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THE DOUBLE AS A LITERARY DEVICE:
PETER SHAFFER'S THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN

(O DUPLO COMO RECURSO LITERÁRIO:
THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN, DE PETER SHAFFER)

(DAS DOPPELTE ALS LITERARISCHES MITTEL
THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN, VON PETER SHAFFER)

SUMMARY

This paper aims at an illustration of the use of the Double in Shaffer's play, *The royal hunt of the sun*. The concept is discussed in two senses: as it was defined and suggested by Artaud, and as it is defined and employed in Psychology. The use of this device in the play serves an ultimate end: to illustrate the relationship between conquerors and conquered people.

RESUMO

Esse trabalho visa a ilustrar o conceito de Duplo na peça de Peter Shaffer, *The royal hunt of the sun*. A autora tenta mostrar que o duplo, usado como recurso literário, é empregado tanto no sentido definido e sugerido por Artaud, como no usado pela Psicologia. O uso desse recurso na peça presta-se, enfim, para ilustrar a relação conquistador-conquistado.

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Literature has made use of the Duplication, a concept which refers to the repetition of a narrative element with figurative manifestations, inside the narrative scheme (GREIMAS, 1979). The concept of the Double is a permanent concern among Antonin Artaud's many projects for the theatre (ARTAUD, 1958). It appears prominent mainly because of his attack on verbal language, which, as he made explicit, is only part of a special kind of language he called the language of the *mise-en-scène*, made up of everything that can fill the space of the physical stage. Artaud named the theatre he proposed, The Theatre of Cruelty, "*which aimed to activate man's 'magnetic' nervous system, enabling him to project his feelings and sensations beyond the usual limits imposed by time and space*" (KNAPP, 1980).

In his book, *Artaud e o Teatro*, Alain Virmaux states, quoting V. Novarina:

... Se, através de Crueldade, Artaud quer juntar a divisão, a contradição, o perigo, a fim de livrar o homem de sua letargia, pelo Duplo - que se tornou o princípio de linguagem por correspondência e por signos - ele quer tornar sensível a unidade múltipla da vida... O teatro segundo Artaud é o lugar onde se resolvem as antinomias ... (e) se refere ao homem integral. Trata-se de um teatro no qual o jogo dos Duplos se associa à empresa da Crueldade " (VIRMAUX, 1978).

The idea of the Double for Artaud is intimately connected with the way in which total theatre affects man. Far from being a mere psychic activity, the double includes everything which reaches man in his wholeness through all the possible means of theatrical expression. Artaud wants the theatre to address itself neither to the spectators' mind nor to their senses in

isolation, but to their total existence (SONTAG, 1973). This idea underlies his insistent suggestion for the use of manikins on the stage to represent real actors, and his proposal for the use of light and sound or even objects raised to the status of actual characters. In brief, the concept of the double lies at the heart of Artaud's attempt to bring together the most diverse means - gesture, and verbal language, static objects and movement in three dimensional space. It is to this complex web that the notion of the Double refers. Furthermore, the theatre, where many actions can be presented simultaneously instead of being narrated one by one as in narrative, is itself the Double "par excellence." With the simple process of materializing any expression on the stage, either by the use of manikins, or by the use of light and sound to replace actual characters, an imaginary universe is created.

This idea of an imaginary universe can be related to the notion of the Double as it is used in Psychology, where the Double is a phenomenon somewhat related to a specular image in the mind of the individual. The Double is then a kind of image - a manifestation of our unconscious. It may be, for instance, a relation between two persons, or between one individual and his own imaginary image. This relation is emphasized by mental processes, common to both: the individual and his double may have common knowledge, common feelings and common experiences. In other words, these persons, the individual and his double, can represent their mutual images, a duplication and a paradoxal division.

This theme was studied by Otto Rank in 1914 (FREUD, 1976). He has associated the double with reflections in a mirror, with R.Estud.Ger., Belo Horizonte, v. 7, n. 1, p. 41-51, dez. 1986.

shadows, with the belief in the soul and with the fear of death. For him, in a way, the double corresponds to man's soul. In modern psychology, the notion of the self has replaced earlier conceptions of the soul. Thus it can be said that today the double corresponds to the self.

According to Jung, the self is a totality comprised of conscious and unconscious contents that dwarfs the ego in scope and intensity. The coming-to-be of the self is sharply distinguished from the coming of the ego into consciousness, and is the individuation process by which the true self emerges as the goal of the whole personality. (Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. IX, p. 41)

Roughly speaking, man lives in two dimensions. The first, the *ego*, is the part which works, thinks, acts. The second one, the *self*, the double, is like another human being within man himself, made up of all his past experiences and all of his desires for the future. The double is like man's inner voice. In brief, the double, the repeated image, the self, has the function of observing and criticizing the ego upon which it exerts a kind of censorship. A familiar entity established in the mind, the double is neither new nor alien. But sometimes, when the individual does not want to "hear" his inner voice, the double may be alienated through repression, leaving, however, the possibility of emerging at any time and expressing itself.

Despite their differences, the double as proposed by Artaud intermingles with the psychological double in the sense that both express the dual aspect of a unique whole.

The aim of this paper is to study Shaffer's *The royal hunt of the sun* as the mutual projection of the three main

characters in one another, which can be referred to the notion of the psychological double. At the same time, this mutual projection is one of the many devices used in the play to convey the main theme. This theme has been expressed through many other means as well. So the mutual projection of the characters performs the function of the double as proposed by Artaud.

In *The royal hunt of the sun*, Pizarro, Atahualpa and Martin, the narrator, can be seen as mutual projections of one another as Doubles.

Young Martin can be considered as a double both of himself as an old man and of Pizarro. One of the devices used by Shaffer to suggest this is the appearance of both characters, Young and Old Martin, simultaneously, on the stage. They function as doubles of each other, while both likewise act as Pizarro's doubles. In Act One, Old Martin, who narrates the story, watches his younger self duelling an invisible opponent with a stick. Thus the same person at two different moments of his life is made to appear almost as two different people, each other's double.

Young Martin, on the other hand, is also Pizarro's double. He leads the middle-aged Spanish general to see in himself the youth he had once been. Pizarro, for instance, speaks to Young Martin, the young page, as if he were addressing himself:

"Strange sight, yourself, just as you were in this very street" (p. 18); then the audience is reminded of Pizarro's adolescent dreams which had once been the same as Martin's. *"Little lord*

of hope, (Pizarro goes on saying), *I'm harsh with you. You own everything I've lost* " (p. 29). *"Time was when we couldn't stop you,"* Pizarro says when Young Martin tries to convince him of keeping his word to Atahualpa (p. 74).

The projection works in both directions. *"Then, he, (Pizarro), came and made them [, my dreams,] real,"* says Martin at the beginning of the play (p. 14). As a consequence of this mutual projection the audience is aware that Pizarro is, for a time, Martin's object of desire, the ideal self he would like to become, somebody he wants to imitate, *"my altar, my bright image of salvation* (p. 13) ... *all I ever want to be* " (p. 29).

In another way, as Pizarro's double, Martin also represents the general's alter ego, his conscience observing and criticizing his behaviour. *"He trusts you (he dares to say, when he foresees that Pizarro is going to take back the word pledged to Atahualpa). You can't betray him, sir. You can't "* (p. 74). In several moments in the play, Martin's words act as Pizarro's consciousness, warning him against disloyalty. When Spanish soldiers remind the boy that they could be dead if the indians were armed, Martin's words recall Pizarro's remote inner voice: *"Honourably dead! Not alive and shamed "* (p. 51). Thus Young Martin often functions as the general's inner voice, his super-ego. His last words in the play are words of disappointment and contempt for the Spanish general's betrayal of the Inca Emperor. His last action is to scream and run from the stage in horror. This also announces Pizarro's painful rejection of his former dreams, his bitter plunge into a world, different from that of his youth, in which he is a mere *"old slogger without traditions or titles "*.

Young Martin, we have seen, also represents the youthful self of the elderly narrator. When Old Martin describes or comments on past situations, the youth's sensibility emerges as if the narrator were speaking with the boy's voice. *"I'm going to tell you (he says) ... things that no one has ever told you: things to make you groan and cry I'm laying. ... Time was when I'd have died for him, [Pizarro] or for any worship. ... If you could only imagine what it was like for me at the beginning, to be allowed to serve him. ... The inside of my head was one vast plain for feats of daring "*, (he says referring to his past dreams) (p. 13-4).

In almost all of Old Martin's speeches, we can hear Young Martin's voice showing his pity for Peru, for Spain, and for Pizarro. We can also feel his regret for the passing of time, leaving *"forty years from any time of hope."*

The evidence that Young Martin simultaneously represents Pizarro's and Old Martin's doubles makes clear the similarities between the narrator and the old general. This emphasizes the inevitable cycle of hope and despair which is part of life, and which the play tries to convey.

A different device is used when Atahualpa and Pizarro are presented as specular images of each other. Atahualpa represents Pizarro's other double. This is made evident by the similarities between the two characters. Both are illegitimate sons and have gained power despite this; in their way, both are usurpers; both are ruthless and illiterate; finally, both are unscrupulous men of action.

While Young Martin represents that part of Pizarro's self

made up of past experience, Atahualpa represents his desires for the future: the incarnation of a truer god and a better, fairer society than the one he had left behind in Spain. Pizarro, however, is always in conflict with this second double. Sometimes he seems to accept it and draws near to it; sometimes he rejects it, and doesn't want to "hear" its voice.

At the beginning, Pizarro feels attracted to the Inca. *"Since first I heard of him, I've dreamed of him every night,"* Pizarro tells De Soto, referring to the sun but also alluding to the Inca King, *"[a] black king with glowing eyes, sporting the sun for a crown "* (p. 44). And he goes on referring to his meeting with the Inca as compulsive, as *"the one I have to make "* (p. 44). Atahualpa thus symbolizes Pizarro's need for worship, for *"something eternal against going flash "* (p. 44).

The next step in their relation is friendship: the two leaders talk and enjoy each other's presence. During this phase, Pizarro's conflict is momentarily appeased, to be aroused again. *"I'll make you set (like the sun) for ever!"* he threatens Atahualpa, pulling the rope that lashes them and throwing the Inca to the ground (p. 86).

At times, his inner voice, embodied by the Inca god, presses him to yield: *"You will die sun (Atahualpa says) and you do not believe in your god. That is why you tremble and keep no word. Believe in me. I will give you a word and fill you with joy "* (p. 87). For a moment, Pizarro almost surrenders to this form of spiritual hope, through which he might overcome the inevitability of death.

However, at the end of the play, Pizarro agrees with Atahualpa's execution, as if he could kill his own double,

as if he couldn't bear the sound of his inner voice. Despite his momentary hesitation, Pizarro doesn't come definitely back to his former beliefs. Instead, he resumes his way in the cycle of life, an eternal cycle made up of hope and despair.

Summing up, we may say that, despite their constant search, none of the three central characters find themselves in one another. Young Martin cannot find himself, either in the old general from whom he had expected chivalric behaviour, or in his elder double, the middle-aged narrator of the play. The converse also holds true. Pizarro cannot find himself either in Young Martin's dreams, which he had given up, or in Atahualpa's, once thought of as a substitute for Christ. At the same time, Atahualpa cannot find himself in Pizarro, finally revealed as a mere faithless untrustworthy human being, far from the white god he expected him to be.

The use of the double, materializing man's sinuous and eternal quest through life, thus proves a reflection of the modern scepticism about final, absolute moral values. The mutual but thwarted projection of the characters in the play is gradually seen to represent man's almost inescapable failure to apprehend the other in any way but as a mirror of his own desires. In this respect, Shaffer's interpretation of Pizarro's relationship with his page and, especially, with Atahualpa, recalls Todorov's belief in man's incapacity to perceive other people's identity - particularly that of the so-called "primitive" - as simultaneously identical to and different from his own (TODOROV, 1983).

Pizarro embodies Europe in its attempt to understand the
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Inca people by trying to grasp their language and to know their equalitarian system of life. However, although he loves the Inca, he does so from his own perspective. The reverse holds true: the Inca also tries to understand and love the Spanish general, but none of them can get rid of their feeling of superiority.

The story of the Conquest of Peru is finished. However, the play portrays a contemporary view - the desirable relationship between Europe - the conqueror, and America - the conquered. Pizarro and Atahualpa nearly attained the realization of a dialogue that characterizes our civilization today: nobody has the last word, any voice can reduce the other voice to the status of a mere object. We are trying to live the difference in the similarity.

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