by different peoples, it is generally accepted that the origin of the tragedy is Greek, its peak having been reached in the 5th Century b.C. with Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

So, to Aristotle, tragedy springs from a ritual dedicated to Dionysus — god of wine and fertility. As many gods who represent the vital forces of nature, Dionysus dies in Autumn and is reborn in Spring. This explains the cheerful and comic aspects as well as the sad and tragic ones in the rites devoted to the god.

As Dionysus was the god of mask and, by extension, of the metamorphosis, this might explain the use of masks on the stage (Romeo wears a mask in the first scenes of Romeo and Juliet). In the performance of a tragedy on the stage, a few artists play many parts only by using different masks

at different times.

There are other schools of thought, however. William Ridgeway ascribes the birth of tragedy to mimic dances of masked actors in honour of dead heroes. Its origin would thus be a mournful ritual, not the cult of Dionysus.

The Greek tragedy undoubtedly pays homage to this god, whose altar stands in the middle of the orchestra — so much so that the Dionysian chorus remains as the ritualistic center of the cult. But, in the interchanges between the characters, the god is not the center, but the destiny of the Greek heroes is performed; their myths constitute the whole history of the nation.

Aristotle gives a definition of tragedy in his Poetics: "it is the imitation (MIMESIS) of a good action, which is complete and of a certain length, by means of language made pleasing for each part separately; it relies in its various elements not on narrative but on acting; through pity (ELEOS) and fear (PHOBOS) it achieves the purgation (CATHARSIS) of such emotions."

The tragedy aims at this catharsis of the audience: it must therefore have a beginning, a middle and an end and also present unity of action. The plot must have some verissimilitude in order to entangle the spectator in its action and finally lead him to the catharsis. The audience must feel an emotional identification with the hero, otherwise no catharsis will have been reached at the end.

Plato conceived MIMESIS to be a great danger because of this identification. The character's presented suffering

seems to be real, and the compassion and fear evoked in the spectator undermine the stoic attitude he should cultivate. Aristotle, on the other hand, thought that people release such pent up emotions like fear and pity by witnessing the spectacle of a tragic plot. They could then be relieved and purged of such strong emotions. The pleasure brought by catharsis is linked to the relish created by the equilibrium, after the audience's feeling of freedom from emotional excesses.

Racine proposed a conception of catharsis similar to the conception of its having a didactic-moralist function: "Exciting terror and pity, the tragedy purges and flavours such passions. That is, in raising them, it takes from these passions what is excessive and vicious, and leads them back to a state of moderation and conformity to reason."

In Aristotle's definition of tragedy we find the expression "good action". By that he means a noble action of heroes that belonged to the heroic age. In order to provoke eleos and phobos (pity and fear), the tragic plot must present heroes who go through an ordeal from a state of happiness to one of suffering, from good fortune to bad fortune. As Chaucer says in his Prologue to the Monk's Tale:

Tragedie is to seyn a certayn storie,
As olde bookes maken us memorie.
Of hym that stood in greet prosperitee,
And is yfallen out of heigh degree
Into myserie, and endeth wrecchedly.

But if the tragic hero were to be "outstanding in virtue and righteousness," the plot would be too shocking to evoke eleos and phobos, but would rather arouse indignation and cause people to question divine justice. So, the tragic hero must fall not because he is evil, but through some hamartia, or "tragic flaw," as the English call it. Hamartia is an intellectual ignorance rather than a serious moral fault; it may designate, in Butcher's words, an "error due to inadequate knowledge of particular circumstances" or an act that is "conscious and intentional, but not deliberate," for example, one "committed in anger or passion," or it may be a mere "defect in character."

The tragic flaw of the protagonist entails his tragic responsibility. The tragic hero must besides be someone who enjoys great reputation and fortune, like Macbeth, Oedipus, or Hamlet. Sometimes the punishment to the hero in his change of destiny — the peripeteia (in English: reversal) — is out of proportion with his crime, or flaw, which is a characteristic of the tragedy.

The hero possesses HYBRIS, or arrogance. Pride, when out of proportion, harms the "measure," or universal equilibrium, or inter-relation between human action and universal forces, between micro and macrocosm. Anagnōris is a process through which the hero goes: it is the recognition, or realization of his flaw or of the other forces acting around him.

Hegel, the German philosopher, believes that the spectator's spiritual response to the function of tragedy of

eliciting pity and fear (according to Aristotle) is very important, because the spectator is not touched by suffering alone, but by suffering derived from a conflict.

This conflict arises from man's ethical behaviour and beliefs, which rule man's relationships within the bonds of the family and the state: relationships of parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife, citizen and state, citizen and citizen. These ethical beliefs sustain personal love, honour, ideals of religion, science or social welfare. Each of these powers is good and righteous, for they are equally justified and there is no essential conflict between them. The kind of conflict that brings about tragic actions, according to Hegel, arises when two individuals start making claims each on behalf of one of two different powers, dividing the ethical substance and disturbing the harmony.

In a tragic conflict there must be a collision between men who are committed to high positive values, and their clash is inevitable, unavoidable. It is not the destruction, however, that elicits pity and fear, but the division of the ethical substance and the suffering it entails. Death alone does not make a tragedy. Death is only sad; for it to become tragic there have to be various essential moments: conscious action, a complete adoption of important values against powerful resistances, either internal or external, conflict, etc. Death, to be tragic, must imply a sacrifice of the gift of life; death as an aim to triumph over the world and life is not tragic. Plato's ideas imply that the life one leaves behind is not particularly important, since the world is

only a semblance to the true reality: So, one must leave this world without pain, to pass into a higher, divine level. Death is only tragic when one values it deeply, but has to renounce it for the sake of a cause one values higher than life itself. Antigone's conflict is tragic: she loves life but deems it necessary to give her brother a dignified burial, even if it means death for her; giving up life is a sacrifice; however, she must renounce it to stand for what she believes is more important still. Jean Anouilh's Antigone cries out in a hymn to life:

"Go on living! Who was it that was always the first out of bed because she loved the touch of the cold morning air on her bare skin? Who was always the last to bed because nothing than infinite weariness could wean her from the lingering night? Who wept when she was little because there were too many grasses in the meadow, too many creatures in the field, for her to know and touch them all?"

Death, coming upon such lust for life, as a result of conflict between different ethical values, IS tragic.

Of the three units related to tragedy — action, time and space — Aristotle insists only on action. "Tragedy endeavours, as far as possible, in not exceeding the time of a revolution of the sun, or at least only slightly." Sometimes it takes longer, then we have the abstraction of it. Tragedies take the significant points in time, which are put together, disregarding the in-betweens. Through this idea a

new conclusion was arrived at: time concentration implies space concentration — action should take place in the same premises.

Shakespeare's tragedies differ from the classic Greek model inasmuch as they go through long periods of time and through various spaces — the unity swerves from the action to the hero. We notice that in the Elizabethan playhouse the stage is projected into the audience — it surrounds the stage. Most of the action takes place in the main stage, in the middle of the audience. There is no scenery, or very little. For example, the play is usually acted in the afternoon, so the illusion of night must be created by words. (Romeo: "Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,...") There is no way of closing down the stage; everything is created through the medium of words; so the tragedy is a verbal universe.

The chorus is a distinct characteristic of the tragedy even in ancient times. The chorus separates the action in various "episodes" with dialogues, while it sings in rich and metrificed verses. It has a quantity of functions, besides being the centre of the ritual: it represents the polis, the collective, which amplifies the action beyond the individual conflict. The heroes of Aristocratic origin live their drama publicly, before all the people. And, as the polis represents universal order, the chorus broadens the drama in a cosmic scale.

The chorus is like the public opinion: it contemplates, objectivates, generalizes, comments, interprets and evaluates,

positively or negatively, the dramatic action of the characters. Sometimes it is the mouthpiece of the author. Nevertheless, insomuch as the chorus tends to be the voice of tradition, the author does not necessarily have to identify himself with it.

In T.S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral we can detach various elements of tragedy, although we will at the end of this work arrive at the conclusion that the play is not a tragedy.

The chorus is an outstanding tragic element, foretelling what is going to happen and commenting on what has already happened. The chorus of the Women of Canterbury separates the action and acts as evaluators of the events. In the beginning their speech is explanatory of circumstances. There is an expectancy on the part of the chorus as to future events. They wait; they are passive.

Their second speech, after the appearance of the tempters, shows fear at what they feel is inevitably going to happen to the Archbishop and consequently to the people. At the beginning of the second act, waiting is mingled with fear, to be followed by the chorus' acceptance of the inevitable.

The last pronouncement of the chorus comes when the Archbishop is being murdered; we can clearly feel the hopelessness in their words; the horror of the deed which is being performed and their cry for the cleansing of souls.

All the while, acting as commentators or spokesmen

for the people, the chorus is representative of the polis. It starts and ends the play, acting as the centre, the voice of tradition, the universal order.

The ancient tragedy was destined to be performed in the sacred temple of Dionysus, as part of a public religious service. In Murder in the Cathedral we feel the whole of the drama is also like a religious service being performed, the action of the play all being enacted inside the Cathedral, which brings to the play another element of tragedy. One other factor is having the same actors performing the roles of Tempters and Knights, just like in ancient tragedies the actors used masks to represent more than one character.

But the most important element of tragedy to be considered in the play is the study of the character Thomas a Becket. Is he or is he not a tragic hero?

Here we have the hero undergoing a fall from good to bad fortune, and this fall can be ascribed to a flaw in his character: his pride. His pride can be interpreted in either of two ways: the pride of righteousness, of choosing what is the right road to tread; or the pride of becoming a martyr. The latter seems to be the pride Becket possesses. We can even feel in his words of the sermon that he is foretelling the event of a new death and the birth of a new martyr. His sermon is a renewal of the Passion of Christ and he harps on the subject of glory and martyrdom, referring to Christ but also reminding the congregation that other martyrs may come. He even says:

A Christian martyrdom is never an accident, for Saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian martyrdom the effect of a man's will to become a Saint, as a man by willing and contriving may become a ruler of men. A martyrdom is always the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to His ways. It is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr.¹

The second part of this speech may well be his endeavour to answer the fourth Tempter, who is the instrument which shows us that Thomas has this kind of pride. The fourth Tempter is the only one who has any meaning to Thomas. He is like a mirror: he challenges Thomas with his pride and makes him own to it. As Fraser says:

The real action of the play lies not in the violent killing of the archbishop at the end but in his confrontation of various temptations, of which the most serious is this temptation to accept his martyrdom for the wrong reason; not out of Christian humility and obedience and the need to bear witness, but out of spiritual pride.²

So, in the sermon, what Thomas is really saying to the audience is that the murder they are just about to see committed by the Knights is a matter of religious

significance. When they see him die they must remember his death is in the pattern of all the deaths that have been suffered in the cause of Christianity since the Crucifixion itself. His death should be recognized as a symbol of other things than the mere decease of Thomas, a colourful archbishop of Canterbury, one of the things being "blood": blood that Christ shed that we might be saved. Christ's death inevitably means any Christian's life is dedicated to Him and that the supreme confirmation of this dedication lies in giving up his life to Him.

Thomas is in a way, in his sermon, inviting the audience to look at the Cross on the altar as they see him die and in so doing identify the two deaths. Then, if Thomas has the pride of martyrdom, his acts lead to the belief that he considers his death as an occasion to triumph over the visible world and life, and reach through it that higher, divine level where Saints dwell. So, the reckoning is: NO, Thomas is not a tragic hero. He is not renouncing life, he is only using it to achieve higher levels of being.

As for the Knights, they illustrate Hegel's theory of conflict in tragedy: they did what they thought was their duty, they stood for their ethical beliefs. Their speeches after the killing remind us of Mark Anthony's speech, in Shakespeare's play, after he has killed Julius Caesar: both try to persuade the people of their righteousness, and of their reasons for killing.

Despite the presence of so many elements of tragedy in the play, the conclusion arrived at is that Murder in the

Cathedral is more a passion-play than a tragedy, the true drama is interior: the crucial moment being when the most dangerous tempter uses Thomas' own words to lure him into temptation. Thomas is the area where a crisis occurs rather than a living person. The chorus has a richer theatrical impact than the character of the archbishop himself.

NOTES

¹T.S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 53.

²G.S. Fraser , The Modern Writer and his World (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 213.

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A READING OF WHAT MAISIE KNEW

Maria da Conceição Magalhães Vaz de Mello

Thesis: "Maisie finally chooses to live with Mrs. Wix because with her she can be most free and consequently most truly human " (Henry James and the Dramatic Analogy, by Joseph Wiesenfarth).¹

In a sense, we can say that in this novel, Sir Claude and Mrs. Wix are the only characters, among those who surround Maisie, who are really human. Maisie doesn't choose Sir Claude, though she loved him more than Mrs. Wix, because he wasn't free. He was, as Mrs. Wix herself had said, "just a poor sunk slave."² He was a slave to his passions, to the women he loved. In the final chapters of the book many people are said to be free. Sir Claude and Mrs. Beale are free. But Maisie is then mature enough to find out that the only person who is really free is Mrs. Wix. Therefore she comes back to England with her.

Maisie is a little girl but her parents and step parents were so irresponsible that they realized that no one but the girl herself could decide about her future. And I think she was right in remaining with her governess and we will see why.

Maisie's parents, Beale and Ida Farange, were immoral and selfish. After their divorce they used Maisie as an instrument to continue their quarrel:

She was the little feathered shuttlecock they could fiercely keep flying between them. The evil they had the gift of thinking or pretending to think of each other they poured into her little gravely-gaging soul as into a boundless receptacle...

But one day Maisie found out that .

She had been a centre of hatred and a messenger of insult, and that everything was bad because she had been employed to make it so.

And she decided to change her behaviour:

Her parted lips locked themselves with the determination to be employed no longer. She would forget everything, she would repeat nothing...

When her parents found out that she was no longer useful to them, and was only a financial burden, they began to call her "a little idiot" and lost any interest in her. Then each began to leave the girl with the other for periods much longer than the agreed six months, and they finished by completely giving her up. But she had a stepfather, Sir Claude, a stepmother, Mrs. Beale, and a governess, Mrs. Wix, to take care of her. Maisie's stepparents were really interested in her. But theirs was also a selfish interest because they were in love and Maisie was an excuse for them to meet each other. They repeated over and over again: "You

brought us together". But Sir Claude really loved Maisie in spite of all his weaknesses though Mrs. Beale loved her only because of him. That's why, at the end, Maisie asked Sir Claude to give up Mrs. Beale. But we know that he would give everything up for her, except her stepmother. Maisie knew that this woman had many things in common with her mother and was very different from her governess, Mrs. Wix. We can say that Henry James presented Mrs. Beale and Mrs. Wix as two opposed characters. How does he do this? He assigns to each adjectives with opposite meanings. When writing about Mrs. Beale he uses adjectives like: young, pretty, lovely, beautiful, charming, handsome and clever. But when he describes Mrs. Wix the adjectives are: poor, old, ugly, dingy, melancholy, terrible, queer. When Maisie, speaking of Mrs. Beale, once said: "She's beautiful and I love her! I love her and she's beautiful!", Mrs. Wix replied: "And I'm hideous and you hate me?" Mrs. Beale was much more educated than Mrs. Wix. She "could say lots of dates straight off, state the position of Malabar, play six pieces without notes and, in a sketch, put in beautifully the trees and houses and difficult parts ." And these were things Mrs. Wix couldn't do. Another important difference between the two women was that Mrs. Wix's reactions were almost always related to silence while Mrs. Beale's were related to words. The first lines in chapter five are:

The second parting from Miss Overmore had been bad enough, but this first parting from Mrs. Wix was much worse... It was dreadfully silent, as it

had been when her tooth was taken out; Mrs. Wix had on that occasion grabbed her hand and they had clung to each other with the frenzy of their determination not to scream.

And a little further:

Embedded in Mrs. Wix's nature as her tooth had been socketed in her gum, the operation of extracting her would really have been a case for chloroform. It was a hug that fortunately left nothing to say, for the poor woman's want of words at such an hour seemed to fall in with her want of everything.

Then Maisie, thinking of Miss Overmore (Mrs. Beale),

remembered the difference when, six months before, she had been torn from the breast of that more spiritual protectress. Miss Overmore... had been thoroughly audible and voluble; her protest had rung out bravely and she had declared that something - her pupil didn't know exactly what - was a regular wicked shame.

Mrs. Beale had repeated several times that she adored Maisie and would never give her up. But we know Sir Claude was the only person she would never give up. Mrs. Wix opened her mouth only once to say to Maisie: "I can promise you that, whatever I do, I shall never let you out of my sight." And this is the only promise in the novel which is entirely fulfilled. Even Sir Claude had repeated to Maisie several times that he wouldn't lose sight of her. But at the end he proved to be too weak to keep his promise.

In spite of all her faults Maisie knew that Mrs. Wix

had been, with passion and anguish, a mother, and that this was something Miss Overmore was not, something (strangely, confusingly) that mamma was even less.

She also knew that

in her ugliness and poverty, she was peculiarly and soothingly safe; safer than anyone in the world, than papa, than mamma, than the lady with the arched eyebrows; safer even, though so much less beautiful, than Miss Overmore, on whose loveliness, as she supposed it, the little girl was faintly conscious that one wouldn't rest with the same tucked-in and kissed-for-good-night feeling.

Mrs. Wix was the only one who could be a mother. She had transferred all the love she had for Clara Matilda, her late daughter, to her pupil. Though being ugly, uneducated, and having a limited "moral sense," she was selfless and had no other interest but the child. When she lost Clara Matilda she lost everything because she "had had absolutely nothing else in all the world..." Nothing is said in the novel about her husband. His name appears only once, in the following passage: "... Mr. Wix, her husband, as to whom nothing was mentioned save that he had been dead for ages." The only man she loved was Sir Claude. But she loved him like a mother. She wanted to save him from the women he loved, especially from Mrs. Beale. Sir Claude, too, could have loved her only as a mother. Once, while speaking about her, he said to Maisie: "I don't love her, don't you see? I do her perfect justice," he pursued, "but I mean I don't love her as I do you, and I'm sure you wouldn't

seriously expect it. She's not my daughter — come, old chap! She's not even my mother, though I dare say it would have been better for me if she had been. I'll do for her what I'd do for my mother, but I won't do more." And he had really done something for her. He had supported her after she had been dismissed by Maisie's mother. He had been human with her as he had been human with Maisie. But when he refused to give Mrs. Beale up Maisie realized that he was not being human and that he was not free. This was what made her choose Mrs. Wix who was more free and more human.

It is interesting to note that throughout the novel the author makes us feel that Maisie and her governess are linked together by some mysterious lace. When Maisie met Mrs. Wix for the first time, at her mother's, she "took her and, Maisie felt the next day, would never let her go." Maisie knew this though Mrs. Wix didn't tell her. In Boulogne they had quarrelled because of Mrs. Beale, but

they rushed together again too soon for either to feel that either had kept it up, and though they went home in silence it was with a vivid perception for Maisie that her companion's hand had closed upon her. That hand had shown altogether, these twenty-four hours, a new capacity for closing, and one of the truths the child could least resist was that a certain greatness had now come to Mrs. Wix.

And a little further: "She still bore the mark of the tone in which her friend had shown out that threat of never

losing sight of her." When the two were together on the bench in the rampart we are told that "their hands remained linked in unutterable sign of their union." Then we have: "Their hands were so linked and their union so continued..." And also: "They had touched bottom and melted together..."

NOTES

¹Joseph Wiesenfarth, Henry James and the Dramatic Analogy (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), p. 65.

²Henry James, What Maisie Knew (Hardmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1975). All quotations from the novel were taken from this edition.

TRAGIC ELEMENTS IN DEATH OF A SALESMAN IN THE
LIGHT OF OEDIPUS THE KING

Maria Helena Lott Lage

Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman may be considered one of the most effective pieces of dramatic art in the Twentieth Century. It is a tragedy in the classical concept of the term, and it contains several elements in common with Sophocles' Oedipus the King, the best known of classical Greek tragedies. It is the purpose of this paper to discuss such tragic elements, although concentrating more on Miller's play. I would say Death of a Salesman is a classical modern tragedy, since it deals with modern subject-matters and speaks to a modern audience. Willy Loman, the protagonist of this tragedy, is a lower-middle class, ordinary man who does not sit on a throne but in a car with which he earns his living. In spite of this big difference with the protagonist of Sophocles' play, both Willy and Oedipus can be considered equally successful tragic heroes. Both of them are human beings whose ideals of achieving human perfection have been frustrated, due to their incapacity to face their weaknesses, cope with their limitations, and confront their real selves.

In both plays, the protagonists are guilt-ridden, and their tormented consciences claim for an expiation of their "sins," and this is what holds the action. The effectiveness of these two characters is that, although the audience is

aware of their faults, it sympathizes with them and is even tempted to consider them innocent or merely unaware victims of external forces. Oedipus, a victim of his fate, might not be judged guilty because he does not know that the man he killed on the road is Laius, his father, and that the woman he married is his own mother. Willy Loman, a victim of society, might not be guilty because he is trapped by an unjust system that does not consider a man's devotion to his job, and by his two sons who turn their backs to a father who deposited all his aspirations on them. Nevertheless, both Oedipus and Willy Loman are guilty. Although to a lesser extent in Miller's play, the heroes' actions are the result of their free will and both of them are trapped by their own ambushes. The inevitability of trying to escape their real selves, and their inability to overcome a confrontation with the truth is what makes these two characters tragic heroes.

Another tragic element common to these plays is their structure. Both of them start with the consequences of a past action whose revelation constitutes the climax of both stories and leads to the catastrophe at the end. In the beginning of Oedipus the King, the plague is already all over the city of Thebes, as a consequence of Oedipus' crimes. Death of a Salesman starts when Willy Loman is near the "breaking point" due to an excess of work, preoccupation, and repressed guilt. Neither his wife, Linda, nor his sons, Biff and Happy, can do anything to prevent it, and the Loman family is in a terrible condition as a consequence of Willy's faults. In

both plays the audience becomes aware that some fatality will occur, but the tragic flaws or "hamartias," which are the reasons for the present chaos, are only gradually revealed and explained. As in a detective story, the narrative of Sophocles' play is inserted in the dialogues and speeches, and Willy's subconsciousness gradually unfolds the whole story as some present word or event reminds him of the past. Such technique of gradual revelation of the truth is an effective characteristic of tragedies, since it provokes strong emotions, creates tension, and builds suspense.

The action of both plays consists of a pursuit of the truth, flight from the confrontation with this truth, and the conflicts or "agons" deriving from the heroes' indecision, pride, and fear. At the same time that Oedipus wants to know Laius' assassin, he evades the answer. He oscillates between listening to Tiresias and ignoring him, and he does not know whether to believe in Jocasta or not, whether to blame Creon or not, because he is afraid to face the truth about himself. Although aware of what the oracle has predicted for him, Oedipus prefers to ignore the facts about his origin after he commits the murder on the road, as he also ignores the murder itself. It is more convenient for him to rely on the fact that he is the only man who could solve the riddle of the sphinx; that he is superior to all men and even has supernatural powers because he believes he has escaped the gods' determinations. Willy Loman wants to find an explanation for the questions he has in his mind, but at the same time he tries to avoid it, hiding behind his illusions. He should know that the episode in Boston may be the cause

of Biff's failure, but he refuses to admit it. He prefers to ignore this fact and look for some other justification. He simply cannot see himself and the ones around him as they really are. Both Oedipus and Willy Loman are involved in terrible conflicts with others, as well as with themselves.

Such conflicts constitute the essential element of a tragedy because of the violent emotions they stir in the audience. In Sophocles' tragedy, there are "agons" between Oedipus and the will of the gods, when he tries to escape his fate. Later, Oedipus has conflicts with Tiresias, Creon, Jocasta, and also with himself. According to some psychological theories, Oedipus's true guilt is to have unconsciously wanted to beget himself through his mother and from her -- a double conflict of an individual who wants to be neither father nor son but himself only. Oedipus was born as a result of his father's drunkenness one night, an indication that he was not actually desired; he was rejected by his parents when he was still a baby; so now he places his ego above anything and any one else. Oedipus is tortured by his "agons" throughout the whole play, and his flight ends only when he finally calls the shepherd who had saved his life, instead of disappearing with him, when he was a baby.

The "agons" in Death of a Salesman involve Willy Loman and the people around him -- his family, employer, and friends. But, like Oedipus, Willy's greatest conflict is with himself, with his own conscience. Miller's hero is a man who has built his life on the illusion that he is respected, well-liked, and thus destined to be successful. He has raised his sons by conditioning them to follow his

dogma and believe that they are the best in everything, and that they will never fail. But his eagerness for success and power, his selfishness and excessive pride, have led him to annihilate his wife's and his sons' personalities. He is actually an immature and insecure man who contradicts himself all the time, and whose inconsistent values and false ideals have confused his sons in such a way that they are totally unable to get settled in life. Happy is the personification of mediocrity whose self-assertion consists of the vulgar idea that having his own apartment and sleeping with every woman he meets are all a man needs to be "happy". He actually deludes himself with the false ideals he has inherited from his father. His apparent good humor and happiness are merely a way to avoid admitting that he has always been rejected by his father, who worships Biff.

Why this obsession Willy has for his oldest son? It is not merely a question of preference, but mainly because Biff, who had been the projection of Willy's false image of himself, turned out to be the exact representation of his real image -- a failed, "low man". As a teenager Biff used to be a leader, a high school hero, popular, admired, and well-liked. He had the potentialities of becoming a success in the future, and his motivation was his father's incentive and "example", or the image Willy "sold" of himself. Biff idolized this image, but exactly at the moment he mostly needed his father's moral support, he was confronted with the real Willy. He saw that what his father said did not correspond at all with what he did. Biff's disappointment caused a trauma that prevented him from doing anything

worthwhile thereafter, as if his life had stopped in Boston. But not even the audience becomes aware of Willy's greatest tragic "flaw" until the climax, towards the end of the play.

Linda suspects there must be a reason for the gap between Willy and Biff because, whenever there is a letter from Biff or he comes home, Willy gets worse, but she does not even get close to the truth. She never realizes that it is Willy's repressed guilt that forbids her to mend stockings in the house because it reminds him of what he wants to forget. Only Biff can understand what is destroying Willy, because it is the same thing that is destroying himself. Sometimes he can hardly control himself, as when he cries out to his mother once, "I know he's a fake and he doesn't like anyone around who knows."¹ But Linda tries to justify Willy all the time. In fact, she contributes to her husband's and her sons' failures with her passivity, omission, and weak personality that lead her to perpetuate Willy's illusions and false ideals before himself and their sons. The only time Linda tried to influence Willy's decisions was disastrous — when she convinced him that he should not follow his brother Ben to Alaska. At the end, Linda cannot understand her husband's suicide (although she had somehow predicted it), because she has never gotten to know the real Willy. She has the same false image of him that he had of himself, as she also holds the same false values that Willy cultivated. She has never realized that Willy's failure as a father, and his need to expiate before Biff, were more crucial to him than his failure as a salesman, the supporter of the family.

Willy Loman is forced to admit his failure as a salesman much before he is confronted with his failure as a father, and his resistance against the former is not as great as that against the latter. Moral and personal defeat are far more difficult to cope with than professional and economical defeat. It has been claimed that Death of a Salesman is a social criticism and that Willy Loman is a victim of the American society of the time; that he represents the distorted dreams of the American myth which failed because of excessive individualism, pride, and ambition — an over-competitive system. It is true that there were faults with the system, and that some of Willy's complaints were just. He was right to claim for some guarantee when it was time for him to retire, as he was also right when he complained about the exploitation of employees by employer, and about the discrepancies of a consumer's society. But Willy Loman is not merely a victim of his environment; he is a consenting victim, and the driving forces were his pride, his uncontrollable ambition, his false ideals. In spite of the system, he could have succeeded. The "ghost" of his brother Ben is there to remind him that he had other chances in life which he deliberately threw away. Willy simply could not distinguish between the real and the ideal, and this conflict may be considered the tragic force on the play.

Such conflict makes Willy postpone the confrontation with his real self throughout the whole play. At the beginning, in the stage directions, Miller says that the atmosphere of the setting is one of "dream rising out of reality." The expressionistic scenes, showing the inside of Willy's

mind from his own point-of-view, display a co-occurrence of past and present, dream and reality, which have a powerful dramatic effect. As Willy's subconsciousness is gradually revealed, the audience accompanies this man's struggle against admitting his own faults and guilt. There is enough evidence that Willy might have been happier in a rural environment, working with his hands, thus following his father and his brother. But there is much more evidence that if Willy had been more responsible and realistic, conscious of his limitations and weaknesses, he would not have failed. Willy's true guilt is that he had a false image of himself and of others. Because he thought he was better than anyone else, he humiliated his best friend, Charley, and Biff's best friend, Bernard. Not even after he realized that he had been defeated as a salesman, did Willy accept Charley's help. He would accept Charley's money, but he would never work for the man he had mocked all his life.

Willy's refusal of Charley's proposal of job gives evidence to the fact that Willy gave more importance to his image as a father than his image as a salesman before his sons. The death of the salesman precedes the death of the father and the latter involves a much greater conflict. Willy saw how Bernard succeeded, in spite of his insignificance as a teenager in high school, just the opposite of Biff. He also saw that Charley succeeded, mainly as a father, in spite of his lack of ambition and non-interference in his son's life, just the opposite of Willy's concept of education. And he finally understood that it was his betrayal of the image Biff had of him as a father that caused the son's failure.

When Willy met his sons in the restaurant, he realized that he could not escape anymore. Only then did the Boston episode come back to his mind, and he realized how much harm it had done to Biff. Only then did he understand that he had always been an obstacle, rather than a guidance, to his sons. When he was left by himself in the restaurant, he understood that his sons would be free only after he got out of their way, so he decided to kill himself. But his attempt to expiate his faults is also confusing and ambiguous. At the same time that he recognizes his guilt and failure, he debates with his conscience (symbolized by Ben) as to whether he should carry out his plan or not.

Willy's eagerness to protect his ideal image as a father is greater than his desire to admit the naked truth. He has been forced to confront his mistakes, but he cannot cope with his real image. For this reason, he argues with Biff, who tries to force him to face reality and to prevent him from making another mistake. He does kill himself, but his last words are full of the same pride and ambition that destroyed him. He dies in the illusion that Biff will worship him for the insurance money which will make Biff "magnificent... ahead of Bernard again!"² Willy's suicide is actually a desperate attempt to perpetuate his dreams, and the only one who understands this is Biff, who concludes, "He had the wrong dreams. All, all wrong... He never knew who he was."³ To a certain extent, Biff Loman can also be considered a tragic hero, because he will have to keep his suffering to himself and cope with it for the rest of his life. Unlike Willy had predicted, Biff neither worships nor

blames Willy for his self-punishment; he simply understands this man's weaknesses and pities him, This feeling is shared by the audience, and catharsis comes in this tragedy with the recognition that the Loman family is finally free to face the reality of their lives.

The end of Sophocles' play also involves much suffering, but Oedipus is much more coherent than Willy Loman. He had promised to punish Laius' assassin, and he does not hesitate when he finds out that he is the one to be punished. Oedipus admits and accepts the truth, in spite of the pain it gives him, and in this sense he is braver than Willy. Oedipus blinds himself and condemns himself to a life of exile, and his suffering is greater than Willy's, because he will remain alive. But, like Willy, Oedipus also abandons his children, recognizing that they would feel free in his company. Both Oedipus and Willy Loman punish themselves after being confronted with their tragic flaws, so that the order may be re-established in their environment. Both Oedipus and Willy Loman are, in fact, two human beings who could not escape the limitations imposed by their human condition.

NOTES

¹Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman, in Collected Plays
(New York: The Viking Press, 1957), p. 64.

²Miller, p. 219.

³Miller, p. 221.

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WHO OWNS THE TRUTH?*

Based on Lillian Hellman's Play The Children's Hour

Maria Josē Ferreira

Lillian Hellman was an American playwright. She was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1905, and died in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, in 1984. Her childhood and adolescence were divided between the two wholly different environments of New York City and New Orleans. In the latter she also had the company of both her mother's and father's families, who were steeped in the traditions of that city. Because of the influence this part of the South had on her, she succeeded in reflecting in some of her plays the life and the views she observed in her youth. Because she felt equally at home in New Orleans and in the North-East, she used both these settings as the background for her plays.

The Children's Hour, her first play, was first produced on Broadway in 1934. It was greatly praised by the public and by the critics, and it launched her into the world of art.

The intention of this study is to analyse an aspect

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of the truth in the above mentioned play.

Near a small town in Massachusetts, Karen and Martha are the owners of a boarding school for girls, in a converted farmhouse. Mrs. Mortar, Martha's aunt, lives with them. Karen is engaged to Joe, a physician and cousin of Mary, one of the students at the school. Catherine, Evelyn, Helen, Lois, Peggy and Rosalie are some other students. Mary does not want to live at the school. Evelyn and Peggy overhear a conversation between Mrs. Mortar and Martha, in which Mrs. Mortar says Martha is jealous of Joe. Rosalie steals Helen's bracelet. Aware of both what had been said and the theft, Mary compels her grandmother, Mrs. Tilford, who is responsible for her, and with whom she lives when away from school, not to send her back to an environment where the two teachers share an "unnatural" relationship. To support her story, Mary makes Rosalie an eye witness of the facts, since she is indebted to Mary. Mrs. Tilford not only keeps Mary with her, but also spreads the news to Joe and to the other girls' mothers, who take them out of school. Karen and Martha lack Mrs. Mortar's testimony because she has decided to travel; they lose their libel suit, and are ostracised by society. Joe still wants to marry Karen, but she makes him see they could not live happily together under the pressure of his doubt. Talking to Karen, Martha realizes she has indeed loved Karen. Soon after this conversation and her aunt's arrival from her travel, Martha commits suicide, and Mrs. Tilford, having discovered in the meantime that Mary had lied, appears to apologize and offer any help that

the teachers might need, not knowing of Martha's tragic end.

The title of this play was taken from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "The Children's Hour".¹ Lillian Hellman derived ironic inspiration from not only the title, but mainly the first stanza of the ten which the poem consists of. His is a sentimental view of life when it becomes merrier by the presence of children who sweeten the hard hours of work in a daytime, in a lifetime. When Karen and Martha think their time has come to enjoy years of work they have had, it is children, apart from family, who ruin all their expectations, and, instead of sweetening their lives, destroy them. Lillian Hellman found the source for this play² in an occurrence that took place in the nineteenth century in Edinburgh, Scotland, where two school teachers were charged with lesbianism by one of their students. They never succeeded in recovering their prestige, their money, or their school.

Lillian Hellman herself has written about The Children's Hour, "[...] this is really not a play about lesbianism, but about a lie. The bigger the lie the better, as always".³ But what is a lie? Is it indeed the reversal of truth, or in some way a confirmation of it: for a lie to exist, there must be a truth.

In The Children's Hour, the bustle that takes over that

small town in Massachusetts is supposedly aroused by Mary, "fourteen, neither pretty nor ugly [...] an undistinguished-looking girl" (p. 7)⁴, an adolescent spoiled by her grandmother; she is not exactly a malignant girl, as Lillian Hellman has said, "I thought of the child as neurotic, sly, but not the utterly malignant creature which playgoers see in her",⁵ but we may suppose that she is unaware of what may happen when she brings up what at the end becomes a catastrophe for both of her teachers.

It is typical of most adolescents to run away from reality. Mary wants to run away from school and from all that attaches her to any established method or routine. She is used to having what she wants, when she wants. Her grandmother's money and prestige have influenced Mary much more than they both realize. The way Mrs. Tilford deals with Mary and considers her demands is totally acquiescent. For a type of person such as Mary, such a way of considering life being ingrained in her, it is practically impossible to balance all the effects one's attitude may reach. She releases a rumor. When she realizes she can not go back, she creates her truth, and adheres to it.

Since she is an experienced lady because of both her age and knowledge of Mary's attitudes, we would hardly expect that Mrs. Tilford, "a large, dignified woman in her sixties, with a pleasant, strong face" (p. 29), would make the situation worse by ratifying Mary's words. But that is exactly what she does when she spreads the accusation among the other students' mothers, who take their children

away from the school. Mrs. Tilford acts slanderously. Mary's truth has become her truth.

What about the "plump, florid woman of forty-five with dyed reddish hair" (p. 5) — Mrs. Lily Mortar? Very surreptitiously, she infiltrates herself not only in the house where her niece Martha lives and works with Karen, but also in their professional activities, and what is worse: in their private lives. Her physical presentation helps to establish her as a healthy woman, nevertheless brusque, conceited and deceiving. Her "dyed reddish" hair suggests Mrs. Mortar's tendency to be false and not dependable, as well as a boastful woman, someone who wants to call attention to herself. Very strong on her outside, but very weak in her inside, as will be noticed in this study. Her own name shows what she is: on the surface, a lily — the symbol of purity, whiteness, beauty; but deep in her, the power to cause or bring bad luck and death: mortar (from Latin mors [stem mort-], death). She presents a contrast within herself, appearing to be one person, but actually being somebody else. What is the truth in Mrs. Mortar?

It is really Mrs. Tilford who spreads the news. It is indeed Mary who whispers the rumor. But the one who actually begins the subject is Mrs. Mortar, when she tells Martha, "I should have known by this time that the wise thing is to stay out of your way when he's in the house" (p. 17). Being afraid of being sent away, she sees no way of reacting unless by attacking her niece, who has just made her aunt realize that she has not been happy there: when she

points out that Mrs. Mortar is always complaining about the farm, about the school, about the money she gets there, about Karen, and even after she has got what she wants (Martha and Karen are giving her money to go to England, and enough to get along on), she's "still looking for something to complain about" (p. 17).

Mrs. Mortar lives on her past, when she was an actress. The past is the escape into which she retreats from the unpleasantness of life. She thinks she is an astute woman, and she believes in her power of domineering an audience, even if this audience is composed of her students, to whom she also teaches, "Women must learn these tricks" (p. 6). Her use of the word "tricks" reveals the amoral, perhaps immoral thoughts that govern her mentality. She is aware and conscious of her reputation and value as an actress — but all that is past, and in her mind only. The sentence "Pity. Ah! [...] pity makes the actress" (p. 6) shows us that she thinks she is still a theatre performer, and at the same time it shows us that being no longer an actress, she is not able to feel pity. Martha represents all those who are around Mrs. Mortar, when she says, "Don't act, Aunt Lily" (p. 17) — they are all aware of her theatricality and do not pay much attention to her. She speaks of her work as a wonderful theatre performer, but she lives in a farmhouse giving voice and elocution lessons to the girls in the school, and does not seek work for herself as an actress. Nevertheless, she criticizes Martha even after she is dead, "She would have got a job and started all over again" (p. 64). Mrs. Mortar's absence of psychological strength does not allow her to start again:

she is static and passive. She considers herself "a poor relation" (p. 16), who accepts the hospitality of her niece, but who does not forget to charge for her services, although she gets paid for them, "I, who have worked my fingers to the bone!" (p. 16), "Here I've donated my services" (p. 16); her attitudes are those of an ingénue, although she is not a naïve character in the play. She is a character within a character, clinging to the memory of a certain Sir Henry who taught her many things about the theatre, and she bases her life on his teaching and on reminiscences of him. The theatre is so much rooted in her that she confuses appearance with reality, and she is incapable of distinguishing her own thoughts and words from her attitudes. Congruence is what is lacking in her. She finds it "natural" (p. 15) that Mary should have her presence when examined by Joe; she finds it "natural that an older woman should be present" (p. 15) at such an examination — she even says, "It seems that I'm not wanted in the room during the examination" (p. 15) — and that same sentence reminds us of the necessity Karen and Martha have of her presence in the room of the trial, and then it is she, "an older woman", that "should be present", who seems not to want to be present to testify in favor of her niece and her friend. And she does not appear, although she once tells Mary, "I always like thoughtfulness" (p. 8). Indeed, the two teachers lose their case not because society censures them or because they are pursued by their rich clientele, but because Mrs. Mortar fails to appear at the trial as a witness.

When teaching Peggy, she recommends her to read Shakespeare's Portia "with some feeling, some pity [...] why can't you feel pity?" (p. 6), "try to submerge yourself in this problem. You are pleading for the life of a man" (p. 7). Now, the lives of two women are at stake, depending on her, depending on her pity, but she is absent — both in body and in responsibility, because she is on a tour, which she considers "a moral obligation" (p. 55), "a moral obligation to the theatre" (p. 55), that is a chimera, a fake, an illusion. This reminds us of one of her sentences, "Pity [...] pity makes the actress" (p. 6). Her asking Peggy whether she can not feel pity brings later an irony: she herself does not feel any pity for the two teachers — pity and mercy, as she stresses several times at the beginning of the play, when reading Portia, "'But mercy is above this sceptred sway; it is enthroned in the hearts of kings, it is an attribute to God, himself; and earthly power doth then show likest God's when mercy seasons justice. We do pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach —'" (pp. 5,6,7,8). In her case, what mercy, what justice? All this then is mere façade.

What is important for Mrs. Mortar is completely forgotten by herself when dealing with others. She tells Mary, "are we in the habit of taking walks when we should be at our classes?" (p. 8), "I suppose you have just as fine an excuse for being an hour late to breakfast this morning, and last week — " (p. 10), but she does not show up at the trial; she stays away not only for a morning or a week, but

for months. She is capable of seeing and feeling that "Things have changed in the theatre — drastically changed" (p. 54), and she is "very glad to see the old place again" (p. 54), but she is unable to realize how much "Things have changed" (p. 55) at school and in the girls' lives — drastically changed, too. Even the interior of the house is different, and she seems not to notice it. This point of view is corroborated by M. Ackley, when he says:

The return of Mrs. Mortar is a remainder of the beginning of the action and is used as an ironic contrast. Unchanged, she returns to a setting and to characters completely changed by what she has done or left undone. The contrast emphasizes the extent to which the lie has been successful. Each of the characters is in some way broken, except for Mrs. Mortar whose words generated the action.⁶

She understands that telling the teachers about the latest changes in the theatre "will throw a very revealing light" (p. 54) on the subject, but she can not understand the revealing light she could have brought to their lives if she had been present in court, as Martha tells her, "great part of the defense's case was based on remarks made by Lily Mortar [...] a greater part of the defense's case rested on the telling fact that Mrs. Mortar would not appear in court to deny or explain those remarks" (p. 55). Her truth does not coincide with reality, "I didn't think of it that way, Martha" (p. 55). She wants to escape

reality. "Now don't let's talk about unpleasant things anymore" (p. 55) or perhaps anything disagreeable that may come from it. She is afraid of "unpleasant notoriety" (p. 55). She is the kind of person who retracts when facing something unpleasant and then shows up offering comfort, "I'm sorry I didn't come back. But now that I am here, I'm going to stand shoulder to shoulder with you. I know what you've gone through [...] I'll be here working right along with you and we'll —" (p. 55). This passage again reminds us of her sentence, "Pity [...] pity makes the actress" (p. 6). She seems not to have known about anything that was going on, or to have understood it in a different way, or even to have believed it, and then hurries to regret it, "now that you've explained it" (p. 55) — and only now she shows that she has realized all that that has happened. Moreover, she tries to inculcate some hope in the girls, "the body and heart do recover, you know" (p. 55) — forgetting that reputation does not recover.

Mrs. Mortar is a contradiction: she wants to be accepted, but she does not welcome the idea of accepting or forgiving others, or she thinks they deserve punishment — because she does not admit having ever failed, "In my entire career I've never missed a line" (p. 8); that refers not only to the theatre, but also to the way she has regarded her entire life. Her sensibility is on the surface; deep in her, she is incapable of feeling: yet, she says to Martha, "you are so thick-skinned that you don't resent these

things —", (p. 15), and to Karen, "How can you be so feelingless?" (p. 66). She never apologizes; nevertheless, she supposes others should, "When you wish to apologize, I will be temporarily in my room" (p. 56). She goes on criticizing others, "You mean to say you're not going to do anything about that?" (p. 18), "What a nasty thing to do!" (p. 10), "Why, I'd slap her hands!" (p. 11), "God will punish you for that" (p. 55); and even after Martha is dead, she seems not to realize the extension of all the facts, and says, "Oh, how could she — " (p. 64), "Suicide's a sin" (p. 64).

Mrs. Mortar is not just ominous, but she also instigates doubts and negative feelings in those who are around her. After coming back from her tour, she sees Joe Cardin in the room and says, "I call that loyal. A lot of men wouldn't still be here. They would have felt — " (p. 56). She seems to forget all that she has done and refers to Mrs. Tilford, "That woman can't come in here. She caused all — " (p. 56), "You going to allow that woman to come in here? [...] I'll never let that woman — " (p. 66).

Lillian Hellman moves deep into her characters' psyches and then she is able to anticipate the image of truth enclosed in the play. That is the case of Lily Mortar's prediction, "Burying yourself on a farm! You'll regret it" (p. 16). For Mrs. Mortar, truth is always on her side; nevertheless, this sentence goes beyond her own predictions.

During the whole play Mrs. Mortar's tendency is to do nothing, although always boasting of doing much. But after

Martha's suicide, she shows the insecurity her static personality tries to hide, "What shall we do?" (p. 64), "We've got to do something" (p. 64), "I don't know what we can do —" (p. 64), "I don't know what — (Looks up, still crying, surprised) I'm — I'm frightened" (p. 64), "I was good to her" (p. 64), "I always tried to do everything I could" (p. 64), "What will happen to me? I haven't anything" (p. 65), "I was good to her too. I did everything I could. I — I haven't any place to go. (After a few seconds of silence) I'm afraid" (p. 65). These sentences show her moral failure and self-delusion. She seems lost both physically and psychologically. The double meaning Lillian Hellman has inserted in Mrs. Mortar's sentences, "I can't help it. How can I help it?" (p. 64) affirms once more how meaningful the irony involved is: she bases her concentration on the psychological.

Perhaps the most significant sentence occurs when, ("for no reason") (p. 9), Mrs. Mortar says during one of her classes, "'One master passion in the breast, like Aaron's serpent, swallows all the rest'" (p. 9): she does not know she is revealing herself, confessing the "truth" that is inside herself — but which she is not aware of; and she says after Martha's suicide, "I can't realize it's true" (p. 64). At the end of the play the statement, "it wasn't true" is used three times. According to M. Ackley, "the conflict is understood to be between the lie [..] and the truth, or more abstractly, between the truth and the forces that prevent its acknowledgement."⁷ The repetition of the

image of truth indicates the importance of this concept to a better understanding of the play.

There are two parallels within Mrs. Mortar's part in the play: she begins the controversy, and she begins the play; she is there at the end of Martha's life, and she is there at the end of the play. She sews the story with the intangible capacity of both her presence and absence, of her truth and not truth.

NOTES

¹Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The Children's Hour," in his Poems by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (London: Gresham, n.d.), pp. 224-25.

²John Phillips and Anne Hollander, "The Art of the Theater I: Lillian Hellman: An Interview," Paris Review, 33 (Winter-Spring 1965), p. 70.

³W. David Sievers, Freud on Broadway (New York: Hermitage, 1955), p. 280.

⁴Lillian Hellman, The Children's Hour in her The Collected Plays (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 7. All subsequent page references for Lillian Hellman's plays are to this edition.

⁵Sievers, pp. 279-80.

⁶Meredith Erling Ackley, "The Plays of Lillian Hellman," Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1969, pp. 35-36.

⁷Meredith Erling Ackley, "The Plays of Lillian Hellman," Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1969, p. 35.

OTHELLO - A REPRESENTATIVE TRAGEDY OF THE RENAISSANCE

Maria Lúcia Barbosa de Vasconcellos

The present paper has a two-fold purpose: it aims at an analysis of Shakespeare's Othello as a tragedy, focusing on the departures from the classical model. Aristotle's Poetics will provide the referential theories. This study also aims at the understanding of tragedy as a dramatic form which takes hold of and gives expression to the tragic element in life.

Tragedy, as a literary form, was carried over to England through Seneca, a Roman philosopher from Nero's time. Towards the end of the 16th c., the traditions of the classical theatre mingled with the native subject matter and native forms. A wide variety of tragedies then appeared, assuming humanistic characteristics. During this period an internal division of the English theatre took place: on the one hand, the neo-classic conception of tragedy, with the force of the Senecan example, in severe accord with the Aristotelian precepts. It was supported by a powerful critical theory, which was given expression to in Sidney's Defense of Poesy. On the other hand, the "open" theatre of Shakespeare, drawing its strength from the actual performance of the Elizabethan playwrights and from the plain fact of box-office success. This new trend violated many a precept of neo-classicism. It took from Seneca his rhetoric, his ghosts, and his flair for horror and blood-vengeance, but

not the austere, artificial practices of the neo-classic stage. The new tragedy escaped the Hellenic model, mastering and framing it in its own measure.

We shall proceed now to examine the so-called "violations" of the Aristotelian rules in Othello, by looking at its structure and comparing it to the formalistic concepts of the Poetics.

According to Aristotle, the prologue was the first part to appear in a text, quite separate from the body of the play. It gave an account of the facts that had brought about the action, eliminating suspense from the unfolding of the story. This prologue would be followed by the chorus, whose functions were to reflect upon the events, to verbalize the collective memories, fears, and aspirations as well as to provide the voice of wisdom and common sense. Neither of these two parts can be found in Othello. While the ancient tragedy worked upon the audience's previous knowledge of the myth, Shakespeare's tragedies work upon its ignorance of the subject matter. The "open" theatre dispenses with the chorus. Very interestingly, the characters soliloquize and their lines have something of a choric effect. They display general reflections or broodings over plans. An instance of this innovation is Iago's speech, as his idea of the scheme against Othello begins to grow:

How? How? Let's see
After some time, to abuse Othello's ears,
That he is too familiar with his wife:

He has a person, and a smooth dispose
To be suspected: fram'd to make women false.
The Moor is of a free, and open nature,
That thinks men honest, that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by th'nose
As asses are.
I have't: it is engender'd: Hell, and Night,
Must bring this monstrous birth, to the World's
light.

(I.iii.)

Iago's asides can also be said to perform the role of the chorus, for, by addressing the audience, he breaks its total emotional involvement with the action. Thus, they provide for the distanciation which interpolated comments always generates. For example, the scene in which Cassio leaves taking Desdemona by the hand:

He takes her by the palm; ay, well said, whisper;
with little a web as this will I ensnare a great
a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will
gyve thee in thine own courtship...

(II.i.)

Aristotle comments on the language used in tragedies saying that it is to be "embellished, (...) through the medium of verse alone or with the aid of song." So, according to him the speeches should be delivered in verse, which is not the case in Othello. An illustration of the different kinds of dramatic speech is found in this play, for Shakespeare uses verse and prose with great artistry to gain particular

effects of tone, mood, and atmosphere. The distinction between the use of prose and that of verse is clear: prose dialogue keeps the scene on the every day level, whereas verse heightens the atmosphere, giving dignity and emotion to the speaker. In Othello, blank verse is the natural speech of the protagonist. He is a heroic and dignified person. Iago, on the other hand, is a lower character altogether. He speaks mostly in prose, but at times he breaks into verse, especially in his soliloquies. It is interesting to notice that the change in Iago's speeches coincide with the changes in his mood. The real Iago, speaking true to himself, uses verse, which is the natural expression of emotion on the Elizabethan stage. But Iago, the jocular, the mocker, uses a quick prose. Prose shows that the mask is on, that he is self-controlled. The passages quoted before are a good example of such changes in language.

With Othello, a lapse into prose denotes the opposite — a break-down of control. Othello speaks prose only when he falls into a fit and when he sees the handkerchief in Cassio's hand:

Oth.: (...) To confess, and be hanged, and
then to confess: I tremble at it.
Nature would not invest herself in
such shadowing passion without some
instruction. It is not words that shake
me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and lips.
Is it possible? Confess. Handkerchief.
O! devil. (Falls in a trance.)
(IV.i.)

Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be
damned to-night; for she shall not live.
No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike
it and it hurts my hand. O the world hath
not a sweeter creature; she might lie by
an emperor's side and command his tasks.

(IV.i.)

In Othello the cast itself also deserves some consideration. While the Greek tragedy presented no more than three actors on the stage, the Shakespearean tragedy in general, and Othello in particular, present a large cast of characters. The stage is crowded, which constitutes another deviation from the classical model. In fact, the Elizabethan stage was suitable to the needs of the playwright. It was built on more than one level, making it possible for the several actors to enter and exit easily.

Aristotle elaborates on the unity of action, in Ch. VIII, as he says that "the imitation is one when the plot imitates one action and it is a whole." What is emphasized here is that unity means cohesion. In this sense, Othello is in accord with the Greek model. Very interestingly, the unity of action is the only one mentioned by Aristotle. The unities of place and time were established by Ludovico Castelvetro, a literary critic of the Renaissance, in his commentary on the Poetics. The neo-classic followed the three unities as a dogma. At this point the "open" drama again departed from the model, since it broke with the accepted unities. In Othello, the action unfolds in different places and time passes on. The idea of time-flow is a very important trait

in the Renaissance. The Elizabethans were fully aware that "tempus fugit," which attracted and yet frightened them. With the Greeks it was different: emphasis was put on the action. The only time implied was the one needed to portray the whole situation.

Another point that may be inferred from the reading of the Poetics is the unity of tone. That is, there should be a maintenance of the same mood and atmosphere, the tragic and the comic sense of life being kept apart. In Shakespeare there is a combination of tragic and comic elements, providing a mingling of tones. A good example is the Clown, in Othello: his lines break the somber atmosphere of the tragedy.

Violence on the stage is another diverging point: whereas in the Greek tragedies violent scenes happened off stage and were reported by the chorus, in the Elizabethan stage there can be found many instances of violence. In Othello, the strangling of Desdemona and the suicide of the protagonist are actually performed before the eyes of the audience.

Historically, it is known that tragedy emerged out of a religious ritual in the ancient Greece. However, in the England of the 16th century this communal and ritualistic focus shifts from a concern with gods and fate to a concern with the passions of men, taking on a moral pattern. The audience became an important element as it was asked to imagine, to respond to the aesthetic experience. It seems suitable to discuss here the concept of catharsis, as it is achieved "through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions." Aristotle merely used the term

without defining it. Many interpretations have appeared. During the Renaissance, Aristotle's definition was revived and catharsis was interpreted in the moral sense of regarding the spectator purified by the tragedy. What is emphasized here is the criterion of emotional response, which, once again, stresses the permanent concern of the playwrights with the audience.

As it has been pointed out so far, the departures from the classical model are explained and somewhat justified as being a manifestation of an age in which man became the "measure of all things." The humanistic and individualistic pattern of the Renaissance permeates Shakespeare's tragedies. His deviations are the stroke of a genius who fully apprehended and displayed the spirit of his time.

Tragedy and the tragic hero will be considered, henceforth, under a more ethical criterion. The Aristotelian definition of tragedy, in Chapter VI, has it as:

(...) an imitation of an action, and of a certain magnitude, in language embellished (...) in the form of action, not narrative (...), arousing pity and fear and bringing about the purgation of such emotions.

Further on, in Chapter XIII, the tragic hero is delineated as:

A man who is not eminently good or just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty. He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous, passing from good to bad fortune.

Genuine tragedies bear the same features concerning the tragic hero, although there seems to be some flexibility in terms of form. Every tragic drama exhibits a central character isolated from his fellows, caught in a limit situation — the tragic conflict. The protagonist shows an astonishing courage, but he is doomed. Forces working within the hero, echoing those without, threaten to split him apart. His ruin is brought about by a tragic flaw, which is not a moral one but lies beyond the limits of right or wrong. There is a marked one-sidedness. When the hero is faced with two equally justifiable and clashing values, he espouses one and by doing so he is forced to let go of the other. He, then, identifies himself wholly with the power that moves him. Whereas in the Greek tragedy the emphasis was on the action itself, during the Renaissance, by force of Humanism and Individualism taken to extremes, the hero as an individual is emphasized. Othello is a tragic hero. Although he is not a king, he is a warrior hero, with his magnificence and his sense of patrician caste. His path unfolds from happiness to a complete collapse. His fall is inevitable.

The relationship between character and plot is so intimate in a tragedy that we speak of "inevitability," that is, the events are related through probability and necessity. Because of the internal structure of the play, the action takes a certain course and not another. In relation to Othello, because of his internal make-up and of the circumstances that surround him, the catastrophe is inevitable. His flaw is his readiness to accept everything as truth.

Iago verbalizes it, saying that "the Moor is of a green and open nature that thinks men honest." In addition, Othello's jealousy, sense of inferiority, total dependence on his self-esteem on being loved, are part of the naive and child-like qualities which account for his yielding to ignoble suspicion.

Surrounding the protagonist, other characters are involved in the action and their function is, in part, to place the hero's struggle in perspective. Such is the role played by Iago in this play. His fate counterpoints that of Othello. The same relationship exists in the portrayal of Desdemona and Emilia. Desdemona is the female apotheosis of the Venetian courtesy-world. She does not step outside the role demands. Before Othello's accusations, she collapses and cannot resist, responding inertly to his savagery. Her fate is counterpointed by that of Emilia who is strong, and also the most complete individual character in the play. Their reactions to Othello help to frame his personality and make his characteristics stand out.

In Othello, the hero's conflict is not that of an undivided soul against external forces — Iago, for instance — but of a divided soul struggling against itself. The clashing values inside Othello are his love for his wife and his strong sense of honour. Because of his exceptional nature, which precludes half-heartedness, his commitment with his honour is so strong that his love has to be destroyed.

Othello's degree of awareness is very high. He knows he is renouncing what he most cherishes. Nevertheless, he

freely embarks upon an intentional course, and experiences the results of his choice. In Act V, scene ii, in a soliloquy, Othello reveals his everlasting love and his profound suffering:

(Kisses her)

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after. One more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears; this sorrow's heavenly,
It strikes where it doth love.

Othello accepts full responsibility for his deed. "It was I that killed her," he says. When he learns that Desdemona is innocent it is too late for him. He knows he has killed her not out of hatred but all in honour. He punishes himself by committing suicide.

When the tragic hero falls, he is the embodiment of the tragic element in the world. The tragic protagonist is ultimately a symbol of the individual's effort to come to terms with himself and with the world. He is never to be blamed but, on the contrary, profoundly respected.

In conclusion we may say that in Othello there is an epitome of the patterns for tragedies as created by Shakespeare, who is no mere imitator of his contemporaries. This play, with all its "innovations" concerning the classical models, is far from being diminished in its value: it is a monument of a remarkable genius and, behind him, of a remarkable age.

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THE NEW MATTER OF BRITAIN: T.H. White's
THE SWORD IN THE STONE

Maria Luiza Cyrino Valle

The Arthurian legend has always exerted great fascination on the minds of men; it has influenced not only literature, but also music, painting and even archeological researches. Over the centuries, the tales of King Arthur and his knights have been retold and reshaped by many writers, either in verse or prose renderings.

The first prose version of the Arthurian legend in English was Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte d'Arthur, published in 1485. Malory's work not only culminates the Medieval Arthurian tradition, but it has also been the seminal source of most subsequent artistic treatment of the legend.

In our century, writers have continued to draw on the legend, as well as on Malory's text. One of these writers was the British novelist Terence Hanbury White, author of the following books on Arthur: a four-volume novel entitled The Once and Future King,¹ published in 1958, and a fifth novel, The Book of Merlyn,² published in 1977. Three of the novels which constitute the tetralogy had been published separately, at different dates. The first one, The Sword in the Stone,³ was published in 1938. It was followed by The Queen of Air and Darkness in 1939, and by The Ill-made Knight in 1940. The Candle in the Wind, the fourth novel, appeared for the

first time in the 1958 four-volume edition, namely, The Once and Future King.

The present study concentrates on the first novel of the tetralogy, The Sword in the Stone, aiming to unfold White's treatment of the legend, mainly in what concerns character creation.

The Sword in the Stone deals with the boyhood of King Arthur and his education by Merlyn. This part of the King's career had never been mentioned in any of the previous versions of the legend. It is then, W.H. White's own contribution to the legend.

Almost all characters in The Sword in the Stone are part of the large cast of the Arthurian legend, and as the book is wholly about the boyhood of Arthur under the guidance of Merlyn, the two of them are the characters of greatest prominence in the story. They are followed by Kay, and to a lesser degree by Sir Ector, Arthur's foster father, King Pellinore, Sir Grummore, and Morgan le Fay. The other characters are based upon figures drawn from popular legends, folktale, and mythical material. Such a mixture is not only applied to the protagonists, since many of the motifs and themes intertwined throughout the story also come from those varied sources.

At first impression, the mixture of so many varied elements gives the reader a puzzling sensation and contributes to the comical tone of the story. The impression one has is that White has made a kind of cocktail, with ingredients ranging from Medieval History and Literature, to folktale,

mythical material, anacronisms, parables, and even Natural History. If the comical tone does persist in White's books, and is in fact related to the satirical style which permeates it, the blending of so many elements is not so confusing or purposeless as it may seem at first. In reality, it is meaningful, since it is closely related to characterization and adds valuable insight into the characters' motivations and roles. It contributes not only to the clarification of the concept of the hero in White's books, but also to the meaning of his work as a whole.

The elements pertaining to folktale and to myth are very relevant to characterization and are mainly centered around Arthur and Merlyn and the development of their relationship. Sometimes the boundary between myth and folktale becomes blurred and it is difficult to distinguish it with any precision. Stith Thompson in The Folktale,⁴ categorizes the various kinds of folktale, but remarks that finding exact terms is a difficult task and comments on the blending which occurs from one into the other.

A similar blending occurs in The Sword in the Stone, but the relevance of White's use of such elements is due not so much to the exact source from which they originated, but to the way they articulate so as to give depth to the presentation and meaning of characters and coherence to his work.

The book offers the possibility of two kinds of reading; if on one level it is the light-hearted, amusing story of the childhood of King Arthur, on a deeper level

this same story presents certain fundamental truths of human life. Folktale and mythical elements are linked to the boyhood of Arthur: they are evocative of the magic world of childhood and at the same time they are suggestive of the more serious, deeper aspects of life, such as fate, wisdom and truth.

Whatever the exact degree to which folktale and myth are incorporated within the story, T.H. White is most of the time successful in using them, and part of his success is due to his ability to apply such elements not only to the plot, but also to the characters, mainly to the figures of Wart and Merlyn.

The most striking characteristic not only of these two characters, but of all characters created by White, is the sense of humanness that they show. The Wart is the first evidence of that. To start with, the name Arthur is mentioned just once, and throughout the book, only the nickname Wart is used. The use of the nickname humanizes the character and establishes an affectionate connection between him and the reader. As opposed to all the other figures which already existed in the tradition of the legend, it also strengthens the originality of T.H. White's text. The Wart is his unique creation. He is presented as a common boy: there is nothing unusual or special about him. The first few chapters show that he is the adopted son of Sir Ector, the Master of the Castle. What is even more important, the opposition between the Wart and Kay is established immediately. This opposition is carried on until the end of the book and the presentation

and development of the Wart is continuously paralleled by that of Kay. Kay's position in the household is privileged mainly because one day he would become Sir Kay, "the master of the estate" (p. 7). He feels too dignified to accept a nickname, is not punished by the governess or by the other members of the household, and enjoys various other privileges for being Sir Ector's proper son. For the Wart, the question of precedence was a painful one, because he did not understand it very well, and Kay had taught him that "being different was necessarily wrong." (p. 13) However, the Wart has a naïve and loving nature. He thinks Kay is more important than himself and "admired Kay and was a born follower. He was a hero worshipper." (p. 13)

The contrast between elder and young children plays an important role in folktales. In tales of this type, the youngest child, the unpromising one, becomes the hero, and in the case of being a son, the tales are many times referred to by the term "male Cinderella."⁵ White is obviously using the same motif here. The Wart, towards the end of the book, compares himself to a Cinderella.

Unlike folktale, however, the child of shiftless habits is not the Wart, the youngest, but Kay:

The Wart loved hay-making, and was good at it, Kay, who was two years older, generally stood on the edge of the bundle of hay which he was trying to pick up, with the result that he worked as hard as the Wart for only half of the result. But he hated to be beaten by anybody at

anything and used to fight away with the wretched hay — which he loathed like poison-until he was quite sick. (p. 11)

Kay's role, which at first impression might be suggestive of that of the villain or of the unkind sister of folktales is really much more complex than that. Although he does perform the role of a foil to the Wart throughout the story, it is also through him that White is able to express some of the more serious passages in the book, which concern destiny, self-realization, and failure. By reverting the pattern of a folktale motif, White interestingly opposes the dichotomy good-bad, and at the same time emphasizes the complexity of his character's role, thus giving him a sense of depth.

The critic John K. Crane points out that White did not want to make a villain of Kay, who is only an ordinary human being, and adds that "the book might be, in a slight way, Kay's tragedy in itself."⁶ He quotes the following lines about Kay:

He was not at all an unpleasant person, really, but clever, quick, proud, passionate and ambitious. He was one of those people who would be neither a follower nor a leader, but only an aspiring heart, impatient in the failing body which imprisoned him." (p. 45)

Kay is a pivotal character in The Sword in the Stone.

He is not only a foil to the Wart, but he is also the means through which White expresses some of the themes of his novels. One of them is his criticism of the environment as a powerful formative force of character. This theme is more fully developed in the second book The Queen of Air and Darkness through the Orkney children, in The Ill-Made Knight through the figure of Lancelot, and finally in The Candle in the Wind through Mordred.

In addition, Kay seems to fill a structural role. His relevance is restricted to The Sword in the Stone, but each of the following books has characters who are developed in much the same way Kay is. In fact, one of White's techniques for character construction can be exemplified by his portrayal of Kay. The contoured lines of Kay's character had been already established by Malory, but T.H. White fills in the empty space within these lines. He gives a certain depth to the character, whose motivations and relationship thereby become complex ones. Consequently, this dimensionality adds to the character's credibility and simultaneously enhances his position as meaningful in the narrative. Kay and a number of other characters have a place in the story, and not just because they had been traditionally there as parts of the Arthurian World. They are handled in such a way so as to remain recognizable figures of the tradition, yet they surely fit into the pattern of White's own story.

As components of this pattern they have meaning in themselves, add to the meaning of the work as a whole and help unfold the concept of the hero throughout the five novels.

The basis of this concept is linked to the portrayal of characters who reflect not ideals of man or idealized life, but man as he is in real life: complex, multi-dimensional, and never simple. Although the vision of childhood is somewhat idealized, this does not interfere with characterization itself.

The characterizations of the Wart and Kay are further developed in their connection with the figure of Merlyn. The episode which precedes and motivates the meeting of the Wart and Merlyn illustrates how the different natures of the two boys make them take different paths. When the hawk they had taken from the mews fails to fly and refuses to return, Kay loses his temper, gives up trying to catch it and goes back home. But the Wart's loving nature and his concern for people make him think of all the hours and effort the falconer Hob had spent training it, so he goes on pursuit until he finds himself in a threatening forest. It is this incident that makes the Wart eventually find Merlyn.

In addition to revealing the diverse natures of the Wart and Kay, this same incident points to other important elements in the story. They are related to the use White makes of the landscape (the forest), and the quest motif. Both the forest and the quest are fundamental parts of Medieval Romance. In Malory's text⁷ there is no precise description of a forest, although the knights move and act in it all the time. The words used to describe it are either "fayre" or "depe." The forest is inseparable from the quest. The knight is always led into a quest as he follows an animal (a hare, a brachet or

a hart) into the forest. There is often an encounter either with knights, damsels, and fays, or with strange creatures such as dwarfs, foul churls, and giants. The forest is also the stage for marvellous occurrences, and the refuge for those who become insane due to excess or love, such as Tristan and Lancelot.

But White's forest is "the great jungle of Old England" (p. 18). It comprises some of the elements mentioned above, but they are given a more realistic touch. It is at the same time reminiscent of the forest as found in fairy-tales, the place where one meets danger:

... The mad and wicked animals were not the only inhabitants of the crowded gloom. When men themselves became mad and wicked, they took refuge there, outlaws cunning and bloody as the gorcrow, and as percecuted. The Wart thought particularly of a man named Wat, whose name the cottagers used to frighten their children with. He had once lived in Sir Ector's village and the Wart could remember him. He squinted, had no nose, and was weak in his wits. The children threw stones at him. One day he turned on the children and caught one and made a snarly noise and bit off his nose too. Then he ran away into the forest. They threw stones at the child with no nose, now, but Wat was supposed to be in the forest still, running on all fours and dressed in skins. There were magicians in the forest also in those days, as well as strange animals not known to modern works of natural history. There were regular bands of out-laws, not like Wat, who lived together and wore green and shot with arrows which

never missed. There were even a few dragons, though they were rather small ones, which lived under stones and could hiss like a kettle.
(p. 19)

The references to the Wat and the "child with no nose" which at first may seem purposeless, show how T.H. White uses some of the traditional elements of the legend to fit his story. The Wat (the word in Old English means insane, mad) has a traceable connection with the wild man of the woods, a figure of Celtic tradition who was sometimes identified with Merlyn. In Malory's text Merlyn appears several times disguised either as a wild man, a woodcutter, a churl or a boy. T.H. White keeps these traditional figures but uses them in a different way. He separates the Wat and the boy "with no nose" from the figure of Merlyn. However, the Wat seems to be a replacement of the wild man. There are no dwarfs in this forest, but the reference to the boy seems to point to a common idea of physical distortion. Where in Malory's text the appearance of Merlyn in disguised forms or of the dwarf are related to prophecies and to the announcement of an adventure, in T.H. White's novel the Wat and the boy "with no nose" are related to the plot and also to the meaning of the work by becoming carriers of themes. Through these two figures White emphasizes man's basic distrusts of all that is different, and how least favored human beings are denied the right to live an integrated life in society.

There are further references to the Wat and the boy in the course of the narrative. The boy "with no nose" is the

Dog Boy of Sir Ector's Castle, who felt more comfortable living with dogs than with people. But the Wat and the Dog Boy are not in the narrative only to serve as tools for this kind of criticism. They are also connected with the Wart, who shows his concern for both, and with the action of the story, as they participate later in an adventure with Kay and the future King.

It is interesting to notice that the Wat shares the forest not only with the outlaws, who are later identified as Robin Hood and his band, but even with the magicians, of whom Merlyn is an example. They are, after all, the excluded ones.

Ironically enough, none of these creatures whom the Wart fears hurt him. The boy meets real danger when he is almost shot by the arrows of a knight, a figure accepted and worshipped by society. This is therefore an instance of criticism which indicates a reversal of socially accepted values.

The discovery that the arrows had come from King Pellinore in search of the Questing Beast is preceded by a description of the boy's vision of this knight in full armour:

There was a clearing in the forest, a wide sward of moonlit grass, and the white rays shone full upon the tree trunks on the opposite side. These trees were beeches, whose trunks are always most beautiful in a pearly light, and among the beeches there was the smallest

movement and a silvery clink. Before the clink there were just the beeches, but immediately afterwards there was a knight in full armour, standing still, and silent and unearthly, among the majestic trunks. He was mounted on an enormous white horse that stood as rapt as its master, and he carried in his right hand, with its butt resting on the stirrup. a high, smooth jousting lance, which stood up among the tree stumps, higher and higher, till it was outlined against the velvet sky. All was moonlit, all silver, too beautiful to describe. (p. 22)

The vision of the knight through the child's eyes contrasts with the description that follows it, and the magic and marvellous give place to the ridiculous and comic, in a scene highly suggestive of a cartoon:

For the ghost lift up its visor, revealing two enormous eyes frosted like ice; exclaimed in an anxious voice "What, What?", took off its eyes — which turned out to be horn-rimmed spectacles, completely fogged by being inside the helmet; tried to wipe them on the horse's mane — which only made them worse; lifted both hands above its head and tried to wipe them on its plume; dropped its lance; dropped the spectacles; got off the horse to search for them — the visor shutting in the process; lifted its visor; bent down for the spectacles; stood up again as the visor shut once more, and exclaimed in a plaintive voice, "Deah, Deah!" (p. 23)

The situation becomes even more comical when King

Pellinore tells the Wart about the brachet that helps him trace the beast, which is described as a composite of serpent, libbard, lion, and hart.

The Quest, which is one of the noblest themes in Arthurian literature, is here made fun of.

The Wart tries to persuade King Pellinore to help him out of the forest, but the knight is unable to do it, because he hears the sound of the beast and he must continue the quest. King Pellinore has been after the Questing Beast for seventeen years. He does not know why he pursues it or why he must do it. The quest, in fact, has been forced upon him: it is "the burden of the Pellinores who have been trained with that idea in mind" (p. 24). Thus, his quest is not a search, but a curse. John Crane calls our attention to the serious side that underlies the apparent comical presentation of King Pellinore.⁸

For a better understanding of King Pellinore's role and meaning, it is also useful to mention here that the scene in which Malory introduces King Pellinore and the Questing Beast, is, as in White's text, connected with Arthur, the pursuit of a hare and the forest. It is also King Pellinore's quest to follow the beast. Although "it was a wonderful beast, and a great signification", for Merlyn prophesied much of that beast" (p. 131), its real nature is never revealed and its meaning is not made clear. Without the knowledge of King Pellinore as used in Malory, this figure would remain too eccentric, comic, and absurd.

The quest is a recurrent motif in Arthurian romance. On the one hand it is linked to religion and to mystical vision in the Grail stories, which present the greatest of all quests. But there are also the non-religious quests in which the knights are permanently involved. These are of two kinds: there are the manly adventures the knights engage in, in order to keep up their reputation for prowess, and a higher kind of quest, the "special adventure," as John Stevens called it in his book Medieval Romance.⁹ This quest has a special effect on the knight, who, through it, becomes more than a common living man. This special "adventure" involves self-knowledge and spiritual growth. In Malory's text one can detect these three modalities. There are the quests for the Grail, which are strictly religious, and the endless quests in which the knights meet adventure after adventure, joust with other knights, and exhibit feats of arms.

In Malory's work, however, King Pellinore's quest does not seem to fit strictly in any of these modalities. Perhaps this occurs partly because the nature and meaning of the beast is so undefined. His figure is more linked to the vague questing atmosphere which pervades the entire romance, rather than to any specific meaning.

In T.H. White's novels, King Pellinore's structural function is manifold. Through this character the impracticabilities of Malory's narrative are satirized as well as chivalric values. But the implications and significance of the quest are also presented through this character. T.H. White uses Pellinore's predicament to criticize contemporary values, as it becomes a symbol of a quest undertaken to fulfill familiar or social expectations, and not one's own.

But the roots of T.H. White's King Pellinore are not to be found only in the Pellinore of Malory's text, his most immediate source. King Pellinore also has a parallel in the White Knight Alice meets in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking-Glass. Quite like White's Pellinore, he cannot stay on his horse:

Whenever the horse stopped (which it did very often), he fell off in front; and whenever it went on again (which it generally did, rather suddenly), he fell off behind. Otherwise, he kept on pretty well, except that he had a habit of now and then falling off sideways;...¹⁰

He is at the same time funny, foolish, absurd, but the most human figure Alice meets in her adventures, and she is impressed by him forever.

The Wart is also very impressed by the knight he meets. Much later, in Book Three, The Ill-made Knight, when Arthur's dream of a happy kingdom is falling apart, he says that King Pellinore was the first knight he ever fell in love with.

What White does then, is to recreate a Pellinore who comprises characteristics of Malory's character and of Lewis Carroll's White Knight. This reveals how he follows the tradition, in that the Arthurian legend was a result of the combination of elements and characters taken from different stories. However, in his process of condensation White adds a satirical touch that is a departure from tradition. The impracticabilities of the medieval rendering of the episode involving King Pellinore and the Questing Beast are more acceptable in T.H. White's work because they are part of the magic world of children, even though approaching the absurd.

Just as in Arthurian Romances the hero is led into the forest as he pursues an animal and meets adventure, here the Wart penetrates the forest as he goes in search of the hawk and has an encounter with a question knight. Finally, after a night's sleep in the forest, he meets Merlyn . Thus the Wart, the hawk, the forest, and the questing knight are part of just one pattern, which parallels the "questing pattern" of medieval romance. In addition to these elements taken from romance, T.H. White also draws elements from fairy tales and children's stories and make them fit into his version. In fairy tales, birds may be the announcers of an adventure.¹¹ Significantly, the knight that Alice meets comes to see her safe out of the wood, and after she has crossed the next brook she becomes a Queen. The crossing of a river symbolizes in fairy tales a transition, and a new beginning on a higher level of existence.¹²

Anyway, be it in fairy tales, romances and even dreams,

the entering of a forest has been associated with the call to adventure and expresses the passage into new stages of life. Related to this call is "the figure that appears suddenly as a guide, marking a new period, a new stage, a new biography."¹³

In The Sword in the Stone, this figure is Merlyn. Going after the hawk the Wart has found a tutor, and the Wart's relation to this quest is best expressed through his own words, when the boy finds out that Merlyn is going to return to the Castle with him:

At this the Wart's eyes grew rounder and rounder, until they were about as big as the owl's who was sitting on his shoulder, and his face got redder and redder, and a big breath seemed to gather itself beneath his heart. "My!" exclaimed the Wart, while his eyes sparkled with excitement at the discovery. "I must have been on a Quest." (p. 41)

The meeting of the Wart and Merlyn marks the beginning of a relationship which constitutes the bulk of this first novel. But the significance of Merlyn is to be found as much in the development of such a relationship as in the way he is characterized in the story.

Merlyn is portrayed first like the character from the Walt Disney cartoon The Sword and the Stone, and as such belongs to the world of children. Instances which are strongly evocative of the film are, among others, the descriptions of the magician when the Wart first sees him:

The old gentleman that the Wart saw was a singular spectacle. He was dressed in a flowing gown with fur tippetts which had the signs of the zodiac embroidered all over it, together with various cabalistic signs, as of triangles with eyes in them, queer crosses, leaves of trees, bones of birds and animals and a planetarium whose stars shone like bits of looking-glass with the sun on them. He had a pointed hat like a dunce's cap, or like the headgear worn by ladies of that time, except that the ladies were accustomed to have a bit of veil floating from the top of it. He also had a wand of lignum vitae, which he had laid down in the grass beside him, and a pair of horn-trimmed spectacles like those of King Pellinore. They were extraordinary spectacles, being without ear pieces, but shaped like scissors of the antennae of the tarantula wasp. (p. 31)

But as a wizard, Merlyn has a parallel in Malory's Merlyn: both are powerful, prophetic, and responsible for the future of King Arthur. In Malory's text Merlyn uses his power to aid Arthur in battle, either by helping him overcome his enemies in actual fight or by giving him advice. He is both a counselor and a strategist, always ready to safeguard the position of the King.

Merlyn always enjoys using his ability to appear under several disguises or simply to vanish away. Besides the magic power which enables him to devise such childish surprises, he combines the qualities of a skilled technician, something like an engineer, with those of an artisan, as he is able to construct a "bridge of stone and steele and write names on tombes with letters of gold."(p. 58)

Merlyn's most striking power, however, is that of vaticination. He foretells all future events and the destinies of Arthur and of other characters as well. His prophecies emphasize the sense of doom which pervades the story, for in spite of all his foreknowledge, destiny cannot be changed. Even when the characters are aware of what will happen to them they are unable to go against their predestined fates. Merlyn's power is useless even for himself. He knows the woman he will fall in love with will be the cause of his destruction. None of his skills and magic power are strong enough compared to the forces of love. He is able to control most forces of nature, but not those of love.

The magician is also a dream-reader, and in addition to this role, he is presented by Malory as a religious prophet, as all his forebodings are uttered in the name and by the wish of God. Thus, fate is in the power of an omniscient being, and there seems to be no place for the question of free will. In spite of his constant invocation of the name of God, Merlyn is seen by many as a witch, as the devil's son, or as having acquired his powers through the devil's craft.

Although the figure of Merlyn provides a great part of the fascination of the Arthurian legend and constitutes one of the most interesting parts of Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur, he is present only in the first book (out of eight), disappearing completely afterwards. The function performed by Merlyn as a prophet and magician is then extended to a number of mysterious men similar to Merlyn himself. The other characters

through whom magic is performed are Morgan le Fay, Arthur's half-sister and enemy, and other mysterious women. Like Merlyn, they are the operators of magic, having the special skills that enable them to manipulate the forces of nature in a marvellous manner.

Unlike the Merlyn of Malory's text, T.H. White's character occupies a great part of The Sword in the Stone. His relevance is not restricted to this first novel, but is in fact extended to all the others. The importance of Merlyn is due to the relationship he bears to the development of the plot, to the central characters, and to the thematic structure of the subsequent works.

As developed by T.H. White, the figure of Merlyn is a mixture of absent-minded intellectual, alchemist, and naturalist. The description of his hut attests to that. The objects in it vary from a gold-medal for being the best scholar at Eton, the fourteenth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, roots of Mandrake, different types of vessels and glasses, retorts with cauldrons, and hundreds of thousands of brown books in leather bindings, to all kinds of insects, stuffed animals and birds, as well as live animals under the care of the magician. The introduction of modern elements and objects in the description of the hut, adds a note of humor and contemporaneity. Merlyn seems to be all at once: a seer, a scholar, a teacher, and a sage.

Such a variety of aspects for Merlyn seems to be a reflexion of the changing characteristics attributed to him by the different authors and sources of Arthurian Literature.

Thus, Merlyn has been associated with the Welsh poet and prophet Myrddyn, with Taliesin, with wild mad men, with a magician who undergoes transformation, with a dream-reader, and has been regarded as the guiding genius of Arthur's reign.¹⁴

T.H. White is successful in reconciling in Merlyn so many different aspects at once. Each of these is in fact complementary to the other, and the character becomes remarkable dimensional, fascinating, and charming.

Merlyn's knowledge is neither only scientific nor excessively intellectual. Most of all he has knowledge of human nature, and his wisdom is greatly due to his understanding of men. He is wise too, in that he perceives that wisdom, courage, and virtue may be learned through nature.

He also possesses the gift of prophecy, although he does not make much use of it. He only reveals to the Wart his royal origin and utters prophecies concerning his future as a king, in the very last page of this book. When in the succeeding novels Merlyn tells Arthur about future events, he does so not in the vaticinating manner of Malory's Merlyn, but as warnings that could prevent future suffering. Arthur himself never pays too much attention to them, "because he didn't like to know the future" (p. 282). Merlyn's prophetic power is related to the fact that he has come from the future, that is, he moves backwards in time. This is not the usual role played by prophets, who live now — in a present time — and know about the future.

Merlyn's trajectory is the same trajectory of the author — the twentieth century man looking back into

the past. Merlyn's capacity to transcend time is reminiscent of that of the Welsh wizard-poet Taliesin, "who was there when the world was created and will endure to the end."¹⁵ Although they transcend time in inverted ways, they have in common the characteristics of agelessness and omniscience, Merlyn for possessing the knowledge of the future, and Taliesin for bearing within him the history of the world and the lore of the ages.

In addition, T.H. White seems to be making a similar use of the traditional motif of prophet-poet, as he establishes a link between his and Merlyn's same trajectory in moving back in time. The prophet-poet motif found in the tradition is then reinforced.

Still related to this reversal of time order is Merlyn's forgetfulness of important details which leads the story to a tragic outcome. An instance of this is Merlyn's omission of Igraine's relationship to Arthur, which leads to his incestuous affair with his half-sister Margause in the second novel The Queen of Air and Darkness.

As for magic, Merlyn does control the forces of nature by making it snow or rain, by vanishing away, by producing various objects or by turning the Wart into animals. But these are transformations which remind one of tricks of a hypnotist or of an illusionist, as Sir Ector himself comments, after having asked Merlyn to give some testimonials of his abilities as a magician.

The fact that Merlyn is a magician does not impress Sir Ector, neither the other members of the household, and

all of them regard the old man as just good enough to be the tutor of the Wart and Kay.

Whereas Malory's Merlyn is an inscrutable and impressive figure, feared by all, the Merlyn of White's creation lives unnoticed in the Castle of the Forest Sauvage, and people's lives are unaffected by his presence or by his magic powers. In fact, he ranks equally with the priest of the Castle or with the sargeant who trains the boys in the art of chivalry — the kind of training which Merlyn does not consider at all valuable, but which is accepted by all as the only fit one. Fighting and military tactics, as well as tilting, jousting, and horsemanship, are considered worthless activities by the magician. The old man cannot value the sort of education which aims only at the muscles:

A lot of brainless unicorns swaggering about and calling themselves educated just because they can push each other off a horse with a bit of stick! It makes me tired. Why, I believe, Sir Ector would have been gladder to get a by-our-lady tilting blue for your tutor, that swings himself along on his knuckles like an anthropoid ape, rather than a magician of known probity and international reputation with first class honour from every European university. The trouble with the English Aristocracy is that they are games-mad, that's what it is, games-mad. (p. 85)

Merlyn's attempts to show the Wart the futility of such education is one of his most difficult tasks. The boy is so involved with knights and fighting that he can perceive

nothing wrong in joustings and combats. He is too used to the fact that men periodically make war against each other.¹⁶

The scene which shows Pellinore fighting with Sir Grummore is hilarious. But there is nothing funny in the fact that they feel that at the sight of each other they must fight. In this scene, T.H. White is not only parodying the almost formular style of Malory's presentation of knights fighting. His criticism is not only directed against Malory's narrative, or the chivalric ideals of prowess and bravery of the Middle Ages. Merlyn's task of showing the Wart the hopelessness and futility of the conventional training of knights is linked in fact to one of the most important themes of the novel. Through Merlyn's teachings, the Wart realizes the violent and destructive potential that exists in men. This theme is present not only in The Sword in the Stone but is extended throughout the other four novels and is indeed a unifying principle. Thus, the power of Merlyn seems to reside not so much in his magic, but rather in the knowledge and wisdom he possesses. It is as a tutor to the Wart that he will best perform his role of guardian and helper, by showing him that his success will not come by magic, but by living and experimenting and relying on his own human means. Most of all, it is Merlyn's task to show the boy that victories are not necessarily the ones achieved in battles, even if whole civilizations have considered and may still consider it to be so.

Merlyn comes to the Castle to serve as a tutor for both the Wart and Kay. Though the relationship of Merlyn and the Wart is primarily one of master and pupil, the teachings the boy receives from the old man are of a very special kind. Disregarding formal knowledge, Merlyn tries to teach him lessons which are meaningful and necessary for a future King, and whose effect proves to last for a lifetime.

The special teachings of Merlyn, however, are not extended to Kay, whose education is limited to the conventional. Kay perceives there is something special in the relationship of Merlyn and the Wart, and he resents it. The Wart him self knows he is somehow privileged by their tutor's guidance and tries to understand why it is so. Merlyn tries to show the boy how powerless he is to change what had already been settled by destiny. Although unfair, he cannot do any magic for Kay. John Crane assigns to fate and to the environment a powerful influence on the destinies of the two boys. According to him, Kay was placed by fate in an environment.

which cultivates pride in selected members and allows it to evaporate at the very moment the cultivated character must depend upon it — as it does for Kay when he lies about having pulled the sword from the stone.¹⁷

Of the Wart, and of Merlyn's relationship to the boys, he adds:

Wart, for several reasons, all of which are

denied to poor Kay, overcomes the environment. Most basically, born in a lower position, he has less opportunity to succumb to the environment than Kay. Next, he has Merlyn, and Merlyn knowing that Kay is socially a nobody, concentrates entirely upon England's unknowing but future monarch.¹⁸

In fact, among other reasons, the treatment Kay received from the members of the household, for example, might have led the boy to think that he would always be the best one. So, why not the King of England? However, T.H. White seems to show that the overwhelming force of destiny is related not so much to the environment one is placed in. That there is an element of predestination in the Wart's life is quite clear, but White also implies that his success was partly due to the potentialities inherent in himself. Merlyn saw in the boy what others did not, but it was not only the truth concerning his royal origin. The wise man perceived that the Wart possessed the potentialities, the necessary qualities to be the King. His role as a tutor was not to "give" the boy such qualities, but to develop to the fullest what already lay there.

There are occasions in the novel in which the Wart himself seems to make his own choice and to set his own destiny. His speech in the kitchen scene, when he regrets his lower social position which impeded him to become a knight, reveals that his choice had already been made. This choice seems to be unrelated to preordained forces, but rather to come from himself:

"If I were to be made a knight",
said the Wart, starting dreamily
into the fire, I should insist
upon my doing my vigil all by
myself, as Hob does with his
hawks, and I should pray to God to let me
encounter all the evil in the world in my own
person so that if I conquered there should be one
left, while if I were defeated,
it would be I who would suffer
for it. (p. 255)

Kay, however, in addition to the limitations caused by the aristocratic environment he lived in, was hindered by his own inner limitations. Basically afraid and insecure, he developed feelings of conceit and pride which were really only a disguise for his fear. And it is mainly his incapacity to overcome his fear, for instance, that prevented him from going through the forest after the hawk, whose chase caused the Wart to find Merlyn. Kay seems to be a representative of most of humanity, that is, of that large majority who, for one reason or another, do not fulfill their own expectations.

That the environment is not the only responsible factor for one's success or failure is to a certain extent demonstrated by Sir Ector. He most probably came to be the ruler of the Castle of the Forest Sauvage in much the same way Kay would be one day, by heredity. Belonging to the aristocratic class, he has received the kind of treatment given to Kay, being used to similar privileges. Both belong to the same environment and thus have been under similar

influences, but Sir Ector seems to be much happier than Kay and to perceive much more of life. Aware of the limitations of his own son, Sir Ector doubts he had the necessary qualities to be the King, acknowledges it, and at the same time he reassures the boy of his love, in one of the most moving passages of the book:

Sir Ector did not say anything silly. He looked at the Wart. Then he stared at Kay again, long and lovingly, and said "we will go back to the church." "Now then, Kay," he said, when they were at the church door. He looked at his first-born again, kindly, but straight between the eyes. "Here is the stone, and you have the sword. It will make you the King of England. You are my son that I am proud of, and always will be, whatever happens. Will you promise me that you took it out by your own might?" Kay looked at his father. He also looked at the Wart and at the Sword. Then he handled the Sword to the Wart quite quietly. He said, "I am a liar. Wart pulled it out." (p. 284)

A similar scene is presented in Malory's text. It coincides with the introduction of Kay into the story, in the beginning of Book I. The Noble Tale of King Arthur. For comparison, the passage is quoted here:

And as sone as Sir Kay saw the swerd he wist wel
it was the swerd of the stone, and so he rode to
his father Syr Ector and said.
'Sire, loo here is the swerd of the stone, wherfor
I must be kyng of thys land.'
When Syre Ector beheld the swerd he returned

ageyne and cam to he chirche, and there they
alighte al thre and wente into the chirche, and
anon he made Sir Kay to swere upon a book how he
came to that swerd.

'Syr,' said Sir Kay, 'by my broder Arthur, for
he brought it to me' (p. 8)

The juxtaposition of the two renderings of this scene shows how T.H. White gives a psychological dimension to the event. The use he made of this incident, and the way he re-created the characters, are examples of how he filled the empty space within some of Malory's figures. This is particularly noticeable with Kay, who in Malory's text is sometimes presented as Arthur's "discomfited seneschal"¹⁹ and in other occasions has the role of a hero. T.H. White's treatment of Kay is consistent although his character is more complex than Malory's. The episode of the sword reveals the character's depth and emotions and it also points to the different directions taken by the Wart and Kay. For reasons that ultimately escape understanding, the moment the Wart reaches the climax of his long preparation under Merlyn's guidance is the moment in which Kay's failure is, after all, only strengthened. Though the role of King was assigned to the Wart, T.H. White pointed out throughout the novel that predestination was not the sole agent in the career of King Arthur, implying that a heroic status may to a certain extent be achieved.

This may be further confirmed by an analysis of the relationship of Merlyn and the Wart, and of the long process that made the Wart develop his potentialities and assimilate

the special teachings from his master. Through the lessons he receives, he is transformed into different animals, and each of them discloses to the boy its natural wisdom and special knowledge.

The role of animals as helpers to the hero is widespread in folktales and myth, forming in some tales the actual center of interest. Similarly, it is also relevant that many heroes are either transformed into animals or associated with animals; in this way, they are able to partake of their natural and supernatural qualities. Alwyn and Brinley Rees have discussed the relevance of the role attributed to animals:

In mythology, animals are not mere brutes; they are possessed of a supernatural intelligence and power. Their association with the birth and infancy of heroes is world-wide, and in many cases they befriend or serve their heroic kinsmen beyond the days of childhood.²⁰

The lessons and the transformations evolve quite smoothly from the narrative, and even in the concluding novel of White's Arthurian series, The Book of Merlyn, when Arthur returns again to see the animals, the transition is felt to be natural. In any way, the lessons are believable all the time.

The first lesson significantly takes the Wart into the water. The association of water with birth or rebirth or even baptism, suggests that the Wart is being initiated into a

special learning process from which he will emerge as a different person. Transformed into a fish, the Wart has the opportunity to see the King of the Moat, who professes just one law, that of power, and who lives by one decree, that of might as right. It is exactly against the motto "Might is Right" that Arthur is going to fight during his whole life.

As a merlyn, the Wart has a chance to see hawks living in a military-like organization. They are trained to kill by hunger, and owe blind obedience to their leader. Unaware that they are in fact prisoners in the Mews, they feel proud and honored for belonging to such a privileged and strong class.

It is the Wart's ordeal to stand by the murderous assaults of the half-crazed colonel Cully, the subaltern so trained in killing, and so pressed by the leader, that he is no longer able to control his obsessive killing instincts. The Wart comes off successfully from this ordeal, which is in fact a foreshadowing of his future actions. He will never accept that "Might is Right" and it will never be through military actions that he will govern his kingdom. But it is exactly the Wart's non-action and proof of courage that make him acclaimed as King by the birds. He withstands the attacks of Cully and saves himself at the last moment by using his intelligence and by restraining the instinct to strike back. In the fourth novel, The Candle in the Wind, Arthur meets a similar madness in Mordred, whom, like Cully, he protects and even loves.

Such a performance differs from the usual behaviour of heroes. Traditionally the role of heroes, both mythical and legendary, is associated with their valor in fighting. The heroes celebrated in heroic poetry, for instance, are primarily men of war, and are often compared to wild animals in their ability to fight: "irresistible onslaught and power to destroy" are the essential characteristics of the hero.²¹

In Malory's book, the quality of a good knight — his "might" — is measured by the blows he gives and by the number of opponents he smites down. White's hero not only lacks these characteristics, but also actively opposes the values associated with them.

The lessons which took the Wart into the Moat and then into the Mews are related to his future performance as a king. He experiences each of these events, and it is based on such experiencing that in the future he is going to make decisions concerning how he is to govern, and how he is to use his power.

The other lessons the Wart goes through seem to be linked not just to particular ways of governing but equally to the knowledge and perception of man's own animal nature. The meaning of these lessons has a mythical implication. Thus, the boy's meeting with the serpent enables him to learn of the reptilian nature of man. A symbol of wisdom, the ancient serpent tells him about the primeval water from where both reptile and man sprang. When transformed into snake, the Wart has the chance to view man from a totally different point of view: that of the snake. Curiously, T. Natrix reacts to man

in the same way human beings react to snakes, with fear and repulsion. As one of the most ancient beings of nature, it is the snake that teaches the boy History and legend.

Through History, the Wart becomes acquainted with the slow evolution of animals on earth, with the forces of competition and evolution that nature imposes, and with the role of man in the chain of evolution. The snake relates the destructive power and ferocity of the ceratosaurus to that of men. Just as it happened with the ceratosaurus, man can also destroy his own kind.

Through legend the Wart learns how poison was spread in nature by the python — and how all the creatures who became venomous agreed to use their killing power only to defend themselves. History and legend showed the Wart that the human animal, together with all the other beings of earth, have just one origin — water, which symbolizes the mysterious immensity from which everything comes and to which everything returns; that is, life itself.

It is from the same ancient water that the rose, a symbol of perfection, springs. What the little verse at the end of this lesson seems to imply is that man should not forget his reptilian side. Only by coming to terms with it, will he be able to balance his beastly and his human sides and then possibly attain perfection:

In the great sea the stars swing over the
eternal whirlpool flows. Rest, rest, wild head,
in the old bosom which neither feels nor
knows. She only rocks us, cradled in heaven,
the reptile and the rose. Her waters which

bore us will receive us good night and sweet
repose. (p. 182)

The instinctual destructiveness of mankind is further reinforced in the episode of the boar hunt, which immediately follows the lesson with the snake. Although this is only a "regular adventure" it is another opportunity for the boy to acquire important knowledge concerning human nature.

The hunt of the boar mobilizes the entire population of Sir Extor's Castle, and during the chase the instinct to kill the boar at bay seems to take hold of all, as if they were being chained in the same electric current:

There were five long minutes during which nothing happened. The hearts beat thunderously in the circle, and a small vein on the side of each neck throbbed in harmony with each heart. The heads turned quickly from side to side, as each man assured himself of his neighbors, and the breath of life steamed away on the north wind most sweetly, as each realized how beautiful life was, which a reeking tush might, in a few seconds, rape away from one or another of them if things went wrong. (p. 203)

At this moment, the people participating in the hunt are very similar to those groups of humans who killed the animals in pre-historic times, but with one difference: in the distant past men might have killed for fear and self-protection, for survival mainly. In the boar hunt, however,

the feeling that moves them is that of pleasure in killing.

However, the leader of the hunt, Master William Twyti whom everybody admires does not like to talk to his eager admirers about his skillfulness in killing and disjointing the animals. Forced to pursue animals for the royal table, his work contrasts with his love for hares and dogs:

Summer or winter, snow or shine, he was running or galloping after boars and harts, and all the time his soul was somewhere else. (p. 198)

This episode shows us that the gregariousness and animality of our ancestors still survive in man. Nevertheless, the episode also shows that this same violent man is equally capable of emotion and love. The Wart is given a glimpse of this paradox of human nature mainly through Master Twyti himself. The boy had been taking part in all the events from the arrival of the huntsman to the end of the chase. With the acute perception peculiar to children he seems to be the only one to notice the feelings of Master Twyti when his dog Beaumont gets killed in the hunt:

The Wart did not like to watch Master Twyti for a moment or two. The strange little leathery man stood up without saying anything and whipped the hounds off the corpse of the boar as he was accustomed to do. He put his horn to his lips and blew the four long notes of the mort without a quaver. But he was blowing the notes for something else, and he startled the Wart because he seemed to be crying. (p. 207-08)

In the next lesson the Wart is taken by the owl Archimedes to visit Athene, the Goddess of Wisdom. The Wart then has the chance to see the world of trees: he watches how they grow, live, and at last die. Next, he sees the formation of minerals and of earth, and the first beings that walked on it. He witnesses the emergence of man and how he slew his brother. Once again the idea that man is only one more being in nature is shown to the Wart. As part of nature, man is under the same laws that work equally for plant and animal. All beings are born, live and die. Even the oak, the strongest of all trees, the emblem of strength, stability and power must submit to the course set by nature. Once again, the destructiveness and ferocity of man is reinforced, as the Wart sees the first man appear and kill one of his own kind, his own brother.

On the several occasions in which the Wart experienced his lessons, there was some reference to his state of sleep. In the episode with the Goddess Wisdom this detail becomes specially important since the Goddess seems to be nothing more than wisdom of his own unconscious. References in the text that favor such an interpretation are, for example, the fact that when Archimedes came to fetch the Wart "he was fast asleep," the reference to "the invisibility of the Goddess," and the boy's memories upon awakening the following morning: "he was aware of her without seeing her" (p. 225). Even later, when the Wart reflected on this experience, "he realized that he had not only never seen the Goddess but that he had also never heard her speak" (p. 226). The visions that the Wart had of the trees and of the formation of the world were

described as a dream by Archimedes, who also related night to wisdom.

To finish off the Wart's education, Merlyn sends him underground to meet the badger. In the previous lessons the the Wart had been shown the similarities of man and beast. He was repeatedly reminded of the savage and destructive potential man carries within himself, even surpassing the animals in this sense. In the final lesson it is time for a creature of the earth to unfold to the boy the greatness of man and his superiority over all other earthly beings. Through the parable of the embryos, told by the badger, the Wart learns how animals chose to receive the characteristics for which they are best known today, and how man's embryo declined the offer to change, and preferred to stay as God had made him. Because of his faith and foresight, man was blessed by God and received not just the Dominion of all other animals, but also the capacity to share the power of the Creator. He continues to be the potential image of God. The following words by the great humanist Pico Della Mirandola, quoted by Otto Rank, complement the meaning of the badger's parable:

Animals bring forth from the womb what they should have. The higher spirits, on the other hand, are from the beginning, or at least soon after, what they remain in all eternity. Thou alone hast power to develop and grow according to free will: in one word, thou hast the seed of all-embracing life in thyself.²²

Through the lessons he had, the Wart got to know and could bring into harmony his animal and his human sides. Merlyn's role in the process the Wart passed through was that of a guide. Their relationship resemble that of an initiate and his teacher. Merlyn is the one who takes the hero to a succession of trials that must be overcome. He is the one who shows the way, though allowing the initiate to experience each of the ordeals. He resembles the tutelar figure who makes it possible for the hero to fulfill the tasks he would have been unable to do by himself.²³ As such, according to Jung, Merlyn can be compared to the mythical figure of Poseidon, protector of Theseus, or to Chiron, the master of Achilles and other heroes. Merlyn is in fact very similar to Chiron, the centaur who is the archetypal figure of the wise man, the one who has the two sources of wisdom, the instinctive and the intellectual, in harmony. Merlyn's instinctive nature is to be seen in his oneness with nature. He talks to the animals, understands them, and lives with them. As a tutelary figure, the magician Merlyn successfully fulfills his role of conducting the Wart through several ordeals, until he is ready for the most important of all: the magical contest through which all heroes must pass and which frequently involves the hero's display of power over the elements.²⁴ The Wart's power over the elements is accomplished as he draws the sword from the stone, which enables him to become the rightful king. He is only able to overcome the elements after having integrated and harmonized in himself the various aspects of nature to the extent to

which he is supported by all the animals, which have each contributed their part. Drawing the sword from the stone is both a symbol of the Wart's integration and an indication that he is now prepared for the tasks with which life will confront him, now no longer as the Wart, but as King Arthur.

There were no precedents for T.H. White to draw on for the boyhood of King Arthur and his education by Merlyn. However, he shows, in his recreation of the Arthurian Stoff, a sound knowledge of the tradition of the legend, of the Medieval Period, and of History as well. He achieves in The Sword in the Stone an integration of such varied elements, which is partly the main factor for the power of his creation .

White's heroes are surrounded by fantasy and magic, but they are also endowed with a common, warm humanity. Therefore, by transforming the familiar figures of the Arthurian cast into characters with credible motivation and a psychological dimension, T.H. White enables the reader to have an emotional experience of their world, and to come closer to "what these men were when they were alive."²⁵

NOTES

¹T.H. White, The Once and Future King (Glasgow: Williams Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1974).

²T.H. White, The Book of Merlyn (Luffolk: Richard Clay, The Chaucer Press Ltd., 1978).

³T.H. White, The Sword in the Stone (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1979). All quotations from this novel are taken from this edition.

⁴Stith Thompson, The Folktale (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 10.

⁵Thompson, p. 170.

⁶John K. Crane, T.H. White (Boston: Twayne Publishers, Inco., 1974), p. 45.

⁷Sir Thomas Malory, in Malory: Works, ed. Eugene Vinaver, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). All quotations from this text are taken from this edition.

⁸Crane, p. 20.

⁹John Stevens, Medieval Romance (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1973), p. 80.

¹⁰Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1960), pp. 207-08.

¹¹ Bruno Bettelheim, A Psicanálise dos Contos de Fadas, trans. Arlene Caetano (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1979). p. 199.

¹² Bettelheim, p. 224.

¹³ Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (New York: Hazell Watson & Vinay Ltd., 1975). p. 56.

¹⁴ Roger Sherman Loomis, The Development of Arthurian Romance (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970). pp. 124-30.

¹⁵ Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, Celtic Heritage (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975). p. 230.

¹⁶ Crane, p. 83.

¹⁷ Crane, p. 78.

¹⁸ Crane, p. 78.

¹⁹ Loomis, p. 19.

²⁰ Rees and Rees, p. 232.

²¹ C.M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1961). p. 97.

²² Pico Della Mirandola as quoted in Otto Rank, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, ed. Philip Freund (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 98.

²³Carl Jung, Man and His Symbols (London: Aldous Books Ltd., 1964), pp. 102-03.

²⁴Raglan, p. 153.

²⁵From the following epigraph of the opening Chapter in The Sword in the Stone:

"And now it is all gone — like an insubstantial pageant faded; and between us and the old English there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imaginations can but feebly penetrate to them. Only among the aisles of the cathedral, only as we gaze upon their silent tombs, some faint conceptions float before us of what these men were when they were alive."

BETWEEN THE INSECT AND THE INSECTICIDE :

A review of Saul Bellow's novel The Deans's December

Myriam Corrêa de Araújo Ávila

Demasiadas palavras
fraco impulso de vida
travada a mente na ideologia
e o corpo não agia
como se o coração tivesse antes que optar
entre o inseto e o inseticida.

Caetano Veloso

When called on to comment on a novel that confronts the "free world" and an iron curtain country, the third world reader can hardly avoid becoming the third biased vertex of a triangle of world views, a geometric figure of opposing forces in which, as in a Bermuda triangle, all objective criticism may get lost. Being a Brazilian reader, I was as affected by Bellow's picture of Chicago (America) as Albert Corde by his contact with Bucharest (the Soviet bloc). In what Bellow himself sums up ironically as "A Tale of Two Cities" the main issue is undoubtedly the match Capitalism x Communism, abundance x poverty, individualism x socialism. As the excellent writer he is, Bellow would not present the issue in its dry nakedness, however anxious he might be (and I felt he was anxious) to make his point clear to his readers. Had he been a minor writer he would not have avoided sounding like a zealous shepherd calling wandering sheep to the fold. He

certainly is afraid of the "big bad wolf," but his skill in exploring the psychological depths of the main character and in filtering his detailed, apparently objective, descriptions through a very personal insight makes the novel so attractive, the narrative so earnest, that the reader is bound to go through its over-300 pages with continuous interest.

Bellow commits himself. That is what saves him from mere pamphleteering. The same can be said of Albert Corde the dean, and, indeed, it is easy to establish Corde as Bellow's mouth-piece. The ease with which the narrative shifts from the 3rd to the 1st person (e.g. from page 219 to 229) without the delimitation of quotation marks, is a sign of the author/character identity, which Bellow does not try to disguise. Corde is younger than Bellow, unburdened by Jewish tradition, but they both descend from foreign families, they are both Chicagoans, and can be said to belong to the same generation. Both cannot feel at ease in a society where the violence of marginal groups and the noncommitment of upper classes contrast so shockingly. However, they are home, they belong there. Both have chosen America, they have chosen Chicago as their home. Corde could have stayed in Europe, but it is in America, "of course," that "the real action is" (page 272). Bellow's family came from Russia and found in America a safe place to work, thrive, and rest.

The story develops as a thesis. Flashbacks and the flow of thought (to call it "stream of consciousness " would evoke the revolutionary technique of Virginia Woolf and Joyce, which is not the case) avoid the dullness of linear reasoning, but

the structure is there all right, not too difficult to see through those technical devices. I would call it the duality insect/insecticide. The insect would stand for dirt and the insecticide for cleanness. The novel is built, therefore, on a double duality: we have Chicago/Bucharest, dirty/clean Chicago, dirty/clean Bucharest. Permutation is possible and often occurs, but all the action is based on those contrasting pairs, and the point to be made is mainly: which does Corde choose, the insect or the insecticide? His unwillingness to choose one of them, his occasional bending towards one or the other, keeps the reader's attention awake through the whole book. We are shown people who have chosen: Mason is all for the insect, while his mother favours the insecticide. Minna can hardly allow insects to exist: they don't breed in the outer space. Spangler delights in torturing insects before spraying them with his "You Can't Beat the System" atomizer.

But what of Corde himself? He alone is unwilling and late to choose. In the months preceding the crucial December he had opened up the windows so that all the bugs could come in, but later, when the creatures begin to tease him too much, he faces a dilemma: should he kill them, should he keep a few as pets, should he fall a victim to their entropic force? In order to clarify the metaphor we must extend its meaning. The insect does not stand for dirt alone, but also for life, inasmuch as life includes dirt as its essential component. Complete cleanness is death, or absence of life. A totally stable society is a dead society. We have a sample of this in Bucharest. If it weren't for those lady-

bugs and their underground mutual-aid service, could their society as a body of individuals survive? On the other hand, repression (the insecticide) is to a certain point necessary, so that the "damn monstrous" "wilderness" (p. 228) does not take over. If left to spread disorderly, people like the black underclass will have "nothing but death" before them (p. 228). "They kill some of us. Mostly they kill themselves..." (p. 229). Corde can certainly do with an alarm system: "At home their doors and windows were wired" (p.172). But this is not enough. One's enemies can be inside oneself, so it is better to be on guard, warding off "random thoughts:" "Those were the worst - they ate you up " (p. 149).

Corde's cases for and against the "insects" are equally strong, it seems. That bewilders him and everybody about him. People want to figure him out, to press him towards a decision: "Is this the conclusion you aim at (...)" "Oh, I haven't even begun to reach a conclusion. So far I'm only in the describing stage"(p. 229). However, Bellow must reach some kind of conclusion as the end of the novel draws near. "The experience, puzzle, torment of a lifetime demanded interpretation. (...) So here was the emptiness before him, water; and there was the filling of emptiness behind him, the slums" (p. 316).

Later on we are offered the description of what affected me as the most shocking scene of the whole novel: a dog's birthday party. (Fancy ten educated grown-ups playing such fools, not one child around, as if they were almost celebrating ritually their detachment from common-sense. And just fancy what epithets the dog itself might be giving them!). Up there,

on the fortieth floor, the slums had remained far far below, insects could not reach them. The Negro driver goes just as far as the garage. The Mexican doorman remains on ground level. Although he can recognize decadence, Corde is at the same time exhilarated by the "altitudes of power," and accepts the ridiculous situation with a "why not?". He could always condescend that far for the opportunity of that agreeable sensation: "Though you were so high, you didn't really need to feel that you might fall, and you enjoyed the safe sense of danger " (p. 324).

In the last scene Corde climbs even higher, five thousand feet high to the top of the telescope at Mount Palomar. Up there it is terribly cold, cold as death, but he felt safe and free, free from all dirt, from disagreeable smells and breaths, so that, when his guide asks him if he minds the cold too much, he says: "The cold? Yes. But I almost think I mind coming down more." He won't be able to reject the insects down here, but he would certainly like to. His option is for the insecticide.

THE PATTERN OF DEATH AND REBIRTH IN CONTEMPORARY
AMERICAN LITERATURE

"Only he who has lost his life will find it."

(Zen Proverb)

Myriam Vieira Bello de Oliveira

Introduction

The myth of the hero is one of the most common in every kind of culture. It can be found in the classical mythology of Greece and Rome, in the Middle Ages, in Eastern civilizations and also among primitive tribes in our times.

For Carl Jung, it has a deep psychological implication: it represents man's internal struggle to overcome the forces that prevent him from reaching maturity. The monsters that the heroes have to slay represent unconscious forces that inspire fear and the hero has to pass through a kind of test before he can conquer himself. The hero triumphs over the forces of evil and then succumbs because of his hybris (hybris means pride, the desire to get too close to the gods). Then the hero suffers a process of decline, through treason by a friend or kin, and finally dies.

The rites of initiation, together with the myth of the hero, also represent a passage to a higher degree of consciousness. The initiation rites are very different from the idea contained in the myth of the hero. The hero has to conquer something, while the novice, on the contrary,

must renounce all ambition and any aspiration, to be submitted to a test. He must accept this without any hope of achieving success, in an attitude of total abandonment. In reality, he must be prepared to die. He submits himself to a rite of death and rebirth, that marks his passage from youth to maturity. The ritual makes him return to the deepest layers of the original identity between mother and child or between the Ego and the Self, forcing him to experience a symbolic death. His own identity is temporarily destroyed or dissolved in the collective unconscious. Then he is brought back from this state of dissolution by a rite of symbolic rebirth.

In all the initiation rites the symbolism of death is followed by one of rebirth. Death means the destruction of a part of man's Self to arrive at another stage of his life.

According to Mircea Eliade,

the mystery of the initiation gradually reveals to the novice the true dimensions of existence, introducing him into the realm of the sacred. The initiation makes him assume his responsibility as a man. This fact is very important: the access to spirituality is translated, in every archaic society, by a symbolism of death and rebirth.¹

This same idea of death and rebirth is present in every aspect of life and creation. It is present in the great cosmic rhythms, in the passage from night to day and in the passage from winter to spring. Mircea Eliade quotes Theophylus of

Antioch , who wrote : "Is not there a resurrection for the seeds and for the fruits?"²

It is also present in the birth and death of new planets and galaxies: planets die in explosions of light, while others are also formed in explosions of light.

Jung says that, even without our knowing it, we suffer the influence of the symbolism of rebirth:

They are reminiscences of an ancient feast of solstice, that expresses the hope that the desolate winter landscape in the Northern hemisphere be renewed by the coming of Spring.³

According to Jung's discoveries, the existence of an unconscious psyche is admitted. In a very distant past his "original mind" was the whole of man's personality. Then, as man began to develop his own consciousness, his mind lost contact with much of that primitive psychic energy. There is within each man a directional tendency that generates a process, slow and sometimes imperceptible, of psychic growth and this process is called by Jung "the process of individuation." Gradually a more mature personality emerges. The organizing centre from where this regulating action emanates seems to be a kind of "atomic nucleus" in our psychic system. Jung called this centre the Self and

described it as the totality of the psyche, to differentiate it from the Ego, that is only a part of our psyche.

The evolution of the Self in each individual depends on the disposition of his own Ego to listen to the messages of the Self, which are commonly conveyed through dreams. But, according to Jung,

this active and creative aspect of our psychic nucleus can enter into action only when the Ego sheds all determined, ambitious projects in favour of a more profound and fundamental form of existence.⁴

This is described by Eugen Herrigel in his book, which tells of his experiences in Zen philosophy in Japan, as a gradual dissociation from the Ego to achieve a higher degree of consciousness.⁵ As Herrigel's Zen master taught him, one has to cut off all ties, leave behind everything one has, everything one is, to achieve a state of communion with the source of psychic energy that exists inside each one of us. It is a process that involves deprivation and suffering, but leads to peace and understanding.

This process of growth is present in each of the three works that will be analysed in the second part of this paper. The three works to be analysed are Seize The Day, a novel by Saul Bellow, "I Look Out For Ed Wolf," a short story by Stanley Elkin, and Invisible Man, a novel by Ralph Ellison. Each one of the main characters in them undergoes a process of suffering and deprivation to arrive at a higher degree of

perception. The quotations that appear in the Introduction and in the Conclusion were translated from Portuguese into English, for the sake of English-speaking readers.

a) Seize the Day - Saul Bellow

The main character of the book is Tommy Wilhelm, a good looking man in his mid forties. He lives in New York, in a hotel where many old, retired people live, the "Gloriana."

What is most apparent about Wilhelm is that he experiences a deep sense of failure. Early in the nineteen thirties, because of his striking looks, he had been briefly considered star material and he had gone to Hollywood. There he stayed for seven years, working hard to become a star and these years of persistence and defeat had marked him deeply. Now he considers himself a loser: "He had never won. Not once... He was tired of losing."⁶ Wilhelm thinks that he had been slow to mature and now it was too late to start another career. He felt a sense of inferiority in relation to his family:

His sister Catherine had a B.S. degree. Wilhelm's late mother was a graduate of Bryn Mawr. He was the only member of the family who had no education. This was another sore point. His father was ashamed of him. (p.17)

Although Wilhelm had great charm still, he was conscious that his good looks would not last long and he felt uncomfort-

able about it; this added to his sense of failure:

He looked down over the front of his big, indecently big, spoiled body. He was beginning to lose his shape, his gut was fat and he looked like a hippopotamus. (p. 34)

His marriage had been a failure and he was paying heavily for his mistakes, for his wife Margaret would not give him a divorce and imposed new and more difficult conditions every time they talked about the matter. Moreover, he had been fired from Rojax Company, where he had been working for about ten years.

So, at 45, Wilhelm is at a dangerous stage of his life: his physical appearance, which meant so much to him, is beginning to disintegrate, he is without a steady job and facing a broken marriage. Also he had a difficult relationship with his father, Dr. Adler, who was a prominent figure in his life. Once a famous doctor, Dr. Adler was now retired and lived at the same hotel Wilhelm lived:

The handsome old doctor stood well above the other old people in the hotel. He was idolized by everyone. (p.15)

Wilhelm felt bitter towards his father, because he didn't help his son, although he was a rich man. Near him Wilhelm felt like a kid; no doubt his father's fame also contributed to increase Wilhelm's sense of failure.

In California Wilhelm had adopted the name Tommy Wilhelm but Dr. Adler wouldn't accept the change and still called his son Wilky, as he had done for more than forty years. This question of the name is important because it reflects the conflict there is deep inside Wilhelm's personality. Wilhelm felt divided: he had always wanted to be another person, a Tommy, but at the bottom he knew he was always Wilky. He wanted to get rid of his father's name, but he sensed that Wilky was his real, inescapable self. This self felt rejected by his father and was under the impression that his father didn't love him. All his father had to give him was advice and no real sympathy and understanding. Wilhelm is in a state of internal conflict and his feeling of frustration is due to the fact that he cannot accept himself.

Dr. Tamkin, a retired psychologist who lived at the same hotel, had convinced Wilhelm to speculate in commodities and he had invested his last seven hundred dollars in it. If the prices of lard dropped, he would lose all his money.

Wilhelm got all worked up by his troubles and this was manifested physically:

He was horribly worked up; his neck and shoulders, his entire chest ached as though they had been tightly tied with ropes. He smelled the salt odour of tears in his nose. (p. 61)

His sensation of guilt is very strong — Wilhelm is always

blaming himself for things he did and for things he did not do. He even got to the point of thinking that maybe making mistakes was the essence of his life, that he was essentially weak and evil.

Dr. Tamkin sensed what was happening and tried to help Wilhelm. The explanation of the title of the book was given by him, when he told Wilhelm about his work and said that it was

Bringing people into the here-and-now. The real universe. That's the present moment. The past is no good to us. The future is full of anxiety. Only the present is real — the here-and-now. Seize the day. (p. 72)

He explained to Wilhelm that inside ourselves we have not only one soul, but many souls. And among all these there are two main ones: one is the real one, the other is a pretender soul. The pretender soul is the one that was created out of repressions, conditionings, all that was gradually imposed on us ever since we were born. The real soul is the one that loves truth. And they are in conflict inside every person, which causes all the trouble. As Tamkin explains,

Biologically the pretender soul takes away the energy of the true soul and makes it feeble, like a parasite. It happens unconsciously, unawaringly, in the depth of the organism. Ever take up parasitology? (p. 77)

This explanation impressed Wilhelm very much and he tried to figure out which was his true soul and which was the pretender:

It was the description of the two souls that had awed him. In Tommy he saw the pretender. And even Wilky might not be himself. Might the name of this true soul be the one by which his old grandfather had called him — Velvel? (p. 78)

Dr. Tamkin also wrote a poem for him, entitled "Mechanism x Functionalism" or "Ism x Hism " on the same theme, trying to impress upon him the significance of the idea of the two souls and urging Wilhelm to assume his true soul, laying aside the pretender soul, which hindered his spiritual progress.

Wilhelm's reaction when he read it was of shock — he felt dazed, as if a charge of photographer's flash powder had gone up in his eyes. He had a brief moment of recognition and illumination, then he became confused again. Later on, as he was walking through an underground corridor, he felt a sudden burst of love for all the the people he saw there:

One and all, he passionately loved them. They were his brothers and his sisters. He was imperfect and disfigured himself, but what difference did it make if he was united with them by this blaze of love? (p. 91)

That experience he had, however fleeting it was, touched him deeply and he knew he had to go back to it. It was the right clue and the answer he was seeking was love: only by for-

giving himself could he love and forgive other people.

Later on, there was another clue about what was wrong with him: he remembered a poem that he had often heard in his childhood, which said:

"Come then, Sorrow!
Sweetest Sorrow!
Like an own baby I nurse thee on my breast."

What did this poem have to do with him? Tamkin had been trying to make him perceive how heavy his sense of guilt was. In reality, Wilhelm had married sorrow: he lived with it so much that he would think feeling joy a treason — an adultery.

Then came the crucial moment in his life, the moment of crisis: Wilhelm learned that the prices of lard had dropped and he had lost all the money he had invested in it. Tamkin disappeared and Wilhelm couldn't find him anywhere. Deserted by Tamkin, he went to his father — it was his last attempt to receive love and understanding from him. But Dr. Adler felt only irritation and contempt for his son and finally Wilhelm understands that he would never have from him the love that he had expected all his life.

Then Wilhelm called his wife up to tell her the news and felt there was only hate in her. It seemed now that he was completely alone, abandoned by all people that once meant something for him, and broke.

Wilhelm is a Christ-like figure — he undergoes intense suffering (Christ's passion) and is deserted and completely alone in the utmost misery.

At the end of the book he went to a funeral and a funeral here is symbolical of his own death. But in death there was also an idea of rebirth:

... the beating of his heart was anxious, thick, frightening, but somehow also rich. (p. 124)

When Wilhelm looked at the body in the coffin, he began to cry, first from sentiment but soon from a deeper feeling:

"the source of all tears had suddenly sprung open within him, black, deep and hot" and "the great knot of ill and grief in his throat swelled upward and he gave in utterly and held his face and wept. He cried with all his heart" (p. 125). Wilhelm was crying for all his life, for all his deep sense of loss and deprivation. It seemed that his tears were purifying him and through them he was getting rid of all the suffering and the guilt so long buried within him.

The last lines are important: Wilhelm heard the music at the funeral and sank deeper than sorrow, "through torn sobs and cries, toward the consummation of his heart's ultimate need" (p. 126). This ultimate need is forgiveness and love for himself — that would mean redemption.

b) "I Look Out For Ed Wolfe" - Stanley Elkin

The main character of this short story is Ed Wolfe — twenty-seven "a neat, thin young man in white shirts and light suits, with lintless pockets." ⁷

The first point to notice about him is his isolation:

Something about him suggested the ruthless isolation, the hard self-sufficiency of the orphaned, the peculiar dignity of men seen eating alone on national holidays. (p. 519)

The fact of his being an orphan is strongly emphasized in the beginning of the story and orphan here can also be symbolical of spiritual deprivation. Ed Wolfe was an orphan in several senses. He had no ties in the world and had been educated at an orphan's house. He felt an orphan in the kind society he lived — he had a feeling that he didn't belong anywhere. To him, the non-orphaned people were those who had background, education, money. The mothered and fathered people were those he saw around him, "their sun-tans apparent even in the dark"(p.540) - they were "non-orphans, with M.D. degrees"(p.521). All these people live according to the advice his boss had given him when he was fired from his job: "Don't love. Don't hate. Detachment and caution"(p.526). Those words are a symbol of people's alienation: nobody wants to get involved in other people's lives. Many people nowadays live isolated, without really opening themselves up to other people, like Ed Wolfe did.

After Ed was fired from his job, he decided to sell his car, on an impulse to make money and have cash available at any time. After that, he went to the bank and decided to close his savings account.

Then Ed starts selling all his things and little by little he gets rid of all the things that meant security to him. At first the process was unconscious; then Ed started to notice that it was as if he were getting rid of parts of himself, of his personality. He sold his books — "I feel as if I'm selling my mind"(p.533). The books represented rational knowledge that didn't make him any happier. Then he sold his future — he cancelled his Life Insurance Policy. This

represented a desire to live in the here-and-now, an attitude of confidence and abandonment to whatever happens. After that he sold all his records — "Sixty dollars for the noise the world makes, man"(p.534). This is the sound that signifies nothing and prevents people from a closer contact with the world inside themselves. Then Ed sold all his clothes and felt as if he was selling "his skin"(p.535). This skin represented protection for him; by laying it aside he could be open to life. This also represents rebirth, to pass to a more perfect stage of life, as larvae do when they shed their skin to be transformed into butterflies . After that Ed sold his telephone and all the devices created by the consumer society, which are considered indispensable to people's lives: one phonograph, two radios, two watches, a pressure cooker. In this process, Ed decided to strip himself to the essentials: "I'll liquidate, I'll sell out" (p.531).

Paradoxically, as he got rid of all the symbols of security, there was hope of a fresh start for him. When Ed tears off the list of all his former possessions and blows it out of the window, as he says softly: "Look out for Ed Wolfe," what was really being blown off by the wind was not only paper, but a part of his former self. What Ed wanted was to get to his "gleaming self beneath" and this he could do by a process of shedding of his possessions (representing parts of him) in a "kind of helpless abrasion, as one rubs wood" (p. 520).

After this, he felt a change — he felt no more envy

and despair: "No envy wrenched him, no despair unhoped him"(p.538).
The change inside him is symbolized by the changing of the
season:

In darkness he walked through a thawing, melting
world. There was on the edge of the air something,
the warm, moist odor of the change of the season.
He was despite himself, touched. (p. 539)

His old self was beginning to melt, together with the ice
that previously covered the side-walks. Ed begins to make
contact with other human beings. Oliver, a Negro, is the
first one. This is symbolical, because Negroes are also
orphans, living segregated among other human beings. Ed
realized for the first time that he could go on for months
without touching another person — both literally and in a
symbolic sense, by evading communication. Suddenly it
was very clear what he was up to: he could see clearly what
hooked him and now he was free. When Ed got rid of the rest
of the money he still had, buying a girl's freedom in a
cabaret (the girl was a Negro dancer), in a symbolic
gesture, the last stage in his process of spiritual growth
had been completed.

The last lines of the story show Ed's new attitude to
life: "Inside her own, he saw indifferently his own pale
hand, lifeless and serene, still and infinitely free." While
Ed was peeling off layers of his personality, which was
symbolized by all the material possessions he deprived himself

of, a new and richer part of his self could come to the surface and he achieved a new awareness, both in relation to himself and in relation to other human beings.

c) Invisible Man - Ralph Ellison

The book shows the passage of a hero from innocence to experience. The hero is a Negro boy, born in the South, and he is shown in a search to find the meaning of life, to find his true identity. During this search, several stages can be distinguished: the boy suffers a series of symbolic deaths and each one represents a new step towards consciousness.

What prompted the hero to start his quest were the words uttered by his grandfather on his deathbed:

Son, after I'm gone I want you to keep up the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born days, a spy in the enemy's country ever since I gave up my gun back in the Reconstruction. Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine them with grins, agree them to death and destruction, let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open. ⁸

These words remained "a constant puzzle which lay unanswered at the back of this head" and the boy would spend his next years trying to solve it. Also the dream he had, in which his

grandfather presented him with an engraved message in letters of gold, saying "To Whom It May Concern — Keep This Nigger Boy Running," remained in his mind for many years.

In the first part of the book, the boy went to a college for Negroes, where he led a happy, sheltered life, removed from pressure and from pain, surrounded by greenness, flowers, white Christmases, comfort and loveliness. But in reality the school was "a flower studded wasteland" (p.37) the boy was able to realize later in time. Near the neat, well-ordered world of the college there was an insane asylum for army veterans. There was a scene between the black boy and an army veteran that took place in a nearby brothel, during which the boy was accurately described by the supposed lunatic. As the veteran said, talking of the boy, "He registers with his senses, but short circuits his brain" — in other words, the black boy is a "walking zombie" (p. 72). Although boy was a good student and piled up knowledge in his head, his degree of consciousness of himself and of the world around him was very low. After the encounter with the veteran, on walking back to the campus, the boy realized that at the college he possessed the only identity he had ever known and he was afraid of losing it. His mind was in a state of tumult and he felt there was a conflict inside him between his vital part, the instinctive part that wanted to express itself, and the part directed by reason which made him feel ashamed of his black brothers.

This conflict is going to be felt all through the action of the book. Before the end of his course the boy was expelled from the college

and as he did not want to return to his family in the South, he decided to go to New York to earn his own living. Before leaving for New York, the boy had an interview with Dr. Bledsoe, the college Dean and the words he heard from Dr. Bledsoe kept haunting him for a long time: "You're a black educated fool, son" (p. 140) and "... learn to look beneath the surface. Come out of the fog, young man" (p. 151).

His going to New York represented for the boy a new stage in his life and the beginning of a hard period of apprenticeship. It meant the end of his previously sheltered life and represented a kind of initiation for him. There the boy got a job in a paint factory, where he first came into contact with the rat-race: he faced the hostility of the other workers and social discrimination against black workers. He got to know about a Worker's Union and about what hard work really was. After a period working in the factory he had a quarrel with a black fellow worker and they had a fight near a furnace in the basement, where both worked. During this fight they forgot to check the valves that controlled the temperature and the furnace exploded. With the explosion, the boy was rocketed into a new world — the world of a hospital, where he lay unconscious for many days. He had a new and strange sensation: "My mind was blank as though I had just began to live" (p: 228).

This represented another stage on his way to self-knowledge — he experienced a kind of rebirth and tried to figure out what his new identity was.

After he left the hospital he was conscious of a change inside himself:

I was no longer afraid. Not of important men, not of trustees and such; for knowing now that there was nothing I could expect from them, there was no reason to be afraid. Was that it? I felt light-headed, my ears were ringing. I went on.
(p. 244)

Then the boy came in contact with the Brotherhood — they were political activists, members of a political party, presumably the Communist Party, and wanted the boy to join them and work for them. The boy became aware of social conflicts and the desire of doing something for his brothers of colour rose in him. Brother Jack, a political leader, put it like this:

You might not recognize it just now, but that part of you is dead. You have not completely shed that self, that old agrarian self, but it's dead and you will throw it off completely and emerge something new. History has been born in your brain. (p. 285)

New ideas and preoccupations were in the boy's mind now. He was conscious that there were connections that led up to the past and future and branches that linked the fate of his people to his own. The Brotherhood leaders had discovered that the boy was a born speaker — he had a power of appealing to people's emotions and raise them into action. So they decided to use him in public meetings, to attract people's attention

and win support for their cause.

While he was waiting for a rally in Harlem to start, the boy was once again conscious of a division inside himself:

Perhaps the part of me that observed listlessly but saw all, missing nothing, was still the malicious, arguing part; the dissenting voice, my grandfather part: the cynical, disbelieving part — the traitor self that always threatened internal discord. Whatever it was I knew I'd have to keep it pressed down. (p. 327)

He had his old self, "that flew without wings and plunged from great heights" and his new public self that spoke for the Brotherhood and was becoming so much more important than the other that he seemed to run "a foot race against himself." The new self was not genuine; it was an image created by others and maybe that was why he felt on a race against himself.

Little by little, the boy grew disillusioned with the Brotherhood. In a confrontation he had with members of its Committee he shed his last illusions about it. As Brother Jack put it plainly, "You were not hired to think — only to speak" (p. 458). The committee didn't give a damn about what people wanted; in reality they manipulated them to serve their own purposes. According to Brother Jack, their job was not to ask people what they thought, but to tell them. Their relationship with the masses was not one of brotherhood, but one of masters versus servants. From that point on, the action of the book is accelerated and the boy's process of changing rises in a crescendo.

The boy wanted to leave the Brotherhood, but sensed that if he left it he would be lost, without any point of reference. He had tried to build his integrity by working for them, but now he realized that "it had changed to water, air. What is integrity?" (p. 492). Little by little the boy got to understand that people saw in him only a façade, only what they wanted to see. His own integrity mattered only to him, not to other people. His point of reference lay within himself, not outside, as he had thought. The matter of invisibility began to take form in his mind. He decided to use the Brotherhood, pretending to work for them, to destroy their power in Harlem. The last straw came when he realized that a note he had received warning him against the Brotherhood had been written by Jack himself. They had been manipulating him all the time, even while he thought it was he who was using them.

His rage exploded and then he had a dream, in which he saw all the people who had manipulated him all his life. In this dream the boy suffered a great pain and was freed from all illusions.

In the epilogue he is living in a basement, in a kind of hibernation. It is like living in a hole, but his hole is full of light — he has put more than one thousand bulbs in it. These lights are a symbol of illumination — after living for more than twenty years in a state of sleep, like most people do, he only became alive when he discovered his own invisibility. He is now aware that when people look at him they see only projections of themselves. This is not due to the colour of his skin — it is due to people's "inner eyes" —

the eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. Now the boy is conscious that the sickness throughout his life lay within himself and not in the world. To realize that you must take responsibility for yourself is what he compares to passion and death:

... the spear in the side, the drag by the neck through the mob-angry town, the Grand Inquisition, the rip in the belly with the guts spilling out. (p. 562)

It is too painful to face himself naked, not blaming the world for what he was and taking responsibility for himself.

Now the boy had two choices:

... you can either make passive love to your sickness or burn it out and go on to the next conflicting phase. (p. 562)

As he wrote the book, he was purged of all his suffering and his rage and now he felt that a process had been completed, the hibernation was over and he had to shake off the old skin and come up for breath in a symbolic rebirth. After being buried in the hole for months, now he would spring into life again, in a Christ-like pattern.

In the last lines the puzzle of the hero having no name is solved — the black boy could be any one of us: "Who knows but that, on that lower frequency, I speak for you?"

What is important in the book is that it doesn't come

to a conclusion: we get the idea that life is a series of deaths and rebirths. Man is not one, but he is a diversity. He is made of many parts, many selves, and each time one of these selves dies, we are born into a new awareness. Our life is really a long, endless quest for identity.

Conclusion

As a conclusion we would like to establish what each of the heroes has in common with one another. The Negro boy in Ralph Ellison's book, Ed Wolfe in Stanley Elkins's short story and Wilhelm in Saul Bellow's novel were all undergoing a process of growth — psychological growth, which consists of steps toward reaching maturity. The process is not an easy one: it is preceded by suffering and by a sense of loss. Each one of the characters goes through a kind of psychic chaos — but this is a preliminary condition before changes take place.

Mircea Eliade says

This psychic chaos is a signal that the profane man is on the point of being dissolved and that a new personality is ready to emerge.⁹

When the chaos dies away, each of the heroes has achieved a higher degree of balance, a reconciliation with his own self, a new kind of serenity and awareness. The world around them is the same, but they may look at it with new, purified eyes.

The kind of existential crisis that each of them underwent is of a religious nature — implicit in their search is a desire to find a deeper meaning in life. According to Eliade,

every existential crisis puts into question at the same time the reality of the world and man's presence in it. This means that the existential crisis is essentially religious, for in the archaic levels of culture the Self is placed together with the sacred.¹⁰

Repeating Jung, we should say that the only adventure that is still open to man in our time is the exploration of the inner kingdom of his unconscious.

Men at some time are masters of their fates:
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that are underlings.

(William Shakespeare. Julius Caesar,
Act I, Scene II)

NOTES

¹Mircea Eliade, O Sagrado e o Profano (Lisboa: Ed. Livros do Brasil), p. 199.

²Eliade, p. 146.

³Carl Jung, O Homem e seus Símbolos (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Nova Fronteira), p. 108.

⁴Jung, p. 162.

⁵Eugen Herrigel, A Arte Cavalheiresca do Arqueiro Zen (São Paulo: Ed. Pensamento, 1975).

⁶Saul Bellow, Seize the Day (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 11. All subsequent quotations from this text are taken from this edition.

⁷Stanley Elkin, "I Look Out For Ed Wolfe," in Contemporary American Short Stories (New York: Fawcett Premier Books Ballantine Books, 1967), p. 519. All subsequent quotations from this text are taken from this edition.

⁸Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1972), p. 16. All subsequent quotations from this text are taken from this edition.

⁹Eliade, p. 203.

¹⁰Eliade, p. 216.

DEPOIMENTO SOBRE A TRADUÇÃO DE THE PIGGLE*

Rosa de Lima Sã Martins

Meu depoimento versará sobre o livro The Piggle, traduzido por mim e pela professora Else Pires Vieira. The Piggle foi o primeiro livro traduzido pelo Laboratório de Tradução da Faculdade de Letras e sua publicação, bem recebida pela crítica, teve o mérito de abrir ao Laboratório o mercado de trabalho da tradução.

Aliás, essa foi a nossa grande recompensa por toda a energia despendida na tarefa árdua e difícil, que foi a tradução de The Piggle — tarefa que executamos em três meses, durante os quais trabalhamos dia e noite, sobretudo à noite, porque durante o dia continuamos cumprindo nossas atividades rotineiras na Faculdade de Letras.

Ainda outro dia eu relembro com Else o dia anterior à data marcada para entrega da tradução, quando ficamos ao telefone até altas horas da noite, trocando idéias, discutindo equivalentes mais precisos para este ou aquele vocábulo e fazendo correções no texto. E às cinco horas da manhã eu estava na Rodoviária, para entregar a tradução a um portador de confiança, que se tinha comprometido a levá-la naquele mesmo dia à Editora, no Rio.

* O presente artigo foi apresentado em mesa redonda na Semana de Estudos sobre a Problemática da Tradução.

Trabalhamos demais, é verdade, mas foi um esforço compensador, que nos deixou uma sensação de realização, de experiência que valeu a pena.

Traduzir é difícil. Quem traduz sabe disso, mas, para quem pretende ser tradutor, fica aqui essa advertência. O trabalho de uma tradução pode, muitas vezes, equivaler à criação de uma nova obra.

A proposta para traduzir The Piggle, nós a recebemos através de uma colega que estava trabalhando no Rio — e que via na tradução do livro a oportunidade para tornar conhecido nos meios editoriais o Laboratório de Tradução da FALE. Uma conjectura que aliás se confirmou .

Para não perder aquela oportunidade, que poderia não se repetir, eu e a Else lemos o livro, percebemos algumas de suas dificuldades, — mas não todas, como viemos logo mais a constatar — e decidimos "topar a parada".

A Editora enviou de imediato o contrato para a tradução. De início, relutamos em aceitar, diante do absurdo de suas cláusulas. E somente o assinamos porque garantiram-nos que aqueles itens eram pro forma, que constavam normalmente de qualquer contrato. Mas, pro forma ou não, acho que, hoje em dia, jamais assinaríamos tal contrato.

Só para dar idéia do seu despropósito, vou ler aqui duas de suas cláusulas:

"A aprovação da tradução fica sob a exclusiva responsabilidade do coordenador editorial, tornando-se claro que o Tradutor acatará, sem reclamações ou reivindicações, o critério utilizado pela Editora".

Outra cláusula:

"Uma vez aprovada e paga, a tradução será considerada propriedade da Editora, podendo ela reservar-se: o direito de publicá-la ou não; modificá-la, corrigi-la segundo seus critérios; preferir publicar outra tradução; imprimi-la onde, quando e em que forma entender, tantas vezes, quanto melhor lhe parecer."

Não creio ser necessário comentar tais cláusulas. Faço, entretanto, questão de acrescentar que, dois meses após sua entrega, nossa tradução foi publicada na íntegra, sem qualquer correção.

Cada uma de nós, de acordo com o preço estipulado no contrato, recebeu Cr\$ 3.500,00, e não teríamos recebido essa quantia se o Laboratório de Tradução não tivesse assumido as despesas de datilografia do texto.

Fizemos a tradução em noventa dias: sessenta dias foi o prazo estipulado pela Editora. Conseguimos uma prorrogação de 30 dias.

Falei até agora de fatos e problemas que motivaram e cercaram a tradução de The Piggle. Talvez eu até me tenha estendido demasiadamente sobre eles — mas achei que seria interessante mencioná-los, uma vez que representaram também uma etapa do trabalho que realizamos.

Mas passemos agora à análise da tradução de The Piggle, ao ato da tradução propriamente dito.

The Piggle é o relato do tratamento psicanalítico de uma criança e contém: descrições pormenorizadas das entrevi

tas psicanalíticas feitas pelo próprio psicanalista e trechos de cartas sobre o estado clínico da criança escritas pelos seus próprios pais.

A criança, no caso, é Piggie, e o psicanalista é o Dr. D. W. Winnicott, psiquiatra inglês, uma das maiores autoridades no assunto.

Piggie iniciou o tratamento aos 2 anos e 4 meses de idade e, ao terminá-lo, aos 5 anos, "dava a impressão de uma criança normal em termos terapêuticos."

A doença de Piggie manifestou-se após o nascimento de uma irmãzinha. Desde então ela começou a ter crises de ansiedade e insônia; chorava sem saber porque, arranhava violentamente o rosto todas as noites e afastou-se do pai, por quem era antes apaixonada; e tinha pesadelos e fantasias que verbalizava admiravelmente bem.

Toda essa sintomatologia da doença de Piggie está muito bem descrita nas cartas dos pais, que também eram profissionais, conhecedores do campo da terapêutica.

As entrevistas psicanalíticas, em número de dezesseis, foram realizadas "de acordo com a demanda", isto é, quando a criança o exigia. Durante essas entrevistas, no consultório de Dr. Winnicott, onde havia uma série de brinquedos, Piggie brincava e jogava com o psicanalista; cantava, manuseava os brinquedos e dizia o que estava fazendo; fazia caretas com o Dr. Winnicott, falava coisas sem sentido, conversava com o psicanalista naquela linguagem inarticulada, própria de sua idade, e ele dialogava com ela em linguagem acessível à criança, ao mesmo tempo que interpretava tudo o que ela dizia

e fazia.

Em seguida, ao que parece, Dr. Winnicott fazia um relato pormenorizado de toda aquela atividade, acrescentando comentários, conclusões, anotações clínicas. Escrevia, entretanto, sem qualquer preocupação literária, e suas anotações muitas vezes são incompletas, em código, com idéias nem sempre bem organizadas.

Talvez fosse sua intenção rever essas anotações, completá-las, cuidar do estilo do livro, mas morreu antes de terminar o preparo do manuscrito para publicação.

Apenas para dar uma idéia da maneira como as entrevistas são relatadas, vou ler aqui um trecho da primeira entrevista.

Fiz, há pouco, menção ao amontoado de brinquedos que havia no consultório do Dr. Winnicott. Piggie começou a brincar com eles e a tirar daquela confusão partes de trezinhos e, após alguns minutos, "começou a dizer repetidamente: 'aqui está um outro ... e aqui um outro'. Isso se referia mais a vagões e locomotivas, mas não importava muito o que fosse: ela sempre fazia o mesmo comentário. Vendo que se tratava de uma comunicação, falei: 'o outro bebê, o bebê Sush'. Devo ter dito a coisa certa porque ela começou imediatamente a falar da época em que o bebê Sush nasceu, tal como ela a lembrava: 'Eu era um bebê. Eu estava no berço. Eu estava dormindo. Eu tinha acabado de tomar a mamadeira'".

Esse momento da entrevista não somente dá uma idéia do linguajar da criança, como também mostra o terapeuta em atividade e sua habilidade em perceber naquele brinquedo e naquela conversa de Piggie, uma comunicação. Aliás, na introdução

do livro, Dr. Winnicott afirma que "todas as vezes que Piggie vinha para o tratamento, trazia um problema, que era capaz de comunicar".

E essa comunicação não ocorria somente através de palavras. Era importante o que a menina falava, mas era igualmente importante a maneira como falava.

Em psicanálise tudo tem um simbolismo: palavras, modo de falar, cor, gestos, voz, expressões, sinais, tudo é sintoma, tudo traz uma mensagem e tem um significado.

Denotação e conotação assim como a sintomalogia semiótica tinham de ser consideradas na tradução. O livro exigia uma fidelidade absoluta ao texto, e por isso foi tão difícil traduzi-lo.

A começar pelo título: The Piggie.

Piggie é um apelido afetoso que os ingleses dão às crianças, geralmente às mais novas, e "piggie" literalmente, significa "porquinha" em português. Mas em inglês a palavra "piggie" não tem a conotação pejorativa que tem em português a palavra "porquinha". Além disso, "porquinha" não se prestaria às variações fonológicas que a criança faz com a palavra "Piggie": "A Piga foi embora. A Piga é preta. Os dois Pigas são ruins, etc". Também os diálogos do Dr. Winnicott com a criança perderiam toda a seriedade se se substituísse "Piggie" por "Porquinha".

Eles ficariam assim:

Winnicott: "Winnicott é o bebê da Porquinha.

Winnicott voraz, o bebê que nasceu da
Porquinha, que gosta da Porquinha

e que quer comê-la".

Alguém, na ocasião, sugeriu que traduzíssemos "Piggle" por "Gatinha", mas esse apelativo, pelos mesmos motivos, não se adequaria ao texto.

Por razões semelhantes não traduzimos o nome próprio de Piggle — Gabrielle, que ela pronunciava ora Gaddy, Gaddy, Gaddy, ora Galli, Galli, Galli ou Gaby, Gaby, Gaby.

Conservamos também o apelido "Sush", que Piggle inventou para a irmãzinha. "Sush" pode ser a pronúncia incorreta de Susan ou de "Such a baby", uma forma carinhosa de os pais repreenderem os filhos. E, uma vez que conservamos esses nomes próprios, por uma questão de uniformidade de critério, conservamos os demais.

Piggle, em suas fantasias, criou uma série de palavras: "babacar" (bebê-car) que sempre aparece associado a uma "mamãe preta" e a um "papai preto", O bebê-car é "ite" — que interpretamos como pronúncia incorreta de "white" (branco) e traduzimos por "banco"; "o bebê-car é banco", cujo significado a própria Piggle não soube explicar. Havia também em suas fantasias um "babacandle" (bebê-cera), um "baby goble" (bebê-gabla) e um "baby-bablan" (bebê-bablã).

Piggle usava a palavra "yams" para designar seios e que traduzimos por "mamãs". Presume-se que ela tenha criado essa palavra por analogia com a onomatopéia "nham" também usada pelos ingleses para expressar "comer" e "coisa gostosa".

Aliás a linguagem de Piggie é rica em onomatopéias que, às vezes, eram iguais às da língua portuguesa e, outras vezes, completamente diferentes, e nesses casos tivemos de traduzir pelos nossos equivalentes.

Numa das fantasias de Piggie "todo o mundo fazia splash, splash (splosh, splosh no inglês) na lama ou brrr do mu" (moo no original). "Moo" é a palavra infantil para vaca e "brrr" indicava fezes.

O barulho do tremzinho "d-d-d-" traduzimos por "tchic, tchic, tchic" e a água pingando, "tipping, tipping, tipping" traduzimos pelo nosso "ping, ping, ping".

Com três anos de idade Piggie entrou para a escola maternal. E, desde então, nas entrevistas com o Dr. Winnicott, em suas conversas ela introduz trechos de histórias infantis, reconstituindo-as, às vezes, do fim para o princípio; repete "slogans" e canta canções difíceis de traduzir, porque tínhamos de prestar atenção não só ao efeito conotativo e denotativo de cada palavra, como também à forma dos versos, ao ritmo, à rima, à aliteração. Incluímos várias Notas do Tradutor para explicar canções, jogos, "slogans" mencionados no texto e certamente conhecidos do povo inglês, mas desconhecidos do leitor brasileiro. Também usamos Notas do Tradutor (N.T.), ao pé de página, para explicar frases que ao leitor poderiam parecer desprovidas de sentido ou ambíguas, ou justificar construções em ordem inversa ou elípticas.

Ao lado dessas dificuldades relacionadas com o próprio estilo do livro, vale ainda mencionar, o grande número de expressões idiomáticas nele usadas, o vocabulário pomposo usado pela mãe de Piggie em suas cartas e, sobretudo, os

problemas decorrentes da polissemia da língua inglesa: apenas na segunda e terceira entrevistas encontramos a palavra "play" usada em cinco acepções diferentes: jogo, brinquedo, representação, desempenho e fazer caretas — e, se alguém contestar alegando que algumas dessas palavras são sinônimas, eu objetaria com a afirmação de que, dentro do contexto em que foram empregadas, e para sua maior precisão, nenhuma poderia substituir a outra.

Apesar de todos esses problemas lingüísticos, The Piggle é um livro essencialmente técnico, e como tal apresenta um vocabulário específico da área, a psicanálise, que exigiu-nos muita pesquisa.

É verdade que nesse aspecto tivemos a orientação valiosa do Dr. Abraão Myssior, da Associação Mineira de Psiquiatria, assim como na área de língua inglesa contamos com a colaboração do Prof. Ian Linklater, do Departamento de Letras Germânicas da FALE:

Ana Maria de Almeida, Professora do Departamento de Letras Vernâculas, foi a nossa grande assessora em Língua Portuguesa. Além da revisão do texto ela estava constantemente advertindo-nos sobre a precisão e a correção da linguagem, correção que muitas vezes tivemos de sacrificar em benefício da fidelidade ao texto.

Tivemos também a colaboração de duas monitoras que trabalharam sobretudo na pesquisa do vocabulário.

Em razão da exigüidade de tempo de que dispúnhamos para fazer a tradução, realizamos com essa equipe um trabalho concorrente: à medida que traduzíamos uma entrevista reuniamos-nos,

ora com o Prof. Linklater, para esclarecer dúvidas eventuais da língua inglesa, ora com o Dr. Abraão Myssior, para elucidar problemas relacionados com a terminologia psicanalítica.

Em seguida encaminhávamos o texto à Profa. Ana Maria de Almeida, a fim de que ela procedesse à revisão do português.

Quanto à forma do livro, conservamos a mesma do original: a descrição da entrevista ocupa metade da página; na outra metade estão as anotações do psiquiatra.

No decorrer desse depoimento talvez possa parecer que eu tenha exagerado as dificuldades da tradução de The Piggie.

Mas The Piggie é realmente um livro difícil e, além disso, tanto eu quanto a Profa. Else éramos "marinheiros de primeira viagem".

Poderia continuar, ainda por muito tempo, falando sobre a tradução de The Piggie, porque ao reler o livro para preparar este depoimento, tive a impressão de estar fazendo novamente a sua tradução. E quem traduz sabe que a tradução é um processo sem fim. Ela sempre pode ser aperfeiçoada. Estamos, a todo momento encontrando soluções igualmente boas para este ou aquele trecho lingüisticamente difícil, embora nem todas sejam adequadas a este ou aquele contexto.

O ponto final da tradução é de fato determinado pelo prazo estipulado para sua entrega. E, pelo mesmo motivo, este

meu depoimento deve parar.

NOTA: Alguns trechos deste depoimento foram transcritos da
NOTA DOS TRADUTORES contida na tradução de The Piggie,
Rio de Janeiro, Imago Editora Ltda, 1979.

O NOVO HUMANISMO: FORMAS DE DESCENTRAMENTO

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O clássico estudo de Leonardo Da Vinci expressa um conceito antropocêntrico do homem que pôde, em épocas passadas, ser admirado com uma aprovação e uma serenidade que nos são hoje estranhas. Leonardo imaginou o homem com pernas e braços estendidos, impondo a forma humana ao círculo, ao quadrado e ao universo. Em nossos tempos, quando a ecologia, a tecnologia, a política e a economia nos lembram constantemente a possibilidade do apocalipse, a visão de Leonardo tende a envolver-se nas brumas de um mito pertencente a um passado irrecuperável. A metáfora de Da Vinci sugere organização, controle e continuidade a partir do homem como centro e medida de todas as coisas. Ao organizar e controlar dentro de uma continuidade o homem realiza-se enquanto "homo ethicus" e "homo historicus" e, nessas realizações, constrói-se a si mesmo e ao mundo. Esse ideal do humanismo secular, entretanto, sofre constantes agressões em nossos dias e propõe constantemente a indagação a respeito da possibilidade, caso a metáfora antropocêntrica torne-se realmente inviável, de novas imagens que a substituam.

Questionar a viabilidade do modelo humanista tradicional supõe a análise prévia de tal modelo e os motivos de seu desgaste dentro da ordem temporal. Se se tomar como base as características do quadro de Da Vinci apontadas acima, é pos

sível formular uma hipótese de trabalho para a crítica do humanismo tradicional nos seguintes termos: se o programa definido pelo humanismo tradicional identifica-se, em larga escala, com o programa da ideologia realista nas artes e nas ciências, o descrédito do humanismo nada mais é que o descrédito da ideologia realista. O termo "realismo" deve ser aqui entendido em seu sentido mais amplo, não apenas como uma ideologia característica do século XIX, mas como a ideologia predominante na evolução da história do Ocidente. Nesse sentido, a ideologia realista aproxima-se da metáfora de Da Vinci, ou seja, o realismo sempre implica em uma divisão dualista original que separa homem e mundo, mundo e centro, e que atribui ao homem a função essencial de organizar e melhorar constantemente a realidade através de planejamentos, ou ficções, sucessivas.

O realista, em ciência ou arte, é sempre um construtor de mapas. Seu fim precípua é o mapeamento do real através de uma configuração prévia, de uma ficção que idealiza e controla a realidade em seu estado bruto. Dadas as limitações humanas, entretanto, nenhum mapeamento é definitivo. Cada mapa idealizado em um determinado ponto da ordem temporal pode ser ampliado e melhorado. Os acréscimos e modificações sucessivos feitos aos mapas dão origem à História, ao Progresso, à Civilização, em suma, ao processo evolutivo que leva sempre em direção ao mapa perfeito, mas nunca o atinge. A função do ideal é acenar apenas, e levar a humanidade a um crescimento constante.

Assim definido, o realista tem sido uma presença constante na evolução ideológica do Ocidente. Pensadores representativos como E. Gombrich em Teoria da Arte, Karl R. Popper em Filosofia da Ciência, e Erich Auerbach em Crítica e História Lite-

rária revelam uma intensa convicção realista.¹ Em Art and Illusion Gombrich caracteriza o "milagre grego" como sendo a descoberta da possibilidade de verdades provisórias na descrição do real, de ficções temporárias feitas à semelhança do mundo. Trata-se aqui da imaginação grega libertando o homem de um primitivismo mítico que poderia apenas conduzir, na concepção de Gombrich, a uma sociedade fechada e hierarquizada dentro de padrões "míticos" e, portanto, irreais. Da mesma forma, a Mimese de Auerbach mostra que a conquista fundamental da Literatura Ocidental foi o desenvolvimento da mimese, da representação realista de uma ação. É a mimese que, da mesma forma que o "milagre grego" de Gombrich, liberta gradualmente a literatura das cadeias da imaginação mítica. Nas palavras do historiador Hayden White, é característica essencial da visão de Auerbach a crença no realismo como a "história da eliminação gradual dos poderes míticos enquanto conceitos operatórios em questões sociais e psicológicas, e do desenvolvimento de forças sociais, naturais e psicológicas caracterizadas como forças intra-históricas compreendidas dentro de uma racionalidade própria".² Popper, finalmente, esforça-se arduamente para demonstrar que a ciência é incapaz de dar respostas absolutas tanto no que toca à natureza como no que toca à sociedade, e argumenta a favor das vantagens do relativismo realista, da verdade provisória.³

Os três pensadores discutidos na parágrafo anterior têm em comum, portanto, a mesma parcialidade na defesa da ideologia realista e no ataque ao primitivismo mítico. Trata-se, de um lado, de defender a todo custo a ordem temporária criada pelo

homem e melhorada com o passar do tempo, e, de outro, de combater os momentos culturais considerados estagnantes, caracterizados por um maneirismo ou um formalismo que podem conduzir apenas a um "regresso em direção a formas de imaginação opressivas arcaicas infantis e selvagens".⁴ São esses os momentos em que não ocorre progresso através de mapeamentos sucessivos, momentos que devem, na melhor das hipóteses, ser considerados como períodos de transição, preparatórios para a aparição de novas ordens organizadas por mapeamentos prévios. Nas artes, exemplos de tais períodos de formalização são frequentemente localizados na última fase de um estilo de época, como é o caso do maneirismo clássico, ou do maneirismo ultra-romântico, ou do parnasianismo. Ou ainda, selecionam-se autores e criadores que, em momentos específicos, por força de uma preocupação constante com a forma, relegaram a um segundo plano a atividade de mapear o mundo. Dessa forma, para o realista, são exemplos de formalismo a obra de um Edgar Allan Poe ou de um James Joyce, a pintura de um Mondrian e a poesia dos grupos concretistas.

É fácil compreender porque o formalismo e o maneirismo devem necessariamente ser condenados pelo humanismo realista. Ao abandonar o procedimento que, de Aristóteles a Auerbach, tem sido considerado padrão na cultura Ocidental, o formalista distancia-se dos ideais éticos, históricos e progressistas do humanismo. Quando essa distância aparece em um grande criador, como Joyce, surge a possibilidade de uma concorrência agressiva e ameaçadora com o realismo. Tradicionalmente, a concorrência apresentada pelos "maneirismos" foi considera

da insignificante e excepcional, normalmente massacrada pela norma realista vigente. Em nossos dias, esses "formalismos" tendem a erigir-se em sistemas auto-suficientes e, portanto, capazes de ultrapassar a sua condição de formalismo marginal, de realidade parasitária que vive à custa da tradição humanista, e chegar finalmente à situação de realidade cultural autônoma, ou até mesmo dominante. Assim, em oposição ao princípio vigente de uma atividade mapeadora histórica e antropocêntrica, o século XX testemunha o aparecimento em grande escala de tendências anti-historicistas, anti-antropocêntricas e anti-mapeadoras. Em oposição ao centralismo realista tais tendências têm em comum a preferência pelo descentramento. Em maior ou menor escala, e de formas diferentes, as vanguardas artísticas do século XX e correntes tais como o Pós-Estruturalismo Francês ou o McLuhanismo enfatizam o descentramento e procuram novas imagens e metáforas capazes de substituir a metáfora centrada de Da Vinci.

É possível imaginar uma evolução gradativa da ideologia do descentramento a partir de Marx, que tende a ver o homem como uma vítima das forças abstratas do capital e do trabalho, ou a partir de Freud, que tende a ver o homem como uma vítima do subconsciente. De qualquer forma, a posição antropocêntrica desloca-se gradualmente. Tal deslocação verifica-se também nas artes, na pintura e literatura em particular, a partir do século XIX. Em pintura, do Impressionismo até a Arte Abstrata e até Mondrian, percorre-se um caminho anti-realista que cada vez mais compromete a posição central humana. Com efeito, do Impressionismo até Mondrian o caminho percorrido aponta para a nega-

ção da necessidade de representar o real (ainda que se afirme a possibilidade de retratar a realidade interior humana) e para a afirmação da necessidade de se dar primazia ao meio de comunicação. Em Mondrian, as combinações de formas e cores, e não a representação do real, é que chama a atenção. Essa ênfase no meio em si e em sua estrutura inerente tende a provocar o esquecimento do autor da obra: o meio tende a absorvê-lo. O código em si, com suas possibilidades de combinação, tende a tornar-se centro e a rejeitar o sujeito-autor. Em literatura, da mesma forma, o realismo triunfante de um Flaubert e um Henry James vem sendo substituído por uma carência de representação e pela ênfase na densidade do meio. De Virginia Woolf e Joyce a Robbe-Grillet e ao argentino Borges o problema da representação do real, do Weltanschauung, dá gradualmente lugar à problemática da linguagem na densidade do seu ser.

A passagem do antropocentrismo para o logocentrismo⁵ é particularmente visível em Borges, o escritor argentino que se torna, subitamente, um dos principais focos de atenção de uma parte bastante significativa da intelectualidade do Ocidente. Em Borges as sugestões do desaparecimento do homem, em particular do escritor, diante do mundo da linguagem e da literatura, são constantes. Já não se trata aqui de uma técnica, como em Joyce, que tende a comprometer o realismo. Borges preocupa-se constantemente com a produção de metáforas de descenramento. O escritor tende a desaparecer porque, como diz Gerard Genette, "quando não está procurando fontes, Borges está descobrindo precursores".⁶ A leitura do escritor argentino sugere constantemente que há no mundo um livro único, uma su-

pra-linguagem onde tudo já está dito. Ao escritor resta apenas a atividade de repetir. Duas das estórias de Borges explicitam essa problemática.

O quadro apresentado ao leitor na "Biblioteca de Babel" é o do mundo como uma biblioteca contendo todos os livros possíveis e imagináveis em todos os tempos.⁷ Trata-se de uma biblioteca em que todas as combinações de signos possíveis foram esgotadas, e, portanto, onde tudo já é escrito. Numa biblioteca desse tipo os leitores e bibliotecários devem necessariamente estar perdidos. O autor esclarece, com efeito, que alguns dos bibliotecários tentaram encontrar a origem da biblioteca, mas falharam. No contexto das possibilidades virtualmente infinitas das combinações da linguagem, o homem já não pode ser considerado um centro. Ele é, ao contrário, uma vítima de uma estrutura incompreensível que o precedeu no tempo e que existirá após sua morte.

A perda de identidade característica dos bibliotecários de Babel encontra-se também, embora de maneira diversa, em "Pierre Menard, Autor do Quixote". Pierre Menard não tem a autonomia criadora característica do escritor na medida em que sua identidade tende a confundir-se com a de Cervantes. Menard não é simplesmente um autor copiando, reescrevendo, ou reestruturando a obra de Cervantes. Ele é um escritor contemporâneo criando, independentemente, uma ficção que coincide, palavra por palavra, com o D. Quixote. Trata-se aqui do escritor que acredita criar mas que, na realidade, deve necessariamente repetir porque tudo já está escrito. Borges sugere, assim, que o criador, o mapeador que controla a realidade atra-

vês de ficções, nada mais é do que uma ilusão, a ilusão do antropocentrismo. No mundo de Borges, bem como no mundo de um grande número de escritores de vanguarda contemporâneos, a função central humana do criador é constantemente substituída pela função lúdica do homem que nada mais faz do que reordenar signos, sem pretensões à originalidade. Em suma, o que se sugere é que não há mais autores, apenas editores.

É interessante notar que a passagem do antropocentrismo para o logocentrismo, tal como ocorre em casos como o de Borges, tende a tornar-se, em última análise, uma passagem para o descentramento total na medida em que a linguagem não pode constituir-se em centro. Da mesma forma que a biblioteca de Babel, a linguagem, vista em termos de possibilidades ilimitadas de combinações sígnicas, admite apenas reorganizações e substituições internas em seu sistema, sem que nunca exista um centro organizador permanente. Ao constituir-se em "centro", a fluidez do fenômeno lingüístico em sua multiplicidade labiríntica gera imediatamente o descentramento total.

Essa visão metafísica da linguagem enquanto situação de descentramento torna-se, em nossos dias, cada vez mais frequente. Os pensadores chamados às vezes de "Pós-Estruturalistas Franceses" têm constantemente enfatizado essa visão de uma linguagem e de um mundo descentrados. É o caso, por exemplo, de Michel Foucault em As Palavras e as Coisas.⁸ Foucault vê as ciências humanas não em termos de uma história, de uma gênese centralizadora, mas em termos da dimensão espacial de uma arqueologia onde um discurso inconsciente constantemente reordenado determina a História Natural, a Economia e a Gramática.

Nas palavras do próprio Foucault, o livro procura "descrever não a gênese de nossas ciências, mas o espaço epistemológico específico de um determinado período".⁹ Foi, de acordo com Foucault, em um campo epistemológico no século XIX, quando um modo de conhecimento predominantemente espacial foi substituído por formas de ordem impostas pela continuidade do tempo, que a posição central do homem no mundo foi radicalmente definida. Em nossos dias, graças a uma nova episteme na qual a linguagem ganha sua unidade e totalidade, "o homem está prestes a perecer, na medida em que o ser da linguagem continua a brilhar de maneira cada vez mais intensa em nosso horizonte".¹⁰

Da mesma forma que Foucault, Jacques Derrida refere-se constantemente à noção de descentramento e de perda do homem na linguagem. A noção de descentramento em Derrida implica na rejeição de todos os princípios que, no decorrer do tempo, tenderam a tornar-se centros de controle. Tais princípios são característicos da história do mundo ocidental e foram chamados, em épocas diversas, de "eidos, archê, telos, energeia, ousia (essência, existência, substância, sujeito), aletheia, transcendentalidade, consciência, Deus, Homem, etc."¹¹ Em um determinado momento da história do Ocidente, no entanto, essa noção de um centro começa a deteriorar-se e, nas palavras de Derrida,

a partir desse momento, tornou-se necessário começar a pensar que não havia centro, que o centro não podia ser pensado em termos de um estar-presente, que o centro não tinha uma localização natural, que não se tratava de um ponto fixo mas de uma função,

uma espécie de não-local onde ocorria um número infinito de substituições de signos. Esse foi o momento em que a linguagem manifesta-se como problemática universal; o momento em que, na ausência de um centro ou de uma origem, tudo se torna discurso — uma vez que se entenda o sentido dessa palavra — isto é, quando tudo se torna um sistema onde o significado central, o significado original e transcendental, nunca está absolutamente presente a não ser em um sistema de diferenças. A ausência de significado transcendental estende o domínio e o jogo da significação até o infinito.¹²

Em Jacques Lacan, finalmente, o problema do descentramento é relacionado ao discurso do inconsciente enquanto ordem simbólica que determina o sujeito.¹³ O mundo do discurso inconsciente é, para Lacan, autônomo. Além disso, o sujeito falante depende totalmente da cadeia significante que o precede e que existirá após sua morte. Ele está condenado ao procedimento de substituição ditado pelo eixo metafórico e sua identidade perde-se para sempre nessa cadeia infinita de substituições. Lacan ilustra essa predominância do inconsciente através da análise do mais famoso dos contos de Edgar Allan Poe. Na Carta Roubada o detetive Dupin deve encontrar uma carta comprometedora roubada de uma rainha com a intenção de ser usada como chantagem. A carta cria, em todos os personagens do conto, uma situação de dependência de uma realidade ausente, de uma realidade que não pode ser manifestamente usada sob pena de que seu poder se perca. A partir dessa idéia geral, Lacan vê a carta como uma metáfora do funcionamento do inconsciente Freudiano, como um significante flutuante e suspenso que con

trola os possíveis significados expressos pelos personagens.

Não é apenas no chamado Pós-Estruturalismo que pode ser verificada a presença da preocupação com o descentramento. Também no canadense Marshal McLuhan nota-se claramente uma preocupação descentralizadora e uma nostalgia pela volta ao envolvimento mítico global. Ao afirmar que o meio é a mensagem McLuhan afirma, na realidade, que o homem é determinado pelos meios que usa para estender seus sentidos. Através dessa determinação os novos meios tendem a criar o homem descentrado que é constantemente desprezado e/ou temido pelos realistas: o homem mítico, ou seja, o homem capaz de participar miticamente na "Aldeia Global". O modelo ideológico subjacente às teorias de McLuhan substituem a noção do homem como um centro controlando a realidade através do meio pela noção do homem controlado pelo meio e vivendo em um espaço mítico e atemporal.¹⁴ Como disse Tom Nairn, "McLuhan age como se nós, com os nossos padrões de comunicação e de sensibilidade, tivéssemos escapado da história — de tal forma que é agora possível falar em um mito-história, no qual as comunicações são vistas como causas, como as alavancas básicas que produzem todas as mudanças".¹⁵

Seria possível continuar a estudar manifestações da tendência descentralizadora, anti-histórica e anti-realista em outras esferas do interesse humano. Poder-se-ia, por exemplo, estudar a popularidade de certas vanguardas que oferecem ao gosto popular, e isso com sucesso significativo, uma forte dose do transitório, do desestruturado, do aleatório, do casual, do imediato. Mas isso nos levaria a transgredir os limites gerais desse trabalho. Mais pertinente que tal tentati

va de verificação seria procurar, em nosso horizonte cultural, as possíveis soluções para os problemas gerados pelo descen -
tamento. É preciso, em outras palavras, encontrar novos sím -
bolos para um humanismo que já não é antropocêntrico, históri -
co e realista, e para um homem que se viu, de súbito, desloca -
do da posição central em que o imaginou Leonardo Da Vinci.

É talvez possível pensar um novo homem em um mundo não
antropocêntrico a partir de certas metáforas popularizadas
pelos teóricos do Estruturalismo e Pós-Estruturalismo Francês.
O conceito de "bricoleur", desenvolvido por Lévi-Strauss, é
um exemplo. A idéia de homem expressa por tal conceito é es -
tranha ao padrão humanista de Da Vinci. Para Lévi-Strauss,
"bricolage" caracteriza tanto a atividade do pensamento mítico
como a atividade do analista de mitos: trata-se nos dois casos
de tentar encontrar, no espaço intermediário entre o percebido
e o concebido Kantianos, uma certa racionalidade estabelecida
a partir de uma nova manipulação e/ou relacionamento de signos.
O "bricoleur", por sua vez, é caracterizado por Lévi-Strauss
como sendo o construtor que só trabalha a partir de materiais e
signos pré-existentes. Esses materiais são posteriormente reor -
denados através de uma atividade de montagem. O "bricoleur"
não impõe formas a partir de um centro de controle; ele as
reorganiza:

Seu universo de instrumentos é fechado e as regras
de seu jogo implicam sempre em trabalhar com o que
está à mão, ou seja, trabalhar com um conjunto de
instrumentos e materiais que é sempre finito e he -
terogêneo porque o que ele contém não implica em

uma relação direta com o projeto do momento, ou até mesmo com qualquer projeto específico, mas é o resultado contingente de todas as ocasiões que existiram para renovar ou enriquecer o estoque, ou para mantê-lo com o que sobrou de construções ou destruições prévias.¹⁶

O "bricoleur" é, portanto, uma metáfora para o homem agindo em um universo fechado, onde as possibilidades de ação são predeterminadas. Nesse contexto, o homem deve definir sua função não em termos de uma teleologia, como no caso do realismo humanista, mas em termos de uma atividade de combinação. Sua função é interrogar "todos os objetos heterogêneos que compõem o seu tesouro para descobrir o que cada um deles poderia 'significar' e, dessa forma, contribuir para a definição de um sistema que está ainda por se materializar, mas que deverá finalmente divergir do sistema instrumental somente em termos da disposição interna de suas partes".¹⁷

No campo mais específico da literatura, também Roland Barthes vê na atividade da "bricolage" e na função do "bricoleur" metáforas para um novo conceito do escritor descentralizado no interior da atividade literária:

Mas inicialmente esse desejo, o desejo de escrever e de comunicar um sentimento, tem a seu dispor apenas uma linguagem pobre e banal; os sentimentos de que dispõe a literatura incluem apenas um número absurdamente restrito de funções: Eu de-sejo, eu sofro, eu odeio, eu rejeito, eu amo, eu quero ser amado, eu tenho medo de morrer — a partir disso é preciso criar uma literatura infinita.

O sentimento é trivial, ou, se se prefere, típico, e essa circunstância governa todo o ser da literatura; pois se a vontade de escrever nada mais é do que a constelação de algumas figuras recorrentes, o que resta para o escritor nada mais é do que uma atividade de variação e combinação: não há criadores, apenas combinadores, e a literatura é como o barco Argo, cuja longa história não admitia criação alguma, apenas combinações. Confinada a uma função imutável, entretanto, cada parte era eternamente renovada, sem que o todo cessasse de ser o Argo.¹⁸

Os conceitos do "bricoleur", do homem parcialmente castrado em sua atividade criativa mas recompensado através de uma atividade de combinações, e da "bricolage", da atividade parcialmente desprovida de um centro e de uma teleologia, são sintomas de uma mudança ideológica de âmbito mais geral em nossos dias. Trata-se de uma mudança que procura afastar-se do mapa e do mapeador, mas sem saber ainda que direção tomar. Em um livro publicado em 1973, John Vernon tenta definir a tendência anti-realista e logocêntrica da cultura Ocidental através do conceito do jardim, do horto edênico.¹⁹ Vernon argumenta que o mundo do horto é uma possível alternativa para o mundo do mapa na medida em que o horto, em oposição ao mapa, não é estruturado em termos de pares opostos que se excluem mutuamente, mas em termos de uma totalidade de experiência; da unidade dos princípios opostos de sujeito e objeto, exterior e interior, fantasia e realidade; de uma espécie de participação total na qual todas as áreas da experiência se acham interligadas. Não é difícil perceber nesse vocabulário, obviamente semelhan

te ao de McLuhan, uma nostalgia pelo regresso ao homem mítico na era atual das comunicações. De fato, Vernon admite que a volta ao horto é a volta à estrutura das experiências primordiais, tanto do mundo da criança como do mundo das culturas primitivas. Mas esse regresso é também um progresso na medida em que ele nos afasta de certos aspectos negativos característicos da estrutura do mundo do mapa. De um lado, como já se notou, a ideologia realista possui vantagens inegáveis: mapeamentos sucessivos permitem ao homem controlar e manipular a natureza e gerar o progresso e o aparecimento das riquezas. Mas a ideologia do mapa sempre implica também em uma reificação não só do mundo, mas também do homem, que tende a ser incluído no mapeamento e transformado em um objeto de consumo. Além disso, como argumenta Vernon, a atividade mapeadora opera em termos de uma maneira esquizofrênica ao separar tudo em dualidades estanques: fato e ficção, mundo e representação, exterior e interior, fantasia e realidade, etc. Trata-se aqui da separação alienadora que o homem mítico, em seu contato com o mundo, parece desconhecer.

O homem mítico do horto é o homem que rejeitou, ou a quem foi negada, a função de centro alienado e que optou pela participação em um todo maior, em uma unidade mística ou mítica na qual ele ainda se move, mas apenas como um "bricoleur" participante e não como um realista criador. Se o realista criava ficções através da linguagem, o novo homem mítico apenas manipula linguagens pré-existentes e autônomas, discursos em cujo interior se localiza toda a sua liberdade. Não importa muito, no contexto desse trabalho, o fato de a

realidade maior a que o homem mítico pertence ser a linguagem dos Pós-Estruturalistas, os meios de comunicação de McLuhan, ou a biblioteca de Borges. O que importa é que, de repente, uma parte bastante significativa da cultura do Ocidente se dá conta da existência, ou da volta, do homem mítico descentrado e procura descobrir seu significado, estabelecer seu novo lugar no mundo. A literatura contemporânea, ao engajar-se nessa procura, tem sugerido símbolos e imagens para esse homem descentrado.

Uma das imagens contemporâneas de descentramento que pode ser vista como uma alternativa em relação à imagem centralizadora de Da Vinci é a imagem da faixa de Moebius. A faixa é normalmente representada por uma figura que se assemelha ao número oito visto em posição horizontal, de tal forma que o resultado é uma seqüência sem início, sem fim, e sem um centro fixo. Jacques Lacan usa essa imagem para representar a ordem simbólica do inconsciente, à qual o homem deve se submeter e na qual ele deve forçosamente entregar-se a uma atividade ininterrupta de substituição de signos. Nessa ordem simbólica do inconsciente o desejo humano nunca é satisfeito pois o Outro, o objeto do desejo, é descentrado e inatingível.²⁰ Também o romancista contemporâneo John Barth usa, em um de seus livros, a imagem da faixa de Moebius para representar o conjunto infinito de estórias já prontas, um discurso já completo e ao qual o escritor moderno nada pode acrescentar. A tarefa que lhe resta é a tarefa de reorganizar essa tradição, recontar as estórias existentes com pequenas modificações e adaptações, em

um jogo infinito de possibilidades de variação. Em John Barth a faixa de Moebius contém as palavras "era uma vez uma estória que começava era uma vez...", que podem ser lidas em termos de uma continuidade infinita. Da mesma forma que o realista que se vê arrancado de sua posição de centro, também o autor-centro percebe-se no processo de ser absorvido pelo discurso de uma literatura que se recusa a ser um mero objeto, e tende a controlar o seu autor.²¹

O caso de John Barth é particularmente interessante nesse contexto porque Barth parece ter dedicado sua carreira de escritor à descoberta de formas de descentramento. Sua posição na Literatura Americana Moderna está vinculada ao grupo de escritores caracterizados como os escritores da "Literatura de Exaustão". Vladimir Nabokov, o escritor russo que se naturalizou americano, é também considerado como parte desse grupo. Os escritores da Literatura de Exaustão imaginam a possibilidade de, em nossos dias, ocorrer uma exaustão nos temas literários uma vez que tudo já foi dito e repetido. Diante disso o problema do escritor contemporâneo consiste em entregar-se à incerta procura do novo não só em uma época em que há uma superabundância de literatura, mas também numa época em que, além da literatura, os meios de comunicação dizem tudo o que há para dizer. O escritor consciente da exaustão vê-se então forçado a repetir velhos temas, a ressuscitar mitos gregos, mas tudo isso de uma forma nova, acrescentando novos elementos. Trata-se sempre de repetir as mesmas histórias, com alguns acréscimos e uma nova organização. Daí a ênfase no jogo característica da Literatura de Exaustão: tudo o que há a fazer é

brincar com a linguagem, reorganizar eternamente as pedras de um imenso quebra-cabeça. Da mesma forma que para Borges, para o escritor da exaustão tudo já é escrito, e o importante é repetir inovando. No Brasil, é curioso notar que o livro A Força do Destino, da romancista Nélida Piñon, revela a mesma preocupação característica da problemática da exaustão e da função descentrada do escritor. O propósito da autora parece apenas ser uma tentativa de recontar a ópera de Verdi acrescentando, nos intervalos do original, detalhes da mesma estória que se repete no presente.²² Além disso, nessa reconstrução da obra a própria autora-narradora insere-se como personagem e vê-se criticada nos seus atos narrativos. Trata-se evidentemente de uma ficção em que a figura central do narrador foi absorvida pelo texto e, da mesma forma que o "bricoleur", move-se e vive dentro desse texto através da atividade nunca insignificante de reordenar, montar, acrescentar. Em suma, a personagem-narradora-autora de A Força do Destino move-se dentro de uma faixa de Moebius que não tem início ou fim, e que lhe determina previamente as possibilidades de ação.

A faixa de Moebius não é, entretanto, a única imagem de descentramento na cultura contemporânea. Uma segunda imagem, talvez mais eficaz, começa a ser usada de forma um tanto insistente. Como a faixa de Moebius, a espiral logarítmica não tem início ou fim. Uma vez preso na expansão de suas curvas, o homem se perde no interior de uma estrutura acêntrica. O matemático Martin Gardner define a espiral logarítmica como

o único tipo de espiral que não altera sua forma

em proporção ao crescimento, um fato que explica porque ela é tão facilmente encontrada na natureza. Por exemplo, na medida em que o molusco enclausurado de um náutilo cresce em tamanho, a concha externa expande-se em forma de uma espiral logarítmica e mantém sempre uma forma habitacional imutável, a despeito do crescimento. O centro de uma espiral logarítmica, observado através de um microscópio, teria a aparência exata da espiral que seria vista se se prolongasse a curva de tal forma que ela alcançasse as dimensões de uma galáxia e fosse então vista de um ponto muito distante.²³

A espiral logarítmica é, portanto, um símbolo perfeito de descentramento e de infinidade, de expansão infinita de uma forma única. Note-se a semelhança de tal imagem em relação à idéia Borgeana de um "livro único" onde tudo está escrito, ou a idéia de mito como uma estrutura atemporal única que constantemente molda e reduz à unidade tradicional os elementos culturais novos que aparecem no decorrer do tempo. Note-se, finalmente, a radical negação do centro e da capacidade humana de criar novas formas, características essenciais do realismo humanista. A espiral logarítmica é o mundo do "bricoleur" e do homem mítico, do homem que não teme perder sua identidade no emaranhado de um labirinto ou nas voltas de uma espiral. É ela é também, pela sua própria essência, a negação da possibilidade do mapeador realista.

Da mesma forma que no caso da faixa de Moebius, a espiral logarítmica tem sido empregada por escritores contemporâneos. É o caso do escritor já mencionado anteriormente, John

Barth, em seus últimos livros.²⁴ Das três narrativas que compõem Chimera, duas recontam os mitos gregos de Belerofonte, o herói frustrado, e de Perseu, o herói vitorioso. Na versão de John Barth, Belerofonte falha na sua tentativa de ser herói na medida em que tenta, a todo custo, manter-se como centro controlador da narrativa e dos fatos dentro da estrutura acêntrica da espiral logarítmica. Perseu, por outro lado, renuncia a seu papel de centro, entrega-se a uma atividade de "bricolage" dentro da espiral, e realiza-se como narrador e herói mítico ao narrar sua própria história. Sua história, no entanto, deve ser enformada pela estrutura da espiral: ela é sempre, ao mesmo tempo, idêntica a si mesma e diferente na medida em que cada nova narração do velho mito implica em uma nova manipulação dos dados. A terceira das narrativas do livro do escritor americano é uma aplicação do método de trabalho de Perseu para o escritor contemporâneo incapaz de continuar a criar novas histórias em um mundo de comunicações onde tudo já foi dito. "Duniazadiad" é a história de como tanto o escritor moderno como Duniazade, a irmã da narradora das Mil e Uma Noites, aprenderam com Sheherazade que, mesmo quando tudo já está dito, é possível recontar histórias sem fim através de uma remanipulação de dados. Trata-se novamente de aprender o ensinamento contido na espiral: a expansão das mesmas formas pode ser multiplicada "ad infinitum".

No Brasil, um romance contemporâneo triunfalmente aplaudido pela crítica usa, com particular intensidade, o símbolo da espiral. Trata-se de Avalovara, de Osman Lins.²⁵ A temática do romance é simples: a narrativa das histórias de amor do per

sonagem central, Abel, que amou duas mulheres no passado e ama uma terceira no presente. Essa temática, entretanto, é estruturada com base em dois símbolos de descentramento. O primeiro deles, que pode ser considerado um descentramento parcial, é o famoso quadrado palindrômico latino, contendo a frase SATOR AREPO TENET OPERA ROTAS. A frase em si já é, sintática e semanticamente, um início de descentramento na medida em que pode ser lida em dois sentidos e na medida em que nenhuma das palavras, dada a ausência de ordenação fixa na sintaxe latina, constitui-se em um centro. Disposta em quadrados a frase torna-se, além disso, uma estruturação acêntrica que pode ser lida em diversos rumos, de baixo para cima, de cima para baixo, da direita para a esquerda, etc... No contexto do romance, cada uma das oito letras diferentes que estão presentes na frase constituem um tema a ser desenvolvido (a letra "O", por exemplo, trata da história da terceira mulher de Abel). Esses temas não são apresentados em ordem cronológica e nenhum deles pode ser considerado "central". O leitor deve, no final, fazer a sua própria montagem do romance.

Osman Lins, entretanto, não se contenta com o quadrado palindrômico. Sobreposta ao quadrado está a espiral, sem início e sem fim. No contexto do romance, a espiral indica a propagação das formas idênticas dos quadrados através do tempo. O mesmo tema "O", por exemplo, aparece várias vezes, de formas diferentes. Através da espiral, dessa forma, Osman Lins cria uma narrativa descentrada onde tanto o narrador, que se transforma periodicamente em autor, como o leitor, tendem a experimentar a sensação de confusão dentro de um labirinto.

Trata-se da confusão necessária do homem, seja ele autor, nar_rador, ou leitor, que se vê, de repente, em um mundo sem cen_tro.

Em uma entrevista Osman Lins declarou que procurou, em seu romance, desenvolver um "esforço de compreensão sobre nos_sa prōpria existência no mundo".²⁶ Para definir o contexto des_sa existência, serve-se o autor de formas de descentramento que tornam-se, em nossos dias, metāforas cuja presença e cada vez mais insistente. Esse artigo procurou analisar algumas des_sas metāforas como formas de descentramento que substituem a velha metāfora centralista de Da Vinci e que exigem do novo ho_mem contemporāneo um comportamento diverso, ditado pela inse_gurança que advém da ausência de centros. É talvez ainda um pou_co cedo para afirmar que a nova situação de descentramento vai permanecer. O desejo de centro, característico de toda a histō_ria do Ocidente, é um desejo arraigado, e a volta aos centros pode ser inevitāvel. É sempre possível argumentar que nāo se pode viver por muito tempo no labirinto ou na espiral. Mas é preciso indagar a respeito de tal vivência descentrada na medi_da em que o vigor de sua presença e de sua realidade ameaça to_mar conta, no momento, de nossa experiência humana.

NOTAS

¹Ver, a esse respeito, o artigo de WHITE, Haiden. The Culture of Criticism. In: HASAN, Ihab, ed. Liberations. Middletown, Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1971, p. 61.

²The Culture of Criticism. p. 59.

³The Culture of Criticism. p. 57.

⁴The Culture of Criticism. p. 66.

⁵Como se verá mais adiante, a passagem do antropocentrismo para o logocentrismo é, na realidade, uma passagem do antropocentrismo para o a-centrismo, em virtude da natureza acêntrica do discurso.

⁶GENETTE, Gerard. Figuras. São Paulo, Perspectiva, 1972. p. 122.

⁷BORGES, Jorge Luis. Labyrinths. New York, New Directions, 1964.

⁸FOUCAULT, Michel. The Order of Things. New York, Random House, 1971. p. xi.

⁹The Order of Things. p. 386.

¹⁰The Order of Things. p. 387.

¹¹DERRIDA, Jacques. Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences. In: _____. The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man. Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970. p. 249.

¹²Structure, Sign, and Play in the Dicourse of the Human Sciences. p. 249.

¹³LACAN, Jacques. Le Séminaire sur 'La Lettre Volée'. In: _____. Écrits. Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1966. p. 19-75.

¹⁴MCLUHAN, Marshal. Os Meios de Comunicação como Extensões do Homem. São Paulo, Cultrix, 1969.

¹⁵NAIRN, Tom. McLuhanism: The Myth of Our Time. In: _____. McLuhan: Pro & Con. Baltimore, Penguin, 1969. p. 67.

¹⁶LEVI-STRAUSS, Claude. The Savage Mind. Chicago, Weidengeld and Nicolson, 1966. p. 17.

¹⁷The Savage Mind. p. 18.

¹⁸BARTHES, Roland. Critical Essays. Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1972. p. xvi-xvii.

¹⁹VERNON, John. The Garden and the Map. Chicago, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1973.

²⁰LACAN, Jacques. Écrits. p. 215.

²¹BARTH, John. Lost in the Funhouse. New York, Bantam, 1969.

²²PIÑON, Nélida. A Força do Destino. Rio de Janeiro, Record, 1977.

²³GARDNER, Martin. The Second Scientific American Book of Mathematical Puzzles and Diversions. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1961.

²⁴BARTH, John. Chimera. New York, Random House, 1972.

²⁵LINS, Osman. Avalovara. São Paulo, Melhoramentos, 1973.

²⁶PAES, José Paulo. Avalovara: A Magia de Osman. In: LINS, Osman. Avalovara. Introdução acrescentada ao volume.

IDEOLOGY, EDUCATION AND THE ENGLISH TEACHER

Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira

Whatever we teach, all of us teachers have an educational role to play — a statement no one would quarrel with. What does this mean? Any dictionary will tell us. To educate, according to one taken almost at random, is not only "to train, develop, cultivate the mind", but also "to form the moral character of oneself or another".¹

I suspect that at least some of us sometimes tend to forget the second part of the definition. We forget that, being what we are, we influence what young people will become. We forget that, if we take our duties lightly, we are telling our students, far more strongly than if we were using so many words, that responsibilities can be evaded, and all that matters is not work — the contribution we all owe to society — but the job, and the money it may (or may not) bring us. If we seem indifferent to the poverty around us, to the acute social needs so consistently ignored in this and other countries, we are implying our agreement with a view of politics which serves nothing but the personal petty interest of those officially engaged in it. If we fail to treat our students with the consideration due to fellow citizens (who happen to be younger and usually less intellectually sophisticated than we are), we are telling them, in silent but forcible terms, that we do not believe the basic tenet of any democratic society: that all

men and women are worthy of respect and have been born with a potential that should be given opportunity for growth and fulfillment. In short, we teachers, whether we think of it or not, are first of all educators, and we educate by what we are rather than by what we say (so we'd better reach for the highest standards our potential allows). With our students, we are now and always involved, both as agents and recipients, in a permanent process that will end only with our deaths. Education is a continuous, mutual engagement.

This general aspect of the question is too vast to tackle in a brief meeting or a short article. Only certain angles of the problem will be focused on here — and they are complex enough. We'd like to discuss certain dangers — and the corresponding attempts to circumvent them — that we, as language teachers, and specifically, as foreign language teachers, are more liable to meet, but also, perhaps, better equipped to cope with. I mean the dangers associated with our condition as citizens of a developing country and members of a culture traditionally disinclined to a critical evaluation of facts, especially of foreign imports, be they of a technological or cultural nature. I also mean another kind of danger, the mirror of the first type: uncritical hostility towards studies connected with foreign countries, notably those responsible for any forms of neocolonialism. These two antonymous dangers — ingenuous acceptance or radical rejection — can lead us to two equally undesirable evils: cultural subservience or cultural isolation.

There is a related, but more general kind of danger,

implicit in the mere use of language and the categorization of experience that it implies. Linguists will often call our attention to it. Robins, for instance, cites words like right and wrong, duty, crime, and many others subsumed under them: property, theft, punishment, reform. According to him the use of these and comparable words in other types of society "presupposes a social nexus of expected ways of behaviour enforced by precedent and the sanctions of disapproval and legal penalties".² These and similar lexical items thus illustrate the ordering of experience and the particular world view which is part of every culture and which is embedded in the semantic structure of any language. They are the most obvious verbal carriers of ideology. We here take ideology in a general as in a narrower sense. That is, we refer to ideology as "a body of maxims and prejudices which constitute both a vision of the world and a system of values"³, and also as "a body of theoretical and pseudo-scientific precepts..." of "stratified principles meant to justify privileges which are made possible by oppression"⁴ within a given society.

The connection with ideology in the second, negative sense, comes out strongly in another linguist's comments on certain abstract words. "Because they are abstract," Langacker notes, "words like these are quite loosely tied to reality. In a sense, they are almost empty. If one is not careful, they can become emotionally charged labels functioning only to brand someone as a communist or to do something in the name of liberty, and it is very easy to be misled by the empty use of words."⁵ We are unfortunately all of us familiar with this phenomenon. Just as I began writing these lines, I had been

glancing at a newspaper with the headline FIGUEIREDO TEM ESQUERDIZAÇÃO COM TANCREDO NO PODER.⁶ Many of us will probably agree that Tancredo Neves, a conservative politician of the old school, skillful in the arts of compromise, is as little likely to lead the country leftwards as Figueiredo himself. The government, however, sensing the end, is using the emotionally charged label esquerdização to try and defeat their opponents. It is part of our job, as language teachers, to be and make our students constantly aware of these linguistic pitfalls.

Having considered the general ideological problem embedded in the very use of language, foreign or not, we may now go back to one of our specific difficulties, mentioned above, one often adduced as an argument by those who oppose any disciplines connected with foreign cultures. The question thus posed has to do with the usefulness of teaching foreign languages to students barely literate in their own. It is further related to the advisability of perhaps facilitating, with that of the foreign language, the introduction of neocolonial influences politically and economically disadvantageous to our country.

Before discussing these problems, a preliminary question poses itself: can we, speakers of a language not widely known internationally, really choose not to reach any other?

For purposes of international communication and of advanced study we have little more choice than had other past cultures: the raising of Greek and Latin to the status of international languages in the ancient and mediaeval worlds

was also connected with political and economical events beyond the control of those using such languages. English itself, long before it conquered the world, had become an unlikely amalgamation of Celtic, Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Scandinavian and French elements, most of them taken to the British Isles by armed conquest.

For purposes of international communication we can scarcely expect Portuguese to do the job. We do have to teach foreign languages, though not everybody in Brazil will agree. At one of the meetings recently held at the Faculty of Letters of the UFMG, when the time given us by the national joint strike of teachers, doctors and civil servants was used to discuss educational problems, some of us were asked why we teach foreign languages at all. English, we were told, will do nothing for underprivileged children, the unfortunate majority in Brazil. They cannot even use the standard dialect of their mother tongue. A lot of these children come from the slums. They will never use the language we are trying to teach them. Why waste their time, and our own?

Those of us who have got into close touch with socially underprivileged children, at some point of our careers, can hardly fail to agree that the large majority of our students will never use a foreign language for its most immediate practical purposes, travel, or reading other subjects at the University. Still the crucial fact is that SOME of these children may, through social ascension, have access to such privileges one day. Can we tell which students will be in this position, and which will not?

As we certainly cannot, there are two important points to consider: teaching a foreign language to the children of the poor may contribute to their becoming less poor. Alternatively, the decision not to do so amounts to telling the socially deprived that they will always remain so, and that they are fit for nothing else. Such a decision would thus recall the creation, in the past, of technical schools that could not lead to the University. They had been created for those who were not MEANT to go to the University and by a legislation that closely linked the Brazilian educational system to the interests of the 5% of economically privileged people in the country. Such schools kept only the negative side of education, the one that reproduces the existing social model and completely contradicts the myth of schooling as an opportunity for social ascension. Though aware of the enormous difficulties, we would like to participate in the creation of schools which would "negate negation" and open a "window to a qualitative change in our society".⁷ In such a school there is room for change. Therefore there is room for English as one of the tools for self-advancement through study and for participation in an international cultural community.

We would like to sum up some arguments set forth by A. Carpentier, the Cuban writer, against cultural isolationism, which the opposition against foreign language teaching implies. Carpentier rejects what he calls "a vaguely apocalyptic South-Americanism" to support active, responsible participation in the international cultural life.⁸ A simple statistical

table, he says, a piece of relevant information about the economy, an article published in the magazine Fortune in New York — in English — by giving us information and feedback about contemporary history may help us more than isolated cabinet research.

In an essay about the contemporary South-American novel⁹ Carpentier adduces other arguments against isolationism. He starts by examining the peculiar conditions of the South-American countries. In the racial context, we are a mixture of whites, blacks and Indians, co-existing at different cultural levels, and, so to speak, living contemporarily in distinct cultural levels. Ancient practices, beliefs, forms of animism, unorthodox forms of knowledge survive among us. They bridge the gap between present realities and remote cultural essences (which keep us close to timeless universals). From this amalgam interesting forms of creativity often emerge.

There is the extraordinary example of Villa Lobos. The continuous movement of some musical pieces from the Brazilian folklore reminded him of Bach and led to the composition of his admirable Bachianas Brasileiras. In the political, social and economic context we are not so fortunate. There is the instability of our economy, often moved by alien interests. Our army, rather than protecting the country against foreign aggression, is often used as an instrument for internal repression. A small South-American business-man will occasionally get rich, owing to some stroke of luck in the international business game, or if he can pay the price in

useful contacts, political or military influence. Still some remote bankruptcy abroad may bring about his downfall.

Isolationism, however, is far from being the answer. Unlike Peguy, who once boasted he never read any but French books, we cannot remain enclosed in our cultural frontiers. Besides, Carpentier notes, to know and to assimilate foreign cultures, as we have done, does not mean to submit to a new kind of colonialism. No intellectual underdevelopment need correspond to economic dependency. To get information does not mean to submit. And, for this, we need foreign languages.

Besides, we may now talk of cultural interchange rather than dependency. In this respect, it is instructive to notice the large numbers of courses in American universities devoted to South-American cultures and languages. Attitudes have been changing. As an example, we may notice that the phenomenon of the foreigner who used to come to Brazil and live here for thirty years without learning the language has largely disappeared. Culturally, as well as economically, the world is becoming a global village. As a graphic example of international cultural cooperation Carpentier mentions the Mexican artist José Luiz Cuevas: he achieved a pictorial transposition of Kafka's works whose astonishing results can be seen in The World of Kafka, published in New York by Falcon Press.¹⁰

We need not feel guilty, then, because we teach a foreign language. Which does not mean that certain aspects of the question may be lost sight of. Considering them is indeed one of the contributions we may offer to education.

One of the points to bear in mind and attack is the exaggerated reverence in which we hold the written text and its author. This is of course the business of the mother tongue teacher as well as ours. Our case, however, is more severe than theirs. Passive uncritical reading will come about more easily in the foreign than in the native language. In L2 critical reading is made more difficult by insecurity in dealing with the surface forms and by ignorance of the cultural background. Reverence for the text is likewise duplicated by the ingenuous Brazilian awe of almost anything foreign. An example of this phenomenon may occasionally be observed among us teachers. The case of colleagues who try to imitate foreign manners, travel abroad rather than in Brazil (if they can afford it) and, in extreme cases, look down on their countries, is not unknown to us.

An excellent article by Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira, a Brazilian specialist in ESP, dramatically illustrates the greater prestige, for some readers, of anything written in English. She mentions an ironic comment in a Brazilian medical journal about a symptom of emphysema supposedly discovered by an American doctor, who had called it target sign. The Brazilian doctor who writes the article informs that the symptom had been discovered fifteen years earlier by a Brazilian, whose name for it was sinal de cotovelo. The writer of the article adds: "For the benefit of those who only believe in medical science written in English, I might use the name elbow sign (literal translation of sinal de cotovelo)"¹¹. The quotation drives home the point I'm trying to make: excessive respect for the text, normal even in the

mother tongue, prevents the necessary critical attitude. The difficulty is enhanced when the reading is done in a language of international prestige.

A related problem occurs especially in the teaching of ESP. As Ms. Vieira's article repeatedly warns us, "not even scientific literature is free from indoctrination — not seldom it becomes the vehicle of an economic or political ideology"¹². Even more pointedly she bids us beware of sensationalism in texts of scientific vulgarization and of subliminal propaganda in so-called scientific texts. She mentions the extreme cases cited in the article Prescriptions for Death published by Time Magazine (28.02.82). There the social irresponsibility of the international pharmacological industry is denounced. Products that have been banished from the developed countries are advertised and sold, without any advice on collateral effects, in the less controlled markets of the Third World. Ms. Vieira also reminds us of the recent Nestlé scandal. (Incidentally, Nestlé is a Swiss, not an English or American company). Advertising by Nestlé of supposedly bad effects of breast feeding aimed at selling their industrialized milk. Thousands of babies starved after their mother's milk dried up. The babies had been given industrialized milk in hospital — and then their mothers, after they left, were unable to buy it for them. Another dramatic instance is provided by ads of IUD's by other companies, in spite of cancerigenous effects and moral aspects. The ads reflect an attempt by international pharmacological industries to get back the market they had

lost as a consequence of the popularity of oral contraceptives. As foreign language teachers we have a role to play in the fight to counter such attacks against people. By playing it well, Ms. Vieira hopefully suggests, we may bridge the gap between the academic context and our own social and cultural reality.

For this purpose, which procedures should we adopt?

By way of a general orientation, I'd like to quote Christopher Brumfit's words in an article on the role of methodology for FLT. There he makes "a plea for an 'ideological' base for teacher education without making a statement for any particular interpretation of 'ideology'. The teacher must be aware that everything he does is an argument for or against a particular moral — and therefore political, economic, social, etc — view of the world. Only within this explanatory framework will he be able to evaluate the role that society demands from the teacher, and only through such a framework will the discipline that he teaches make consistent sense".¹³

In a talk entitled Power and Politics in ELT, delivered at the London University Institute of Education for the Coloquium on Aspects of English Teaching on June 23rd 1983, Dr. Brumfit clarified his position on a number of points implicit in the statement above and mentioned in this paper. To start with, he said there is "massive hipocrisy" in teaching English to people of the Third World who think they will improve their financial status by learning it and thus enter the world economy.

Like me, however, he sees no alternative. Any world language will have implications of cultural and economic influence. And one simply cannot do without international languages. To deprive a country of English, Dr. Brumfit continued, is like taking away its access to penicilin. An intermediate solution, he suggested, would be the one already in existence: English should be one among a number of international languages, thus establishing a kind of cultural balance of power.

The most important point of the lecture was the statement that every language has the potential to whatever use its speakers want to express: "you can use English to expropriate the expropriators". (This reminds us of the case of India. There English actually forwarded the cause of national independence. By becoming a língua franca it brought together people divided by a number of mutually unintelligible languages.)

Towards the end of his provocative talk, and having thrown in the remark that some people teach English to identify with the middle class, Dr. Brumfit declared that the purpose of education is responsible disobedience. For me, this means taking a stand whenever anything in the social, political, educational or other system needs to be changed, in order to defend people's basic interest. I hope we University teachers have recently done just that: together with civil servants and doctors throughout the country, we went on strike for over two months. We risked our salaries and, some of us, our jobs, for better teaching conditions. English

may have helped us to take this stand. Teaching English has given us many rewarding experiences, among which listening to interesting people like Christopher Brumfit in London and many others here. Teaching English has also made us somehow share in the viewpoints of more than one culture. This in turn has given us a privileged, contrastive critical attitude to cultural values, and enabled us to criticize them in a balanced way.

After these comments on a general attitude to adopt in our teaching practice, we'd now like to sum up suggestions recently made to improve FLT in the lines sketched so far and thus make it more effective from an educational point of view. The suggestions can be summed up under the expressions "ideological", "responsive" or "discriminating" reading. These expressions, all synonymous with "critical" reading, have been used in an illuminating article by John Holmes, to which we would also like to refer.¹⁴

Critical reading has been greatly emphasized. In fact, it was the theme of the Third National Meeting on Reading, significantly entitled Luta pela Democratização da Leitura no Brasil. The meeting was held in Campinas, São Paulo, in 1981 and was sponsored by the local federal University (UNICAMP) and other educational institutions.

Trying to sum up suggestions of procedures for "ideological reading" we shall first take those concerning the teaching of foreign languages, and then of the respective literatures.

Most works on the subject start with considerations

on the basic fact that makes critical or ideological reading necessary. Ms. Vieira's article¹⁵ recalls the basic premise of the sociology of culture: there is no such thing as an impersonal, neutral text. Quoting Vigner, she emphasizes the difference between objective and "objectified" texts. Objective texts would ideally be neutral, impersonal, faithful records of facts. Indeed, no such texts exist in an absolutely pure state. John Holmes persuasively argues that even the prototype of objective texts — scientific ones — fail to be objective. He quotes studies demonstrating that more often than not scientific research fails to be completely rational. Scientists "choose" facts that confirm their hypotheses: they "protect" their theories. In the Sciences, especially in the Social Sciences, statistical generalizations are often disguised as scientific laws. As other examples of irrationality in the Sciences, Holmes mentions some typical facts: medical science concentrates its efforts on the mechanism of the heart rather than on the prevention of heart disease. Money that should more justifiably go to publicity campaigns goes into heart transplants. So also nuclear rather than solar energy has been used for the production of electricity.¹⁵ What we often have, then, even in scientific discourse, are objectified rather than objective texts: seemingly objective, neutral and impersonal practice disguises the author's ideology and underlying suggestions for action. As Aristotle told us long ago, and speech act theory now reminds us, language is a form of action.

To counteract all this, critical reading, and a number of strategies for its practice, are suggested. For an adequate grasp of their use, we'd like to refer teachers to Holmes and Vieira's papers. For an overall view, I'll try to sum up Beverley A. Lewins's article Reading between the Lines.¹⁶ The paper suggests a number of strategies to help students develop critical reading.

First, a pre-view of the text is recommended. Here material preceding and following the text, besides sub-headings and the amount of text devoted to each subheading, are examined. The importance of each of these elements is emphasized. A provocative title, especially in the form of a question, often indicates an emotional argument rather than an objective text. Intertextual elements — quotes from authoritative sources like the Bible — mark an attempt to stamp the text with authenticity. The bibliography should also be scrutinized. Thus, texts from popular magazines cannot be given the same weight as professional journals, nor governmental statistical sources be put on a par with Ph.D. research. The amount of space devoted to 'pro' and 'con' arguments should also be examined: it may tell a lot about the author's impartiality. Examination of the author's biographic data is no less important: it may indicate whether he has or hasn't got any extra-academic interest in the subject. So also information about periodicals in which texts are published can reveal informative cultural dependencies. Date and place of publication can indicate historical circumstances preventing impartiality. This can

be seen, for instance, in books about Germany and Japan written in the Allied countries during World War II.

For the body of the article itself Lewin's paper suggests that the text should be dealt with at different levels of abstraction. Linguistic clues should be examined first. Words and phrases like of course, it is a fact that, modals like must, should, adjectives, intensifiers, convey emotional appeals and value judgements as against the more cautious modals might, could, adverbs like often, possibly or verbs like believe, assume.

At the next level of abstraction other factors should be considered. Have any facts been omitted from the text under consideration? (Authors may choose only those that confirm their standpoints:) Is the text ironic? (It is of course more difficult to detect irony in a foreign language than in one's own. The ingenuous student tends to take ironic statements at face value.)

As part of the suggested procedures for critical reading, the author of Reading Between the Lines recommends several exercises to develop the students' ability to read critically. The class may be asked to underline rhetorical questions, emotional or judgemental words. Comparison of different reportings of the same event by different newspapers with different ideological bents is another useful exercise. Still another, fit only for advanced students, is to ask them to re-write some polemical material from a different point of view. Some of these exercises may be difficult for certain classes. They may be done in the mother tongue first, before proceeding in English. Educationally, what matters

is the development of the critical attitude. Established in L1, it will hopefully be transferred to L2.

Critical reading can be introduced at any level, even for absolute beginners. I hope to be excused to present, as an example, my own textbook, published under the title A Tour of Brazil.¹⁷ In this book, the conventional formula of having somebody visit the foreign country to introduce linguistic and cultural data has been inverted. Instead, a British anthropologist's visit to Brazil is described. A Brazilian reporter escorts the anthropologist in this visit, showing him Brazil's touristic attractions. A conventionally picturesque vision of the country consequently emerges. However, the anthropologist's notes in his diary, and his wife's letters home, present quite a different point of view. The splendours of Brasília's architecture, for instance, are contrasted with the misery of the migrant workers, the "candangos", who built the great capital and now starve in the satellite towns around it. The international centre of São Paulo is shown to exist at the expense of thousand of workers who are, if not poorer, as poor as others anywhere else in Brazil. Ect.etc.by contrasting such different view points, it is hoped that the texts will lead the students to an increasingly critical attitude. The method has the additional advantage of giving English a definite role in the curriculum: that of integrating the area of language study with that of the social sciences.

Ideological or critical readings can of course be applied to the study of literature as well. As a general

orientation we might adopt the approach recommended by Pedro Lyra.¹⁸ He calls this approach polismo, which could be rendered by integral or comprehensive criticism. Such criticism would not be content with the study of form. After all, even the Formalists in their best moments implied that whether a writer makes perception difficult, by different forms of estrangement, or whether he chooses to make his medium transparent, his aim is all the time to convey a certain way of looking at experience.

According to Lyra, the literary work of art should be analysed at three different levels. The first one, focused on the text itself, is that of literariness. Lyra calls this the essential level, for, without it, the work would not exist as literature. The second is the semantic level, where the writer's ideology is to be found. The aim here is persuasion. Finally, there is the factive level, focused on the reader and aiming at changing his or her behaviour.

This integral criticism can be used both for the foreign and for the national literature. It seems to me that, when the literature studied is a foreign one, the approach should also be contrastive. Whenever possible, reference should be made to the national literature, so that parallels and contrasts may facilitate the unknown by means of what is already known.

I will briefly illustrate this combination of integrative and comparative criticism by suggesting a possible reading of Thackeray's Vanity Fair. The reading should include, besides the analysis of the formal structure of the novel, that of the ideology of the author.

The case is especially interesting: this ideology is at war with itself: character presentation clearly shows this. From one point of view, Becky Sharp, the central female character, is an unscrupulous, immoral creature. A poor dancing-master's daughter, she is brought up by charity at a boarding school. Her predictable fate is to become a governess. In order to evade it she uses her sexual appeal. In her matrimonial and amorous schemes, Becky manages to go virtually through all social classes. Starting out almost as a servant, she first seduces Joseph Sedley, the rich merchant's son. Next she rises to the officer and gentleman level, by marrying Captain Crawley (she could have married his father, Sir Pitt, the baronet, had she only waited a little longer). To betray her husband, she later chooses no other than Lord Steyne, the greater London aristocrat. Becky is described as "a woman without faith, or love of character". Yet, beside her, her friend Amelia, who is said to have "a kind, tender, smiling, gentle, generous heart", fades into insignificance.

A lot has been written to explain Becky's attraction, which contrasts with the moral disgust she might be expected to inspire. To me, what explains it is the extraordinary lucidity which allows her even as an adolescent to analyse the social system she lives in and to defeat it with the only weapons left her. The social origin of Becky's rebellion is explicit in the novel. We are told that her instructors had been "shift and self and poverty". Amelia's "last tutoress", by contrast, had been love.

Becky's lucidity allows her to be the best judge of character in the novel. She is the only one to see Dobbin's merits — and this is the key to the novel's happy end. Thus admiration for goodness somehow saves Becky morally and helps explain her attraction. The courage with which she defies the laws of 19th century society — represented by the great initial scene in which she throws the Johnson's Dictionary through the window — wins the reader's grudging admiration. Nonetheless, the implied author exercises his ambivalence towards the character by punishing her. Only poetic justice explains why Becky never gets the title she had so strongly desired. "She never was Lady Crawley", we are sententiously told. In spite of that, the way she is allowed to work on our imagination shows the author's ideological conflict. He both admires and reproaches Becky, for he judges her by a double standard. One is the nineteenth century law that poor women should remain virtuously poor. The other is his own private ideology, according to which a better social system should be created. Such a system would not force gifted young women to choose between poverty and some sort of prostitution, within or without marriage. Thackeray's ideological conflict thus explains the ambiguity of the character.

Examining Vanity Fair at this ideological level we are reminded of our own novel, Macunaĩma. In spite of the enormous formal and historical gap between the two, our hero without character strikingly resembles Thackeray's heroine. Like her, Macunaĩma goes through all social classes. He is, like her, a picaroon, who never changes behaviour, and

never learns his lesson. Perhaps because there is no lesson to learn, except that the contradictions of society seldom allow us to ally prosperity and innocence. In both novels ideology has a lot to say in order to explain the impact of the characters on the reader's imagination.

With this example, we feel it is time to finish this paper. We hope to have made clear the contribution that an ideological, critical orientation may give to our practice as foreign language teachers. After all, the ability to see critically is the first step towards a sense of justice. This sense, in turn, is the prerequisite to the building of a better world, which all education should aim at.

NOTES

¹The Universal Dictionary of the English Language, 1956 ed.

²R.H. Robins, General Linguistics: An Introductory Survey (London: Longmans, 1967), p. 24.

³Jonathan Culler, Structural Poetics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 144.

⁴Pedro Lyra, Literatura e Ideologia (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1979), p. 41. Here as in the other notes all quotations from Portuguese texts have been translated by myself.

⁵Ronald W. Langacker, "By Way of Introduction," in Language and its Structure (London: Harcourt and Brace, 1976), p. 39.

⁶Estado de Minas (Belo Horizonte), 18 July 1984.

⁷C.R.R. Cury, "A Propósito de Educação e Desenvolvimento Social no Brasil," in Educação e Sociedade, III, no. 9 (1981), p. 157.

⁸Alejo Carpentier, Literatura e Consciência Política na América Latina, trans. Manoel J. Palmeirin (Lisboa: Publicações D. Quixote, 1971), p. 76.

⁹Carpentier, p. 9.

¹⁰Carpentier, p. 94.

¹¹Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira, "Leitura Crítica de um Texto Científico," included in this number of Estudos Germânicos.

¹²Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira. "O Que Existe au-delã do Texto?," in Cadernos PUC-SP:EDUC (Ensino de Línguas), No. 17 (1984),pp. 117- 31.

¹³C.J. Brumfit, "The Role of Methodology in the Training of Teachers of English as a Second Language," in Problems and Principles in English Teaching (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 53.

¹⁴John Holmes "Ensinando Professores a Ler: O Problema da Compreensão de Textos Acadêmicos," in Cadernos de Linguística (Leitura) da PUC de São Paulo, No. 16 (1983).

¹⁵Vieira, "Leitura Crítica."

¹⁶Beverly A. Lewin, "Reading Between the Lines," ELS Journal, 38, No. 2 (April 1984).

¹⁷Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira, A Tour of Brazil, 2 vols. (Belo Horizonte: Editora Vigília Ltda., 1980).

¹⁸Lyra, pp. 157-83.

THE SELF-REFLEXIVE PHILOSOPHY OF ROBINSON JEFFERS

Terry Beers

The poetry of Robinson Jeffers is consistently haunted by a philosophy that seems to insist on the insignificance of humanity, especially when humanity is compared with the natural world. Robinson Jeffers' criticism has long recognized the importance of this philosophy to an understanding of Jeffers' poetry, but critical reactions have differed wildly concerning the success of the haunting. Kenneth Rexroth strongly condemns the poetry and philosophy:

His philosophy I find a mass of contradictions -- high-flown statements indulged in for their melodrama alone, and often essentially meaningless. The constantly repeated gospel that it is better to be a rock than a man is simply an unscrupulous use of language.¹

William Everson is more positive:

In the mature work of his supreme middle years he hurled his indictments and asserted his pronouncements with pulverizing intensity.²

These two positions, despite their different evaluative stances, share a similar approach: they see the poetry as a manifestation of the philosophy; but they also fail to recognize

that the poetry undermines the philosophy even as it is expressed, essentially because it is expressed.

Jeffers' philosophy emerged through narrative works such as "Tamar," "Roan Stallion," and "Thurso's Landing" to eventually become a vision cosmic in scope.³ However, despite the complexity of its poetic expressions, Jeffers was eventually able to clarify it into a convenient scheme:

First: Man also is a part of nature, not a miraculous intrusion. And he is a very small part of a very big universe, that was here before he appeared, and will be long after he has totally ceased to exist.

Second: Man would be better, more sane and more happy, if he devoted less attention and less passion (love, hate, etc.) to his own species and more to non-human nature. Extreme introversion in any single person is a kind of insanity; so it is in a race; and race has always and increasingly spent too much thought on itself and too little on the world outside.

Third: It is easy to see a tree, a rock, a star are beautiful; it is hard to see that people are beautiful unless you consider them as part of the universe -- the divine whole. You cannot judge or value any part except in relation to the whole it is part of.⁴

Jeffers added one more component to his philosophy, a natural deism, or pantheism as Jeffers himself reluctantly named it,⁵ giving his philosophy an essentially four-tenet structure; he also gave it a name, Inhumanism, which was meant to signify the shift of attention Jeffers wanted to achieve, a shift of

for waiting, for standing; the difference is that between positive action and helpless passivity.

The first section of the poem ends with the emergence of a new symbolic pair that builds upon the differences now signified by the sky and the earth; thus the differences between the hawk and humanity are explored:

He is strong and pain is worse to the strong....
The intrepid readiness, the terrible eyes.
The wild God of the world is sometimes merciful to
those
that ask mercy, not often to the arrogant.
You do not know him, you communal people, or you
have forgotten him;
Intemperate and savage, the hawk remembers him;
Beautiful and wild, the hawks, and men that are
dying, remember him (198).

With the exception of the last line, this section of the poem continues to present the hawk as a singular image while the first introduction of humanity is plural, 'people.' The use of the singular hawk would seem to emphasize its independence while the use of the plural 'people' would seem to emphasize humanity's collective dependence. The hawk is characterized by words such as 'strong,' 'intemperate,' 'savage,' and 'arrogant.' Humanity is linked to words like 'mercy,' and 'communal;' humanity also forgets. The words mercy and communal and the action of forgetting seem to imply weakness. Thus the differences of hawk and humanity are governed by significations of independence and dependence and strength and weakness. The introduction of a synthesizing term, 'God,' begins the process

of evaluating these qualities, a process which is to result in the shift of attention away from human values to those of nature.

'The wild God of the world' is a being above both hawk and humanity, the dispenser of mercy, and perhaps the poetic incarnation of the fourth tenet of Jeffers' Inhumanism. As dispenser of mercy this god is also a judge, an evaluator, a signifier for ultimate values. The hawk, unencumbered with communal human affairs — independent, arrogant, strong — remembers this god; the hawk and the god are linked. Humanity, communal and weak, has forgotten him; humanity and god are estranged. Thus there is a third over-riding symbolic pair comprised of transcendent values, signified by the hawk, and merely human values, signified by humanity. The second section of the poem explores this pair further by introducing a new element into the poem, the persona of the poet.

Section two begins: "I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk" (198). This line accomplishes two things: first it introduces a persona into the scene heretofore dominated by the hawk, and second it introduces the hypothetical choice contemplated by that persona. In a sense, the symbolic pairs of the first section are transformed by this line, for the hypothetical choice — that between a hawk and a man — recasts into choices the sky and the earth, the hawk and humanity, and transcendent values and human values. The denouement of the poem, the mercy killing of the hawk by the persona, plays to these choices by describing the transcendent ascension of the hawk's spirit through the

persona's final decision:

I gave him the lead gift in the twilight.
What fell was relaxed,
Owl-downy, soft feminine feathers; but what
Soared: the fierce rush: the night-herons by the flooded
river cried fear at its rising
Before it was quite unsheathed from reality (199).

The hawk is reunited with the heavens; it's strength inspires fear. Behind it, earth bound, is its soft, feminine body. The denouement, then, like the 'wild' god of the first section, serves to emphasize the importance of the first terms of the symbolic pairs Jeffers has given to his poem by celebrating the final return of the hawk to the sky; the celebration of this 'fierce rush' recalls those aspects of Inhumanism that emphasize the importance and the beauty of nature, turning attention away from mankind toward the transcendent, 'wild God of the world.' In one sense, this reading of the poem, in terms of Jeffers' philosophy, would seem to be adequate; however, the first line of the second section calls attention to another element of the poem: it is the only line that seems self-reflexive, that calls attention to itself as language play, and it is this line that undermines a provisional reading of this poem as an assertion of Jeffers' philosophy.

"I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk," on one level, is a assertion consistent with the Jeffers Inhumanist philosophy: it quite matter-of-factly is a statement by the poet's persona of preference for the

world of the not-human. But within this line is the limiting phrase "except the penalties," and this phrase triggers a choice of possible significations that lead to questions about the felicity of expressions that shift attention away from the non-human world.

This line of the poem points to a hypothetical choice: if the persona could choose, he would prefer the hawk to the man, even if the choice extended to homicide. But the condition, "except the penalties," mitigates the bald assertion of such a preference; the penalties for homicide are too severe. However, the mitigating condition is not so easily explained, for the word 'except,' the signifier that indicates the penalties' power over the persona, also conjures the sound of its homophone, 'accept'; here the language of the poem undermines a simple reading: the hypothetical choice between a hawk and humanity is complicated by the simultaneous imposition and defiance of human values.

In more detail, if the signifier 'except' is taken to signify the word 'except,' then the persona is in a weak position: in this case the poet will have, paradoxically, accepted the power of the penalties to prevent an anti-social action, in essence accepting the power of the 'communal people' of the first section of the poem. If instead the signifier 'except' is heard to signify the word 'accept,' a possibility a reader is forced to consider at least provisionally due to the language play of homophones, then the persona is in a stronger position: in this case the poet will have, paradoxically, excepted himself from the power of the penalties

to prevent anti-social action, in essence defying the power of the 'communal people' to influence his actions, while at the same time accepting the penalties themselves.

The importance of this choice is not the eventual decision that comes from it -- in fact the particular choice between man and hawk is hypothetical; the persona never actually makes this particular choice despite the fact that it foreshadows the eventual choice between life and death that the persona makes on behalf of the wounded hawk. Instead, the importance of this choice is that it focuses attention back to the persona himself and the philosophy he would seem to assert. If the persona is influenced by the penalties he accepts the human world and its values by avoiding a particular action; if he is not prevented by the penalties from a particular action, he still is forced to accept the human world and its values by virtue of the fact that he has chosen to accept the penalties themselves. In either case, what becomes clear is that the language play -- the ambiguous signifier 'except' -- has forced attention away from the values of the 'wild God of the world' and toward the values of humanity. In a sense, the symbolic pairs of the first section, with their first terms privileged by their association with the inhuman world, have been overturned: the fact of language use has thrust the world of humanity into the field of attention; it is no longer nature that possesses values but humanity that bestows them. The hawk -- with all the tenets of Inhumanism that he might be seen to signify -- yields his position of privilege to mankind who assumes the role of evaluator.

"Hurt Hawks" is thus a complicated assertion of a philosophy that is undermined, in a sense, by the very fact that it is expressed in language. And the simultaneity of this process is not only an aspect of Jeffers' poetry; when Jeffers chose the name Inhumanism for his philosophy he was essentially engaging in the same linguistic give and take, for while the name Inhumanism was meant to signify the importance of the 'not-human,' the word undermines itself by calling attention to its own use as language: an unusual and value-significant word like Inhumanism asserts its human origins and recalls the definition of man as a symbol making animal. Thus there seems to be a certain irony to Jeffers' philosophy, an irony that is signified in his poetry and that lends the poetry an indeterminate ambiguity that enriches reading. Rexroth's petulant charge that the assertion that it is a better thing to be a rock than a man is an "unscrupulous use of language" seems to lose its force; it is precisely because it is a use of language that Jeffers poetry and philosophy question their own assertions.

Hurt Hawks

I

The broken pillar of the wing jags from the clotted shoulder,
The wing trails like a banner in defeat,
No more to use the sky forever but live with famine
And pain a few days: cat nor coyote
Will shorten the week of waiting for death, there is game with-
out talons.

He stands under the oak-bush and waits
The lame feet of salvation; at night he remembers freedom
And flies in a dream, the dawns ruin it.
He is strong and pain is worse to the strong, incapacity is worse.
The curs of the day come and torment him
At distance, no one but death the redeemer will humble that head.
The intrepid readiness, the terrible eyes.
The wild God of the world is sometimes merciful to those
That ask mercy, not often to the arrogant.
You do not know him, you communal people, or you have forgotten
him;
Intemperate and savage, the hawk remembers him;
Beautiful and wild, the hawks, and men that are dying, remember
him.

II

I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk; but
the great redtail
Had nothing left but unable misery
From the bones too shattered for mending, the wing that
trailed under his talons when he moved.
We had fed him six weeks, I gave him freedom,
He wandered over the foreland hill and returned in the evening,
asking for death,
Not like a beggar, still eyed with the old
Implacable arrogance. I gave him the lead gift in the twilight.
What fell was relaxed,
Owl-downy, soft feminine feathers, but what
Soared: the fierce rush: the night- herons by the flooded river
cried fear at its rising
Before it was quite unsheathed from reality (189-199).

NOTES

¹Kenneth Rexroth, "In Defense of Robinson Jeffers," Saturday Review of Literature (August 10, 1957), 30.

²Brother Antoninus (William Everson), Fragments of an Older Fury (Bekerley: Oyez Press, 1968) 59.

³For a complete explication of Jeffers' emergent philosophy consult: Arthur B. Coffin, Robinson Jeffers: Poet of Inhumanism (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1971); for a full exploration of the philosophical roots of Inhumanism refer to: Radcliffe Squires, The Loyalties of Robinson Jeffers (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1956).

⁴Robinson Jeffers, The Selected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, ed. Ann N. Ridgeway (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968) 291.

⁵Robinson Jeffers, Themes in My Poems (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1956) 23-24.

⁶Robinson Jeffers, Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers (New York: Random House, 1959) 198. All subsequent page references in the text will refer to this specific edition.

THE ELEGY AS A SEPARATE GENRE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE:
MILTON'S "LYCIDAS" AND DYLAN THOMAS' "FERN HILL".

Thaís Flores Nogueira Diniz

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.

William Wordsworth

INTRODUCTION

John Milton's "Lycidas" and Dylan Thomas' "Fern Hill" are quite different poems. "Lycidas" was written in 1637; in an age of religious controversies in which the Puritans took the offensive, turning the temper of the times towards violence and coarseness. Milton dominated this Puritan side of the contest and used Poetry as well as Prose to perform his duty. In his attempt to fuse into one the spirit of the Renaissance and of the Reformation, to unite the art of Antiquity with the moral ardour of the Bible, he shows in his poems an intermingling of the two elements: Paganism and Christianity, Nature and Religion.¹ "Fern Hill" was written in 1946, in an age of pessimism due to the trauma of the two world wars. Psychology, the attack on traditional Christian views, and the advance of Science as an agent of transformation of the world were also factors responsible for this mood that pervaded the literature

of the time and Dylan Thomas' work. However, his poems are famous for their sound effects, achieved by his magistral use of language. Nevertheless these two poems written in different form, in different ages, in different styles have something in common: both lament a loss, and it is in this direction that I have guided my work. The purpose of this paper is to analyse "Lycidas" and "Fern Hill" as elegies, and to compare the devices used by both authors in their composition.

THE ELEGY: LAMENT AND CELEBRATION

Elegy, from Greek elegia, means lament. According to the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, elegy is a "lyric, usually formal in tone and diction, suggested either by the death of an actual person or by the poet's contemplation of the tragic aspects of life."² "Lycidas" is a poem suggested by the death of a friend and "Fern Hill" is suggested by the poet's contemplation of time passing, lost childhood, indeed tragic aspects of life. "In either case, the emotion, originally expressed as a lament, finds consolation in the contemplation of some permanent principle."³ The permanent principle that brings consolation to Milton is his assurance of resurrection, but Dylan Thomas is pessimistic. For him the process from childhood to adulthood is irreversible, there is no solution for it.

According to Coleridge, elegy "is the form of poetry natural of the reflexive mind which may treat of any subject, if it does so with reference to the poet himself. In a narrow sense, an elegy is a song of lamentation for the dead."⁴

The term elegy in Greek literature referred both to a specific verse form (couplets consisting of a hexameter followed by a pentameter line) called "distich form" and to the emotions conveyed by that form. Originally any poem in this form was known as an elegy if it concerned the dead, dealt with love, was a war song or a political satire. The Latin elegy was initially distinguished from other literary genres by the meter mentioned above, the tone of complaint, and themes related to love and death.

Many Renaissance poets who tried to write the quantitative verse of the classical distich failed, and the term was used in the 16th and 17th Centuries for poems with a variety of content, including laments. The connection between elegy and death was made clearer with the title of one section from Donne's An Anatomy of the World, "Funeral Elegy," but it was Milton's pastoral elegy "Lycidas" which helped to establish the elegy, a lament for the dead, as a separate genre in England. Although the boundaries between elegy and elegiac verse (meditative and reflexive verse) are sharp, a distinction is made between them.

There is no specific form by which an elegy can be characterized, because what defines an elegy, as we have stated, is tone and subject matter.

"Lycidas" is written in eleven verse-paragraphs with different number of lines in each. Structurally the first two paragraphs form the Introduction of the poem. In this part, although referring to Edward King's death, the poet sees the possibility of his own death. Paragraphs 3, 4, 5

and 6 form the first part in which the poet laments Lycidas' death, regrets that the Muse could not protect him, and shows the first cause for his own pain: the chance of his own death before his work could be completed. Seventh and eighth paragraphs form the second part. In elegiac tradition, various persons come to visit the dead body: Arethuse, the fountain, Mincius, the river, Triton, Neptune, Hippotades (all of them personified). This part also shows, by denouncing the existence of bad priests, the second cause of Milton's pain: a quarrel with the contemporary English Church. The climax of the poem is at the end of this part, when Milton states his quarrel with life (a parallel to his quarrel with the Church). The third part consists of the ninth paragraph. It is like a link, changing the mood from terror into comfort. The conclusion of the whole poem includes the tenth and eleventh paragraphs. It describes Lycidas' resurrection and his going to heaven. Above all, this part "describes renunciation of earthly fame, the abnegation of self by the great egoist and the spiritual purgation of gaining one's life after losing it."⁵

"Fern Hill" is written in a very strict form. The poem is constructed by six nine-line stanzas, with only an infrequent rhyme. The stanza form is original and more easily understood after hearing. Sound and rhythm indicates which words and ideas are linked. The pattern is maintained: the corresponding lines in every stanza have the same number of syllables. Only in the sixth and seventh stanzas is there some relaxation. This elaborated sound structure is not maintained at the expense of meaning.

but as a method of controlling sense. Concerning meaning, the structure of the poem does not consist of the usual technical devices but of the repetition in the last stanzas of motifs presented in the first ones. These are: the motif of careless mood of childhood, the motif of pleasure in this situation, and the motif of time's action, by which the situation becomes a fate.⁶ They are not worked out with regularity, and their place and order are not formally observed.

As in all the elegies, lament and celebration sound throughout the poems.

In "Lycidas" we have lament for the friend's death, and celebration for the assurance of his resurrection. In "Fern Hill" the poet celebrates life, childhood, the age of innocence and happiness, and laments death, the loss of childhood.

Milton's poem, as many modern elegies which found their models in the subject matter of pastoral laments, mourns King's death within the traditional framework of the Pastoral Elegy, a literary convention dating back to the Greek Theocritus, but especially indebted to Virgil's Ecloque that laments the death of the Roman poet Gallus. The essence of the pastoral convention in literature lies in its use of the restricted world of shepherds to comment on the complex universal world. The poet reflects the real world in the mirror of the shepherd's life. The various elements that constitute a Pastoral Elegy (Invocation,

Statement of Grief, Inquiry into the causes of death, Sympathy and weeping of nature, Procession of mourners, Lament, Climax, Change of mood, and Consolation) are all present in "Lycidas."

Following this traditional convention of the pastoral, elements of nature appear, not only mourning the death of the shepherd as in the fourth paragraph but also accepting death as a fact. Milton says that all nature is mourning: desert caves full of wild rhyme, woods and the gadding vine; he says that the willows and hazels are sad; and predicts destruction by saying that roses, herds and flowers will be destroyed as Lycidas.

Nature in Thomas' poem is not used as an element of the pastoral but as a metaphor which helps to build a line from innocence to experience. In the first two stanzas the farm scene suggests sunlight, happiness: Thomas talks about "apple boughs above youth and easiness," "starry night and trail with daisies and barley." At the end, the farm cannot be re-visited, it is "for ever fled from the childless land."

In any age, the college days of a young man are thought to have something like a pastoral quality — from mature life men look back at that time as being more care-free, and at their relationship then as having been more generous, disinterested, and comradely than now. Milton says that he and King were "nurs'd upon the self-same hill." Although Thomas is not referring specifically to college days but to his childhood, he says in a vivid tone, looking back towards this age, that he "was young and carefree."

In "Lycidas" the poet is not speaking in his own person but in the guise of a shepherd or "swain." Lycidas is the name of a shepherd in Theocritus' Idyll and also a speaker in the Ninth Eclogue of Virgil. The fictional nature of the pastoral was always taken for granted: nobody was supposed to believe that the herdsmen were real, and in charge of actual flocks. But fiction engaged men's imagination because it fulfilled a real human desire while speaking about simplicity and innocence, youth and beauty, love and art.

Although in "Fern Hill" the poet does not speak in the guise of a shepherd, he also praises the fictional nature of childhood, also with its characteristic simplicity and innocence, youth and beauty.

Milton speaks of King's death and rebirth evoking death and rebirth or young gods and mythological figures such as Satyrs, representing luxuriant forces of nature, and Fauns who dance symbolizing the act of creation. The direct reference to Orpheus may be understood at least in two ways since he symbolizes the poetic genius: The poet states that even he, a poet, could not be prevented from dying; on the other hand Orpheus' head, floating, suggests a terrible confrontation with death. Amaryllis and Neaera symbolize the sensualist side of man, the part that is mortal, and Fury, the "Fate," who "cuts man's life," reminds him of his mortality. Then Apollo, the sun-god, appears as a symbol of inspiration, reminding man of his

immortality. Apollo is also seen as a Christ figure and as the first allusion of non-pagan mythology. From this point in the text the figures that appear always stand for immortality: Arethuse (symbol of perfection and virtue), Neptune (god of fertilizing waters) and Hippotades (god of the winds, representing movement, life). So towards the end of the poem, terrible images suggesting death (beheaded Orpheus, Amaryllis, Neaera, Fury) give way to images suggesting life (Apollo, Arethuse, Neptune, Hippotades, etc.). Little by little, as the poem moves towards its conclusion, pagan and Christian elements are mingled. The sudden introduction of Christian personages fulfils the purpose of attacking the corrupt clergy of the time. Milton makes biblical allusion such as John X, 1 to compare priests' activities to a robber's "creeping and intruding, and climbing into the fold." In the last two paragraphs, pastoral images give way to Christian ones, and many of them are related to resurrection: Lycidas is not sunk, but "mounted high" like Christ who "walked the waves" (Mat. XIV, 26). The "nuptial song" (Rev. XIX, 19) is referred to symbolizing the union of silence and song, of death and eternal life. The biblical allusion in the passage: "and wipe the tears for ever from his eyes" refers also to resurrection, when God will finish up all suffering (Rev. VII, 17 and Rev. XXI, 4). Only in the last lines, Milton returns to the pastoral tradition referring to the song of the "uncouth swain."

In "Fern Hill" the myth of Eden appears in the first stanza, when Dylan Thomas describes his "golden age" and uses

words such as "apple boughs" as images of Paradise, of Eden. Here everything is lilted and brilliant and he, then a child, was like a prince, "honoured among wagons," and like a lord, "having trees and leaves." The Fall has not yet disturbed the Paradise in the fourth stanza, when the poet refers to the virgin (maiden) and to Adam, the figure of innocence, the first "man conceived as a vast representation of the power of the Universe."⁷ The world appears glorious to the boy as Eden did to Adam. Fall appears in the last two stanzas: although all is still gentle and melodic, terror has become overwhelming as death, represented by the "chains", "the shadow of my hand" and the "childless land."

The line from innocence to experience, referred to previously, can be supported by the idea of time in "Fern Hill". In the first stanza, time is kind and permissive. It does not matter for the boy. "Once below a time" connotes a child's unawareness of immortality, of the time passing. In the second stanza, time shows "his" power, letting him "play and be golden," although the child is still ignorant of time and mortality. In the fifth stanza, a taint of awareness begins to appear when time allows some song before "the children follow him out of grace." Evil is suggested when time "would take the child up to the loft." But in the last stanza, time makes the child wake to a "farm forever fled from the childless land," that is, awake to death, to adult and experienced life, aware of his

being mortal. Time has passed, he is an adult, death is close.

Time in "Lycidas" is worked out in a very different way. Cyclical life, death and rebirth, may be supported by the use of time in the poem. In the first paragraph, the idea of past time is clear with a tone of sorrow for everything having been ended before the adequate hour, like "berries plucked crude" and "leaves shattered before the mellowing year." The second paragraph shows present time, the author's awareness of his present life and his future death, expressed by the feeling that a "gentle muse may favour" his "destined urn." The third paragraph gives the idea of movement of time, of progress of time through images of growth and maturity, and also through allusion to progress of a day (morn, noon, night) culminating with the rise of the evening star. In the fourth paragraph with a tone of despair reflected by images of destruction such as "canker," "worm" and "frost," the terrible sensation of a future death is implicit. The eighth paragraph begins in a tone of despair with a question against time: Why must man go unready? But in the tenth paragraph a tone of hope arises: "Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more, for Lycidas, your sorrow is not dead," and the image of sunset, of the sun "sinking in the ocean bed," helps to limit time. This tone of hope grows in lines 179-181 with the promise of eternity implicit in the continuity of "sweet societies singing and singing" and in the everlasting comfort suggested by God wiping "for ever the tears from his eyes." At the end of the poem, after having performed

his duty of mourning his friend, the poet turns back to life and to his future purposes: "Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

"Lycidas" is an elegy written as a lament to the poet's friend who was drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, "Fern Hill" is an elegy in praise of the poet's lost youth, but the particularity of the cause of grief in both poems is lost in a sorrow which speaks for all men, in a universal feeling. In "Lycidas", Milton associates King's death, and implicitly his own death, with a long tradition in which the deaths of young men had been lamented. He does not try to achieve a personal expression of feeling, but a universal emotion, a pathos of untimely death. In "Fern Hill," the nostalgic remembrance of a child's farm holiday is only the starting point. The poet is overtaken by this memory and his words become a vehicle for expressing not only homesickness but a universal longing for lost youth, a universal and human desire for life.

CONCLUSION

"Lycidas" and "Fern Hill" present lament in several tones: sadness, longing, despair, complaint, sorrow, etc., which are expressed through images of night, darkness, decay, shadow, sleep, etc. Celebration is found in both poems: "Lycidas" celebrates King's future resurrection and "Fern Hill" celebrates the poet's Golden Age. It is presented in tones of

vividness, hope, happiness, joy, etc. through images of light, birth, music, movement, sound, etc. which stand for life, either in form of rebirth or in form of childhood. But indeed what these two poems lament and celebrate is not restricted to personal experiences. Above all, they speak about lament and celebration in a universal way. What they lament is not Lycidas' death or the lost farm, but universal death and loss. What they celebrate is not only Lycidas' resurrection or the lilted farm of Thomas' boyhood. They celebrate life in a universal way. Both poems may be defined as elegies. Myths and time were worked up in both poems to reinforce the idea of the main elements of all elegies which have been pointed out: lament, celebration and universality.

NOTES

¹Cf. Emile Legouis, A Short History of English Literature, (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1971), p.165.

²Alex Preminger ed., Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 215.

³Ibid., p. 215.

⁴The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature, Dorothy Eagle rev., (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 168.

⁵E.M.W. Tillyard, Milton, (Penguin Books - Chatto & Windus, 1968). p. 74.

⁶C.F. Derek Stanford, Dylan Thomas, (London: Neville Spearman, 1954), pp. 111-112.

⁷J.E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 4.

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JOHN RUSKIN & THE PATHETIC FALLACY: A CRITIQUE

Thomas LaBorie Burns

The Pathetic Fallacy has had some currency in modern literary criticism and it is interesting to see where the discussion originated. John Ruskin, 19th century writer and art critic, introduced the concept in a self-contained essay, "Of The Pathetic Fallacy" in his Modern Painters, vol. iii, pt. IV (1856). The essay begins in a typically rancorous fashion:

German dulness and English affectation have of late multiplied among us the use of two of the most objectionable words that were ever coined by the troublesomeness of metaphysicians -- namely, 'Objective' and 'Subjective'.

This one-two to the jaw of Anglo-Saxon thought may seem at first to have Kant as its target, but, as we shall see, British empiricism is not meant to go unscathed. The contrast between objective and subjective had been made in the Middle Ages and was made in new ways since the 17th century, with a very complex subsequent history.¹ This initial distinction, though it seems to lead into a philosophical by-way, is really to the point: the pathetic fallacy, according to Ruskin, is very much a failure in distinguishing between out-there and in-here.

The subjective-objective problem is, to be sure, one of the cruxes of Western metaphysics. Ruskin takes the "realist" position, launching an attack on "idealism", which in the most succinct form, might be summarized as "To be is to be perceived". He distinguishes between subjective and objective qualities of things, following the scheme of primary and secondary qualities established by John Locke. Like most realists, Ruskin supposes it an easy matter to dispose of idealism by simply denying its validity. He assumes an objective reality which idealists since Plato have taken pains to call into question. One of the most ingenious exponents of this position, George Berkeley, argues that a tree crashing in a distant forest makes no sound at all if there is no one near enough to hear it fall, which to realists seems fantastic. What Berkeley means, if I understand him correctly, is that "sound" means precisely physical vibrations producing a sensation in a hearer. The world and its objects, then, exist only if they are perceived. Though this argument was ridiculed and parodied, it was never, so far as I know, seriously refuted.

Ruskin contributes very little to the argument. He makes two statements; first, that a blue flower "does not procure the sensation of blueness if you don't look at it" (thus far agreeing with Berkeley), and, second, that the flower is always blue because it "has always the power" of producing a blue sensation. This seems to me so imprecise as to dodge the issue. Is the flower really blue in itself? Berkeley would say it is in so far as it is perceived by someone as being so, which is just what blueness means. Ruskin's second

statement seems to mean no more than his first, namely that the flower is blue when you look at it, since the power of evincing blueness cannot be known without it being tested, i.e. without perception. Ruskin then contrasts true and false appearances, saying the latter are unconnected with anything in the object itself and are due to difficulties in the perceiver. But, one may object, that also could be true of a "true" appearance. By what means can one distinguish between one and the other? It was Berkeley's great merit to abolish the need for such a distinction since all appearances are by definition subjective. As to what the connection is between the thing itself and its appearance, philosophy would have to wait for Kant, who proposed that objective reality is known only so far as it conforms to the structure of the mind, which he analysed in detail, a position that is essentially idealist.

Ruskin's method in the essay is to proceed by making a statement, followed by an example illustrating his meaning, and concluding with another more refined statement to clinch the argument. The opening statement is typically a dogmatic assertion designed to shock or wake up the reader, like the paragraph that begins the essay, quoted above. Thus, Ruskin, getting into his real subject, says that our favorite poetry is full of what is pleasureable but untrue — which is Plato's position — and furthermore, Ruskin thinks that we like it all the more for being untrue, which he never really demonstrates, at least in this essay. After this salvo, he quotes a line about the sea as the "cruel, crawling foam" and dubs it a pathetic fallacy, since "the foam is not cruel,

neither does it crawl." He thinks an image becomes fallacious or false when it is produced by violent feelings, which must be kept under control. What merely looks like a transferred epithet, a common-place in poetry, thus becomes the pathetic fallacy.

It it is Ruskin's intention to shock, he might be said to succeed, since one immediate reaction is that if things are not allowed to have human characteristics transferred to them, as in certain figures of speech, poetic language is in danger. But Ruskin reassures us that the pathetic fallacy is only indulged in by second-rate poets, since "the greatest poets do not often admit this kind of falseness." Evidently, he does not number poets like Keats among the greatest. In any case, the example he uses to prove his point is flawed. He compares Dante's line about spirits falling "as dead leaves flutter from a bough" to Coleridge's "The one red leaf, the last of its clan/That dances as often as dance it can". He pronounces the latter false on the grounds that the poet imagines there is human life in the leaf, when there is not, while Dante's lines are not fallacious because the poet is aware all the time that there are leaves on one hand and souls on the other. Ruskin ignores however, the difference between the two figures: Dante's line is a simile, a figure that calls attention to two unlike terms of comparison, while Coleridge's lines constitute a metaphor, which disguises the difference. Perhaps Ruskin just means that Dante's line is better poetry. This is a view corroborated by a long following footnote in

which Ruskin launches a tirade against the "sin" of bad poetry. Curiously, he seems to think that poets deliberately write badly, or he is unaware that poets often think their poetry good when there is general agreement that it is not. Since most bad verse is probably written through ignorance or incompetence, and will soon be forgotten if it is ever read, it is hardly a case for moral outrage.

In Ruskin's next illustration, he quotes a passage in the Odyssey where Odysseus greets his ex-companion Elpinor in Hades and expresses surprise at the speed with which Elpinor arrived. Ruskin then quotes Pope's translation of this passage, which is considerably less economical than in Homer, and excoriates Pope for being false to the emotion that Odysseus presumably feels. That he has elaborated on Homer's words does not necessarily mean that Pope has falsified the emotional content of the passage. It may mean nothing more than that Homer and Pope are different kinds of poets, or that an 18th century English translation in heroic couplets may well be different from an 8th century B.C. Greek epic in dactylic hexameters. So it is an unjust conclusion, and a false one as well, if we are admirers of Pope's poetry, to say that "No poet of true imaginative power could possibly have written the passage."

An oft-quoted part of Ruskin's essay is that in which he enumerates the three ways of perceiving: a man who perceives rightly but without feeling; a man who perceives wrongly, but with feeling; and a man who perceives rightly "in spite of his feelings". The first is the mode of the unpoetic, the second of bad poets, and the third of true poets. What Ruskin

seems to be doing in the essay is to argue for the kind of poetry that is satisfying to both intellect and emotions. Either the greatest poetry has just that kind of satisfaction, or he is trying to get us to see that good poetry cannot really falsify, whatever its emotional content. He evidently believes that poetry must be factually accurate in the interest of truth and the best kind of poetry occurs when emotions are held in check. If a poet gets emotionally involved with his own poetry, it will be consequently bad, as he may be subject to the pathetic fallacy. But surely what matters is not what the poet is feeling when he writes the poem but how the finished version of the poem turns out, since it is by that, and not the poet's emotional states, that the reader will be directly affected. Ruskin seems to give more importance to the personality of the poet than he should. So the "high creative poet" (his greatest type) is emotionally impassive and stands serenely aside and "watches the feeling, as it were, from far off." Ruskin may be saying here what Eliot would say later about great poetry being impersonal, an escape from personality, but his restrictions seem arbitrary and his categories mere abstractions of his personal tastes.

To contrast the pathetic fallacy with what is a perfectly accurate and adequate poetic description, Ruskin quotes some lines that describe a man desiring that his body be cast into the sea: "Whose changing mound, and foam that passed away/might mock the eye that questioned where I lay". One might suppose that the word "mock" is transferred to the unthinking waves and therefore an example of pathetic fallacy, but Ruskin

assures us that it may mean simply "deceive" and imply no "impersonation". One might ask, however, why that particular word was chosen with its strong associations of human emotion. The expression "passed away", which Ruskin thinks strictly literal, may also have the meaning of "died", something else that cannot happen to waves. The lines may be said to be good, but they are not totally devoid of pathetic content and they do not "limit their expression to the pure fact", Ruskin's rather curious critereon for good poetry.

Ruskin's remarks do reveal, however, what he seems to be driving at: poetry must avoid the "poetic" in the bad sense if it is to have power. But it is hardly a critical revelation to say that for poetry to be good it must avoid being bad. And bad for Ruskin is lack of emotional control:

A poet is great, first in proportion to the strength of his passion, and then, that strength being granted, in proportion to his government of it...

We recognize a truth in this, perhaps the same one Pound is anxious to impart when he tells poets that they must write verse which is at least as good as good prose. Yet Ruskin is not raising a cry for better technique but castigating what he considers false or inadequate feeling. As he could hardly find fault with the technique of a poet as good as Pope, he is content to call him "cold-hearted" and compares him unfavorably to Wordsworth, which is ad hominem and worthless toward making a critical point.

Ruskin says that the pathetic fallacy, which he nowhere

satisfactorily defines, is a sign of weakness. He defines the fallacy by its alleged effects instead of showing just how it brings about those effects. In a final paragraph, however, Ruskin neatly summarizes what he has been saying in the second part of his essay:

... the pathetic fallacy is powerful only so far as it is pathetic; feeble so far as it is fallacious...

The first part of the statement shows that he does find a place for extreme emotions, and he does in fact make a reference or two to the prophetic. He even admits to the attractive power of unrestrained imagery, though he thinks it of an inferior kind to that which is checked by a fidelity to truth. The problem is that his conception of truth is that of a rather prosaic realism.

The second part of the statement, that the pathetic fallacy is feeble so far as it is fallacious, seems to mean that if it is "true" it is powerful. This is a way of saying that the pathetic fallacy is allowable if it is truly pathetic; that is to say, if it works, and not, if it does not. This is saying nothing at all, especially when we remember that what Ruskin has not done in the essay is to show how poetry can be fallacious other than by not being prosaically true. The term "pathetic fallacy" is an amalgamation of a psychological and a logical term, which may be what is wrong with it and why it is difficult to define. Nowadays, it means something like "the application of human feelings to the

inanimate world,"² a device which poetry can hardly do without. Even Homer, one of Ruskin's great impassive poets, has expressions like "ships that joy in the wind."

NOTES

¹Raymond Williams, Keywords - A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (Glasgow: Fontana books, 1976), pp. 256-264.

²Joseph T. Shipley, Editor, Dictionary of World Literature, New Revised edition, (Totowa: Littlefield, Adams, 1972), p. 301.

CONSIDERAÇÕES SOBRE AS DIFICULDADES ENCONTRADAS NA TRADUÇÃO
DE TEXTOS CIENTÍFICOS EM LÍNGUA ALEMÃ PARA O PORTUGUÊS*

Veronika Benn-Ibler

No presente trabalho gostaria de abordar alguns aspectos morfo-sintáticos da língua alemã que precisam ser considerados ao se iniciar uma tradução para a língua portuguesa. A minha experiência nessa área de pesquisa está vinculada, principalmente, a textos científicos, em especial ao campo das Ciências Médicas, sendo portanto este o tipo de texto que pretendo apresentar aqui. Vejamos o seguinte período de um artigo de uma revista médica alemã, a Münchner Medizinische Wochenschrift (Semanário de Medicina de Munique), intitulado "A síndrome reumática do hipotiroidismo num sentido mais restrito".

Tradução interlinear

Tradução

¹Nach Ausschluss aller Fälle von
Após exclusão todos casos de

Excluídos todos os casos de

²Hypothyrose bei denen sich
hipotiroidismo em que se

hipotiroidismo em que os

* Comunicação apresentada como parte de mesa redonda na Semana de Estudos sobre a "Problemática da Tradução", promovida pelo Laboratório de Tradução da FALE/UFMG, em outubro/novembro de 1984. Essa comunicação dirigiu-se a um público, em sua maioria, não-falante da língua alemã.

- ³ rheumatische Stigmata auf bekannte
reumáticos estigmas de conhecidas
estigmas reumáticos decorren
tes de conhecidas doenças
- ⁴ entzündliche oder nichtentzündliche
inflammatorias ou não-inflama-
tórias do quadro reumáti-
co e, (aqueles casos) onde
não há sinais mais evidentes
- ⁵ Krankheiten des rheumatischen
doenças de reumático
- ⁶ Formenkreises zurückführen lassen
quadro deduzir podem
de uma miopatia de hipoti-
roidismo,
- ⁷ oder bei denen keine gröberen
ou nos casos mais evidentes
resta um grupo de pacientes
- ⁸ Anzeichen für eine hypothyrote
sinais para uma de hipotiroidismo
com uma síndrome não especĩ-
- ⁹ Myopathie vorliegen, verbleibt
miopatia presentes sopra
fica. Esta porém reage pron-
- ¹⁰ ein Rest von Patienten mit
um resto de pacientes com
tamente a uma terapia de
- ¹¹ unspezifischer Symptomatik, die
não-específica síndrome que
substituição adequada, na base
- ¹² jedoch auf eine adäquate
porém a uma adequada
de hormônios da tiróide, (pos
- ¹³ Substituitonstherapie mit
terapia de substituição com
sibilitando, assim), o desapa

¹⁴Schilddrüsenhormonen **prompt**
hormônios de tiróide prontamente recimento completo e prolonga-

¹⁵anspricht, vollständig und
reage completo e do (daqueles sintomas não-espe

¹⁶dauerhaft verschwindet.
prolongado desaparece.¹ cíficos).²

Ressalta aos olhos a extensão desse período, de construção altamente hipotática e, por isto, de difícil tradução. Trata-se de um período típico da linguagem científica alemã. A sua recodificação só é possível, dividindo-o em unidades sintáticas menores. A oração principal situa-se no meio do período, nas linhas 9 a 11 da coluna à esquerda, e é a seguinte: "verbleibt ein Rest von Patienten mit unspezifischer Symptomatik"/ "resta um grupo de pacientes com uma síndrome não-específica". Gostaria de chamar a atenção aqui para uma das orações relativas (linhas 11 a 15): "die jedoch auf eine adäquate Substitutionstherapie mit Schilddrüsenhormonen prompt anspricht"/ "ESTA porém reage prontamente a uma terapia de substituição adequada, na base de hormônios de tiróide". Na tradução proposta não foi formulada uma oração relativa, mas iniciou-se um novo período com o pronome demonstrativo "esta", uma vez que o relativo "que" em português cria ambigüidade neste caso. Ele pode referir-se tanto à "síndrome" quanto ao "grupo de pacientes", sendo

que na língua de partida, pelo fato do pronome relativo conter marca de gênero, número e caso, esta ambigüidade não existe. "Die" que substitui o seu antecedente "Symptomatik" é feminino, "Rest" é masculino, se a oração relativa estivesse vinculada a "Rest" o pronome relativo na língua de partida seria "der", que é uma forma do relativo masculino.

O elemento-chave de uma oração em língua alemã é o verbo. Numa oração independente que não seja nem interrogativa e nem imperativa, ele ocupa sempre a segunda posição. Isso facilita a sua identificação e, conseqüentemente, a dos complementos que o antecedem e a dos que o sucedem. Por exemplo:

(Vide quadro a seguir)

Vitamin C hat keinen Einfluss auf die Anfälligkeit

A Vitamina C tem não influência sobre a propensão

A Vitamina C não influi sobre a propensão a doença

Keinen Einfluss hat Vitamin C auf die Anfälligkeit gegen

Auf die Anfälligkeit gegen Krankheiten hat Vitamin C keinen Einfluss.

O verbo transitivo "haben" que está na terceira pessoa do singular, sō admite um sujeito no singular, no caso, "Vitamin C". Ele rege um objeto direto "keinen Einfluss". Essa função sintática do complemento do verbo é indicada pelo morfema do caso acusativo, masculino, singular -en.

Também em frases curtas, como é a que acaba de ser mencionada, a análise de unidades sintáticas menores é essencial, uma vez que em língua alemã a ordem das palavras na oração, exceto o verbo, é bastante livre. O deslocamento do objeto direto para a primeira posição:

"keinen Einfluss hat Vitamin C auf die Anfälligkeit gegen Krankheiten",

ou do objeto preposicionado:

"Auf die Anfälligkeit gegen Krankheiten hat Vitamin C keinen Einfluss".

ocorre freqüentemente e tem efeito estilístico. Estão implícitos, aĩ, conteúdos emocionais que dependem de motivações externas à linguagem, mas que precisam ser captados pela tradução. No exemplo mencionado, que é parte de um estudo sobre Vitaminas, é natural que o autor tenha preferido a ordem Sujeito-Verbo-Complemento.

Se, por um lado, a posição fixa do verbo na língua alemã é uma ajuda para o tradutor, por outro, ela se torna problemática quando estamos diante de verbos separáveis; isto é, de

verbos que contêm uma partícula que nas formas flexionadas aparece isolada do verbo, no fim da oração. É justamente esta partícula, que pode ser uma preposição ou um advérbio, que confere ao verbo que está na segunda posição, um novo sentido. No caso da linguagem científica que se caracteriza, como foi visto anteriormente, por períodos longos, isso constitui um problema, porque somente no fim da oração é possível depreender o sentido do verbo que em português já vem explícito mais no início da oração. Vejamos o exemplo a seguir:

Krankheiten bestimmter innerer Organe lösen neben einem lokalen einen sogenannten Übertragenen Schmerz in bestimmten Haut-bzw. Muskelregionen aus.⁴

Doenças de determinados órgãos internos causam em determinadas regiões da pele ou dos músculos além de uma dor local uma dor denominada reflexo.

O verbo "lösen" significa em português "solucionar". O verbo "auslösen" traduz-se por "causar". No exemplo acima sobressai nitidamente o erro em que pode incorrer uma tradução que não considere esta característica sintática da língua alemã.

Nas orações com verbos modais e nas orações subordinadas repete-se o mesmo caso, o verbo que determina o sentido vem no fim da oração.

Vejamos então um exemplo com verbo modal:

Der Arzt kann eine Diagnose auf Grund seiner Kenntnisse über Aetiologie und Pathogenese stellen.

O médico pode fazer um diagnóstico baseado em seus conhecimentos de etiologia e patogênese.⁵

Agora um exemplo com oração subordinada:

Todesfälle , die durch Krankheiten des Herzens und der Kreislauforgane, an bösartigen Geschwülsten oder an Gefäßstörungen des Zentralnervensystems eintreten, haben in den letzten Jahren erheblich zugenommen.

Casos fatais que ocorrem devido a doenças cardíacas e dos órgãos circulatórios, (devido a) tumores malignos ou a distúrbios dos vasos sanguíneos do sistema nervoso central, aumentaram consideravelmente nos últimos anos.

No que diz respeito à partícula separável do verbo, o falante nativo, a certa altura da oração, é capaz de pressentí-la podendo depreender o sentido do verbo antes que a partícula apareça. Em grau bem menor esse fenômeno também ocorre nas orações com verbos modais, porém ele dificilmente se verifica quando se trata de orações subordinadas. O que isto significa para o tradutor, que nem sempre sente a língua de chegada como o falante nativo, não é preciso detalhar mais.

Vejamos agora o seguinte exemplo:

Der bei einem Autounfall schwer am Kopf
O em um acidente de carro gravemente na cabeça
verletzte Junge bekam sofort eine Bluttransfusion.
ferido menino recebeu imediatamente uma transfusão de sangue.

Esta construção sintática é muito usada em linguagem científica alemã. A tradução de estruturas deste tipo para o português é bastante problemática, uma vez que não existe estrutura correspondente, como mostra a tradução palavra por palavra. O recurso mais comumente usado para viabilizar a tradução de tais estruturas é novamente a decomposição em unidades sintáticas menores, no caso o uso da oração relativa. Assim teremos em português: "O menino, que no acidente de carro foi gravemente ferido na cabeça, recebeu imediatamente uma transfusão de sangue".

Outra peculiaridade da linguagem científica alemã são as construções nominais. Se na linguagem cotidiana alemã dizemos:

"Vitamin C beeinflusst nicht die Anfälligkeit gegen Krankheiten."
"A vitamina C não influi sobre a propensão a doenças"

encontramos no texto científico alemão a construção já citada nesse trabalho:

"Vitamin C hat keinen Einfluss auf die Anfälligkeit gegen Krankheiten."

Evidencia-se que muitas vezes é mais adequado transformar as construções nominais do alemão em construções verbais na língua portuguesa.

O idioma alemão é rico em palavras compostas e a linguagem científica faz uso delas em abundância. Os elementos de palavras

compostas são de tal forma combinados, que o mais específico deles precede sempre o mais geral. Em português ocorre justamente o contrário.

Por exemplo:

Krebsvorsorgeuntersuchung	= exame profilático con-
Krebs-vorsorge-untersuchung	tra câncer
Krebs = câncer	
vorsorge = profilaxia	
untersuchung = exame	

No caso do tradutor encontrar-se diante de um substantivo composto que não seja do seu conhecimento, a decomposição do mesmo em unidades de sentido menores é, sem dúvida, uma ajuda para se chegar ao termo correto como mostra o exemplo acima.

Porém, todo o cuidado é pouco. Traduzir "Krankenhaus" por "casa de doentes" (Kranke(n) = doentes/ haus = casa) não prejudica o teor informativo, mas fere a norma da língua portuguesa que prevê em seu vocabulário a palavra "hospital". No entanto, traduzir "Gelbsucht" por "vício amarelo" (Gelb = amarelo/ sucht = vício) é incorrer em erro, pois, trata-se, no caso, da "hepatite."

Ainda no campo de formação de palavras, quero me deter em um sufixo formador de adjetivos, muito usado na linguagem científica. Trata-se do sufixo "bar" que indica possibilidade e que pode ser acrescentado aos verbos transitivos. Tomando-se por base, por exemplo, o verbo "heilen" = "curar" forma-se o adjetivo "heilbar" = "curável". A partir de adjetivos forma-

dos pelo sufixo "bar" pode-se formar ainda, pelo acréscimo de mais um sufixo — "keit", que indica qualidade, o substantivo "Heilbarkeit".

Existe também na língua alemã o substantivo "Heilung" também formado a partir do verbo "heilen", com o sufixo — "ung" que indica o resultado de uma ação. Para fazer ressaltar as diferentes modalidades de cura implícitas nos dois substantivos é preciso que se acrescente em português um adjunto adnominal ao substantivo "cura". Vejamos os seguintes exemplos:

Die Heilbarkeit von Krebs im Frühstadium ist medizinisch nachgewiesen.

A possibilidade de cura do câncer em estado precoce é comprovada pela medicina.

Die Heilung des Krebses ist eins der hauptsächlichsten Ziele der medizinischen Forschung.

A cura do câncer é uma das metas principais da pesquisa médica.

Há no substantivo "Heilbarkeit" um traço semântico fornecido pelo sufixo "bar" que é uma avaliação quanto à possibilidade de cura, o que não se verifica no caso do substantivo "Heilung".

O tradutor encontra-se diante de uma tarefa especialmente árdua quando um texto na língua de partida aborda uma temática para a qual não há correspondência integral na língua de chegada, uma vez que não existe também correspondência entre as instituições. Para citar apenas um exemplo, refiro-me aos

textos que abordam assuntos relativos a seguro contra doença na Alemanha. Há uma diferença acentuada entre o nosso INAMPS e o seguro-enfermidade na Alemanha. Constatam nesses textos palavras como "Krankenschein", "Krankengeld", que podem ser traduzidas através do processo de decomposição de substantivos compostos. Teríamos assim "formulário-doença", "dinheiro-doença", conceitos bastante difusos para o falante do português, que só podem ser esclarecidos mediante notas explicativas. Também pode-se lançar mão de um organograma que esclareça a estruturação do sistema seguro-enfermidade alemão.

Entre tantos problemas com os quais o tradutor se defronta quando a língua de partida é o alemão, é preciso ressaltar que a incidência de palavras de origem greco-latina é bastante grande nos textos científicos. Temos por exemplo:

Prophylaxe

Diagnose

Pathogenese

Anamnese

Ao lado dessas convivem pacificamente as expressões germânicas:

Vorbeugende Therapie = Prophylaxe

Krankheitserkennung = Diagnose

Entstehung der Krankheit = Pathogenese

Vorgeschichte der Krankheit = Anamnese

Essa peculiaridade da língua alemã de empregar nos textos científicos tanto o vocabulário de origem germânica quanto greco-latina suaviza, sem dúvida, o trabalho árduo do tradutor.

NOTAS

¹MERTZ, D.P. "Das hypothyrote rheumatische Syndrom im engeren Sinne". Münchner Medizinische Wochenschrift, München, 122 (1980) Nr. 31, p. 1091.

²O que está entre parênteses não consta no original, mas torna-se imprescindível em português para garantir o teor informativo e a clareza da tradução.

³WILLE, Konrad. Wissenschaftssprache Deutsch. Goethe Institut, Manuskriptdruck zur Erprobung, 1978, p. 122.

⁴STRUPPLER, A. & BELAU, Ch. "Funktionelle Anatomie des Schulter-Armschmerzes", Münchner Medizinische Wochenschrift, München, 122 (1980) Nr. 34, p. 1153.

⁵BIRKENFELD, Helmut & ROSCHER, Manfred. Medizin 1. Max Hueber Verlag, München, 1980, p. 28.



Poems



Arlington.....

Chester Sheppard Dawson

No sunlight fills these empty spaces. No
bird-calls filter down to rejoice sleeping

ones who lie here now as tribute to the
world's incessant guns.

How wrong old Horace was if literally
taken. Let us assume he understood

and if he could these sleepers awaken. §§

Aura...

Chester Sheppard Dawson

Accentuating undulation
head proud
a young brown girl
in red skirt saunters
tightly past
two males atop a low stone
wall
who let her know
in language mute and
clear:
She is the essential com-
ponent of the
hemisphere . §§

Delivery.....

Chester Sheppard Dawson

I watch the knifed
workers

in the
store unhinge

crates
behead cabbages

adroitly
leave lettuce shorn

carrots
swift-trimmed.

The
immense boxes once

pregnant
subside now

to manageable
dimension. §§

Epopée...

Chester Sheppard Dawson

During
storms puddles
quiver

on sidewalks
endowed
with

wrinkled anima-
tion. §§

Abstract

DISSERTAÇÃO DE MESTRADO - INGLÊS

Departamento de Letras Germânicas, Curso de Pós-Graduação em
Letras, FALE/UFMG, 1984

Sandra Giffoni Pellizzaro Lima. Migration and Quest: A
Study of the Journey Motif in Steinbeck's The Grapes of
Wrath. Advisor: Ana Lúcia Almeida Gazolla, Ph.D.
24/10/84.

This work is an analysis of the journey motif in John Steinbeck's novel The Grapes of Wrath. In the first part, the process of migration is discussed in its general causes and characteristics, as well as in its symbolic relation to man's archetypal quest for the discovery of himself. The second part deals with the characters, their individual stories, and the family's struggle for survival. The third part focuses on the symbolic texture of the novel, in special the Biblical associations, the myth of Edenic possibilities, and the main images which appear in the text. The fourth part deals with the reversal of the American Dream, represented by the failure of the Joads' search. The journey is then seen in its twofold role: as a motif which gives structural cohesion to the plot, and as a vehicle for the projection of the theme of the quest.

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