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S U M Á R I O

APRESENTAÇÃO

O VOLUME

O volume 9 de ESTUDOS GERMÂNICOS sai apenas com o fascículo relativo à literatura, ou seja, o nº 1. O próximo volume, de nº 10, deverá ter novamente os dois fascículos, cujos temas centrais serão "Texto/Contexto", para o nº 1 (Literatura) e "Lingüística Aplicada ao Ensino de Língua Estrangeira" para o nº 2 (Língua).

O presente fascículo engloba três aspectos dos estudos literários: os três artigos iniciais se apoiam no processo da escritura, buscando o sentido através da análise da narração, no primeiro; do efeito semiótico e do uso de signos icônicos, indiciais e simbólicos, no segundo; e do uso de pressupostos teóricos peircianos e lacanianos visando à elucidação de aspectos do processo de literatura do texto literário, no terceiro.

Os dois artigos seguintes tratam de leituras das diferenças sociais. Aqui o foco são os grupos minoritários: o negro e a mulher.

O último artigo trata do envolvimento político/ideológico do autor e sua relação com o trabalho de criação.

Esperando reencontrar-nos brevemente com nossos leitores, no volume nº 10, aqui lhes entregamos este fascículo.

O EDITOR

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to shift the focus of the current readings of Joyce's **The Sisters** *from* discourse to narration, *by regarding it as a journey of a voice in search of a truly expressive locutional tonality.*

Centered on the story's process of enunciation, this essay seeks to demonstrate that, in his attempt to domesticate language and make some sense out of his utterance, the subject of the enunciation in The Sisters *ends up entrapped by/in the very silence from which he tried to set himself free, through narration.*

Paths of Disclosure and Discourse: Joyce's The Sisters

Os Caminhos da Revelação e do Discurso: **The Sisters**, de Joyce

Die wege der Enthüllung und der Rede: **The Sisters** von Joyce

Luiz Alberto de MIRANDA*

Resumo

A finalidade deste trabalho é mudar o foco da leitura do conto **The Sisters**, de James Joyce, do discurso para a narração, *considerando-o como a jornada de uma voz rumo a uma tonalidade locucional verdadeiramente expressiva. Centrado no processo enunciativo do conto, este ensaio procura demonstrar que, na tentativa de domesticar a linguagem e de impor sentido à sua elocução, o sujeito da enunciação em* **The Sisters** *acaba preso no/pelo próprio silêncio de que pretendia se livrar através da narração.*

The purpose of this paper is to offer one more contribution to the study of the enunciative process of James Joyce's **The Sisters**, the opening story in *Dubliners*. To attain this goal, I shall focus my attention on the overall configuration of the young narrator's utterance, which I regard as a literary rendition of an adolescent's struggle for self-disclosure and apperception developed along the path of discourse. Starting out with the narrative voice's flamboyant display of locutional indeterminacy and undecidability — in the opening sentence of the story and throughout its first paragraph, respectively — I intend to examine four major aspects of the enunciative process of **The sisters:** the pact adult-writer/boy-narrator, its implications and consequences; the especial kind of epiphany the story displays; the "cleavage" in the subject of the enunciation and his failure in transcending" himself or his own discourse; and last, but not least, the entrapping force of the three key signifiers of the text — *paralysis*, *gnomon* and *simony* — which, emerging from the thematic level of the story, set up a "prison house of language" for the narrator, laying their imprint both on the text's structural configuration and on its narrational effect.

No essay on **The sisters** can overlook the complexity of the text's first paragraph or the intriguing ambiguity of its first sentence. Like the opening of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the initial lines of **The sisters** are a stylistic "tour-de-force", and many critics have pointed out the similarities between the two passages. There are, however, striking differences between them, especially in regard to the control each narrative voice has over its material.

In Proust's long first paragraph, the first-person narrator uses the imperfect tense to evoke some of his bedtime rituals as a child, and =

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encounters no difficulty in articulating the feelings he used to experience whenever he found himself caught up on the threshold between sleep and alertness. In Joyce's, the narrative voice sounds rather hesitant in its choice of verb tenses. Unable to start with a clear-cut view of the incident, it mixes past-perfect and present tenses, that is, thoughts and perceptions occurring at the moment of the narration ("Now I knew... Now it sounded") with actions or attitudes occurred either in a recent ("Night after night I had passed... and studied") or in a remote past ("He had often said... and I had thought"). The end result is a truncated, tentative utterance, which gives us "the pattern of an experience as it actually is to memory or observation."[1]

The locutional tonality of each text's first sentence is also different. "Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure"[2] is an utterance that leaves no doubt as to when and by whom it is produced. The same cannot be said of the first sentence in **The sisters** ("There was no hope for him this time: it was the third stroke.").[3] Entirely composed of monosyllables, and fully illustrative of a narrative voice's attempt to overcome speechlessness, this sentence lacks overt specificity in terms of both voice and referent, and constitutes an extremely odd start for a story in which character and narrator are one and the same figure. In contrast to the opening sentence of Proust's work, which definitely points to a past habit and paves the way for a recollection of past incidents, the first sentence in *Dubliners* combines reiteration and finalization, for it consists of the culmination (in the present) of a sequence of repeated facts (occurred in the past). With its two impersonal constructions, its third person pronoun and its deictic reference to time, the opening utterance of **The sisters** brings the immediate situation of both teller and character to the foreground of the diegetic space; and in its ambiguity, narrational in nature, it anticipates one of the basic issues of the story's enunciative project: the relationship between reporting self and experiencing self.

The first aspect of the enunciation of **The sisters** to be dealt with in this paper is precisely the one raised by the story's first sentence and paragraph: the relationship between reporting self and experiencing self. To analyze this relationship is to refer to the pact between writer and narrator, for it is this pact that determines the place, time and stance from which the story's enunciation stems, as well as the overall design — trace or finality — that its narrative voice performs and achieves.

There is no doubt that, in **The sisters**, narrative action and narrational act are not simultaneous. Narrating self and experiencing self are different subjects, or at least different stances of the same subjectivity. Yet, this is not to say that the subject of the enunciation in **The sisters** is an adult looking back to a childhood experience — which would be a gross misconstruction of the text's enunciative process. It is obvious that there is an adult presiding over the entire composition; but this adult chooses to disguise himself as an adolescent narrator and to become the main character in the story. Therefore, it could be said that the enunciative project of **The sisters** belongs to a mature subject (or self) who chooses to play the part of immature narrator (reporting self) so that the feelings of the thirteen-year-old boy he was (experiencing self) may come to the foreground of the diegetic space.

The disguise adopted is quite effective. Even in the earliest version of the story, published in the *Irish homestead* in 1904, the juvenile tonality of the narrative voice can be promptly perceived.

There, the opening lines of the story read as follows:

> *Three nights in succession I had found myself in Great Britain Street at that hour, as if by providence. Three nights I had raised my eyes to that lighted square of window and speculated. I seemed to understand that it would occur at night. But in spite of the providence which had led my feet and in spite of the reverent curiosity of my eyes, I had discovered nothing.*[4]

The "unknowing" position of the narrative voice in the quotation above shows that, as early as the first version of the story, the pact between adult writer and boy narrator had already been established and was already at work. According to this pact, the adult yields to the boy the right to narrate, and does not allow his adult consciousness to intrude in the narration.

The result of this process is a disruption of the conventional narrative norms, according to which a narration must be sparing, straightforward and coherent, so that it can perform its function properly. The boy's narration, however, is neither a straightforward nor a sparing one. He does not spare words, or goes straight to the point. His narration unfolds itself slowly and gradually, as though it were searching for its original motivation, or its remotest root — the sensation of perplexity that assailed the boy when he heard the reticent comment of the priest's sister on her brother's state of mind before his death. Also, the boy's narration lacks coherence, in the traditional sense. **The sisters** becomes coherent as a narration only insofar as it unfolds itself; and it is this very unfolding that provides it with its narrative status and allows it to impose itself as narration.

Therefore, it could be said that, in making the narrative voice of his reporting self that of an adolescent, the adult writer turns himself into an incompetent, almost impotent narrator, incapable of verbalizing the "epiphanic" experience he lived through. The master of diction deliberately becomes a master of inter-diction (of "diction-between", "half-diction") and also of interdiction (diction of interruption, prohibition, paralysis). In fact, as the young narrator of **The sisters** is unable to detach himself from the

emotion in which he has been caught up, he cannot see himself except with the eyes of the sentient self who experiences that emotion. By presenting his image "in immediate relation to himself" alone, he ends up producing a lyrical utterance — an utterance that, seeking to rearticulate an experience not so much to disclose its meaning as to recapture its revelation, suits perfectly Joyce's purpose, which is more to crystallize a vision than to manufacture a plot.

As I used the adjective "epiphanic", I think that, at this point, a review of the Joycean concepts of epiclesis and epiphany is in order, for both are essential to the understanding of Joyce's stories, including the one under consideration.

According to Peter Garret, *epiclesis* is the invocation the priest makes to the Holy Ghost, at the moment of the Consecration, so that bread and wine may turn into the body and blood of Christ, respectively. The term *epiphany* appears for the first time in *Stephen hero*, where the narrator defines it as "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself."[5]

Each of the stories in *Dubliners* is an *epiclesis* — the transformation of a "slice of life" into an art object, a "thing of beauty". And each of them features, at the center of its thematic proposition, an *epiphany* — a moment of clairvoyance or perplexity, involving either character or reader or both. Yet, most of Joyce's "epiphany-oriented" critics[6] fail to emphasize that, in making his notion of *epiphany* the basic thematic component of his early short story collection, Joyce created not only an "epiphany-centered" narrative form, but also an "epiphany-centered" narrational method. The concept of epiphany serves to designate not only the thematic nucleus of Joyce's stories, but also their narrative structure and their narrational effect. It is as though the *epiphany* could "leak" from the thematic level of a story through the structural to the narrational.

It should be stressed, however, that in some stories, the *epiphany* is characterized by a "hole" or "lack" — and becomes the revelation of an absence rather than the presence of a revelation, either for character or reader or both. This is precisely what occurs in **The sisters.** As the boy narrator fails to verbalize his "epiphanic" experience, the reader is prevented from sharing it; and is led to experience the epiphany of a lack (not a lack of epiphany), of absence, of silence. In this respect, the reaction of the reader to the boy's narration is similar to that of the boy to Elisa's reticent comment.

Now, we shall turn our attention to the boy narrator, the actual subject of the text's enunciation. In **The sisters**, the narrator seems to be speaking from two places/times simultaneously, or oscillating between two stances or stages of his "I". Since his enunciative gesture occurs shortly after the epiphany he experiences, there is a "cleavage" or "split" in the subject of the enunciation. Strictly speaking, the narrative voice in **The sisters** comes from two "I's:" The "I" of the moment of the enunciation and the "I" of the moment of the epiphany. The tense fluctuation in the first paragraph of the story illustrates this assertion in full. The "I" of the moment of the enunciation engages himself in an act of narration in an attempt to recapture, through discourse, his other self — that is, the "I" he was at the moment of the epiphany. Self appropriation and apperception is the primary objective of the boy's narration, and the feature that makes it similar to a psychoanalytic session in which only the analysand is present. Opening his way along the path of discourse, he purports to effect a self-disclosure that would take him back to the time/place of his "epiphanic" experience. In other words, he is seeking to link narrating self and experiencing self, the "I" he is now (at the moment of the narrational act) with the "I" he was then (at the moment of the narrative action), to be able to verbalize his experience in full. In his longing for or nostalgia of oneness and completeness, the boy narrator seeks to harmonize epiphanic perplexity and narrational alertness past sensation and present enunciation, in order to fashion a paradisical, ideal self, in full possession of an equally paradisical, ideal "logos".

The overall dynamics of the enunciation of **The sisters** thus reveals an Ego trying to set up an encounter with the Id, according to Freud's prescription in the third of his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis:* "Wo es war soll Ich werden".[7] Yet, even if the Id is, as Lacan would have it, that repository of truth to which the Ego should return as though it were returning home, the idea of a stabilized Ego, impermeable to the "threats" of the Id or totally accepting of its plural structures, is a utopia. The journey "back home" is a doomed enterprise simply because the human subject "can be grasped only as a set of tensions, mutations or dialectical upheavals, within a continuous, intentional, future-directed process",[8] which unfolds itself metonymically as discourse. So, the ideal self the subject of the enunciation in **The sisters** is looking for cannot be found except in the speaking subject he is, and the ideal "logos" he longs for cannot reside outside the signifying chain of his own enunciation. The "dictum" that is, the definitive discourse, lies in the "dicens", that is, the searching, tentative one — which is the only one the boy narrator, as a speaking subject, can ever utilize. Self-appropriation through disclosure and discourse does not go beyond self-acceptance. For the "lack" or "gap" that characterizes the operations of the subject "incapacitates him for selfhood, inwardness or apperception or plenitude; it guarantees the indestructibility of desire by keeping the goals of desire in perpetual flight."[9]

Joyce's **The sisters** has been also related to the theme of "transcendence". The critic Phillip Herring affirms:

Like most of Joyce's work, **The sisters** *is about transcendence, in this case, how a young boy wishes to elude the authority of elders who unwittingly inhibit his spiritual and intellectual growth...*[10]

My claim is that the theme of transcendence may be present in **The sisters**, but never with this coloration or on this level. I relate it not to the boy as character, but to the boy as narrator. In other words, I prefer to see a gesture towards transcendence on the narrational level of the text, and not on the narrative one. Simultaneously with his attempt to fill in his "gap", to "transcend" the precariousness of his subjectivity, is the effort of the boy narrator to move beyond his own discourse, to surpass its limits (or overcome its limitations), to "transcend" it — in order to attain a higher mode of expression, which would enable him to verbalize his experience in full. But the "transcendence" he longs for, the realm of the transparent, unambiguous "logos", cannot be reached, as long as Ego and Id continue to coexist. To put it differently, the boy narrator seeks to transcend his discourse in that he wants his narration to perform a traditional function, which is to narrate something, to point to a signified. He does not know that there is no signified except in the interplay of signifiers, no "logos" beyond discourse and no narrative except in narration: for he does not know that there is no stabilized selfhood, except in the subject that manifests itself in the mobility of the signifying chain of discourse. For "far from being an epiphenomenon of the signifier, the subject has a relation of interdependence with it... both are characterized by their power of indefinite structural displacement."[11]

This is one of the reasons why **The sisters** remains as "opaque" in its meaning as Miss Flynn's reticent comment on her brother's mental and spiritual confusion. In an attempt to restore his individuality by reconstituting the "sudden spiritual manifestation" that assailed him, the young narrator can only retrace the steps that led him to the climactic epiphany he experienced; but he ends up by narrating events whose structural disposition reflects the very silence of which he wants to rid himself. *Enoncé* and *énonciation* are thus blended and no meaning is to be found behind the gestures of the narrative voice.

These considerations lead to the conclusion that the three key signifiers of the story — *paralysis*, *gnomon* and *simony* — not only encapsulate its thematic propositions and structurual configuration, but also regulate its narrational design.

Paralysis, for example, turns out to be not only "the name of a maleficent and sinful being", (9), but that of an infectious and contagious disease, which contaminates even the voices of those who dare to speak about it. In fact, the boy's narration is a paralytic one, in that it stops at the very moment it should disclose a major revelation. What was supposed to be just the prelude to the verbalization of a significant experience ends up replacing both the experience and its verbal rendition; and what was supposed to be just an introduction to the narrative proper becomes the very corpus of the narrative. Also, as the reader is denied the pleasure of a satisfactory conclusion, he becomes as paralyzed by the boy's narration as the boy himself was by the words of the priest's sister. *Paralysis* thus becomes the first regulating force of the text's enunciation.

The second term, *gnomon*, serves to define the structure of the narrative, but it also points to the generating impulse and the end result of the narrational act. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, a gnomon is "the part of a parallelogram remaining after a similar parallelogram has been taken from one of its corners."[12] In the same way that "lack" or "gap" is what makes the human subject what he is, it is a lack, a hole (the missing part of the parallelogram) that provides the gnomon with its "raison d'être", and makes it what it is. Founded on the gnomonic structure of a speaking subject, **The sisters** could only be a gnomonic utterance. In fact, the story lacks a conventional ending, and derives its identity as a text from this very detail.

The word *simony* also lays its imprint on the narrational design of the text under analysis. A live gnomon himself, the subject of the enunciation in **The sisters** is also guilty of the sin of simony. Although he does not sell any church goods, pardons or offices, he sells out his narration, misuses the sacred material at his disposition, speaks a lot but does not say much. Like the careless priest who drops the chalice containing the blood of Christ, the young narrator also wastes his blood together with his words.

In conclusion, it could be said that **The sisters** is a moment or place when/where the signifiers *paralysis*, *gnomon* and *simony*, actualizing themselves as narration, make a locution turn in upon itself and become circumlocution. To describe the subject of the enunciation of **The sisters** one could use a modified version of Malcolm Bowie's rendition of Lacan's concept of human subject: as he engages himself in the act of enunciation — a literary version of the process of language acquisition — the young Dubliner, inserts himself into the pre-existing symbolic order of that "hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city", thereby submitting his desire to the systemic pressures of that order: in choosing to narrate, he chooses language and allows his free instinctual energies to be operated upon and organized."[13]

In fact, as he tries to "deparalyze" himself by telling a story about (and out of) paralysis, the young narrator in **The sisters** loses control of his discourse and reaches the end of his narration as paralyzed as he was before he started it. The signifier *paralysis* combined with *gnomon* and *simony* — which sound equally strange and prove to be equally powerful — imposes its own pattern of signification on the narrator's enunciative gesture. »

turning his work into a reflection of the "deadly work" he himself longed to look upon. In this respect, **The sisters** is an illustration of the power signifiers have over those who believe to be in full possession and control of them. Oblivious, like most speaking subjects, of the extent to which words made and continue to make man, the young narrator of **The sisters** ends up entrapped in a "prison house of language" and acted upon by the very words he believed he could domesticate with his narrational act. This is his misfortune — and, paradoxically, the source from which we, as readers, derive our pleasure and gratification. ❑

NOTES

1 David Daiches, Dubliners. In *Twentieth century interpretations of Dubliners.* Peter Garret (ed.) Englewod Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968, p. 28. For quotations from *The sisters* refer to the 1980 Penguin edition of *Dubliners.*

2 First sentence of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu.* Cf. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu.* Paris: Gallimard, 1954, p. 3.

3 James Joyce, *Dubliners.* New York, NY: Penguin, 1980, p. 9.

4 Marvin Magalaner, *Time of apprenticeship:* the fiction of the young James Joyce. London, Abelard Schuman, 1959. In this book, Magalaner presents an extended analytical appreciation of Joyce's revisions of *The sisters,* along with a facsimile of the first version of the story. The reader should refer to Magalaner's work for a more detailed treatment of this issue.

5 Peter Garret, Introduction, *Twentieth century interpretations of Dubliners,* p. 11.

6 Among these, I include Harry Levin, Anthony Burgess and James R. Baker.

7 Sigmund Freud, *The major works of Sigmund Freud.* Chicago; Ill: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1971, p. 840.

8 Malcolm Bowie, Jacques Lacan. In *Structuralism and since.* John Sturrock, (ed.). London: Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 131.

9 Bowie, p. 134.

10 Phillip Herring, Structure and meaning in *The sisters, The seventh of Joyce.* Bernard Benstock, (ed.). Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana Univ. Press, 1982, p. 131-144.

11 Bowie, p. 132.

12 Cf. *Webster's New World Dictionary* (College Edition). New York, NY: World Publishing Co., 1968, p. 619.

13 Bowie, p. 126.

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A Peircean Reading of O'Neill's Emperor Jones (1920)

Uma leitura peirciana de *Emperor Jones* de O'Neill

O'Neills *Emperor Jones* mit Peirce Gelesen

Fred M. CLARK*

Summary

The article aims at showing, through an analysis of the semiotic effects of the use of iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs in the play, that O'Neill's work has to do primarily with the blurred boundaries between the actual and the imagined, the domain of a synthesis of the real and the illusory.

Resumo

O artigo demonstra, através da análise do efeito semiótico do uso de signos icônicos, indiciais e simbólicos na peça Emperor Jones, *que esta obra de O'Neill lida principalmente com as confusas fronteiras entre o real e o imaginado, com o território da síntese entre a ilusão e a realidade.*

An examination of the critical bibliography of O'Neill's work reveals various generations of different critical approaches. His theater as a whole and the individual plays have been analyzed from a number of possible points of view — the psychological, the literary, the sociological, the theatrical. Each critic, with the readings resulting from a particular critical methodology, has contributed something to the understanding of O'Neill's fictive universe. One critical method is not necessarily incorrect as compared to another; nor is one inherently superior and to be favored for reaching some type of ultimate interpretation of the perceptions that the playwright has encoded into his theatrical works. On the contrary, each approach generally adds something to an ongoing process of understanding as the texts live on after their author has ceased to exist. As Tiusanen says, the dramatic text is a work of art, and "when treating this elusive thing, the best results are achieved if it is discussed not from one but from several points of view." (1968: 19-20) I propose a particular reading, using Peircean semiotics, of the play that "established O'Neill as an international figure" (Carpenter 1979: 52). I hope to bring together many elements already noted and discussed by some critics, while, at the same time, offering a somewhat different understanding and interpretation of the work.

A number of semioticians of theater have found Peirce's work to be most useful in analyzing and describing how the sign functions on the stage (cf. Elam 1982: 21; Pavis 1982; Pladott 1982). As Pladott has noted:

> *The main advantage of applying this model lies in the possibility of classifying all the signs of a theatrical performance structure according to their 'representational' function... On the basis of this classification we may then explore the various types of relationships that the global functional systems form with one another. Consequently, we are able to avoid such unnecessary antinomies as written text/performance; illusionist/non-illusionist theatre, etc. (1982: 30)*

With Peirce's definition and division of the sign in terms of how the sign vehicle relates to its object, we can explain the dynamic of O'Neill's text systematically in terms of sign function.

For Peirce a sign is "some-=-

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thing that stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity." (CP 2.228) It is of a dynamic, triadic nature, composed of three moments in a constant mediating relation: the sign in itself (the sign vehicle), the object (the referent; the something for which the vehicle stands), the interpretant (the sign created in the perceiving mind; this sign functions as a sign of a sign). Peirce defines a number of trichotomies of the sign; the three major ones based on the relation of the sign to the three elements of the triad, however, constitute the basis of his semiotic: (1) the sign in relation to itself; (2) the sign in relation to its object; (3) the sign in relation to its interpretant. These categories, in turn, yield further divisions resulting in sixty-six classes of signs. The most exploited of the three basic divisions, particularly by semioticians of theater, and the most fundamental according to Peirce (CP 2.275) is that which concerns sign and object; this breaks down into the well-known tripartite model of icon, index, and symbol.

The relation between the iconic sign and its object is grounded on similarity; the icon "has no dynamical connection with the object it represents; it simply happens that its qualities resemble those of that object, and excite analogous sensations in the mind for which it is a likeness. But it is really unconnected with them" (CP 2.299). The index functions as a sign when it points to its object; the relation between the sign and its object is purely causal or contiguous. The indexical sign "is physically connected with its object; they make an organic pair, but the interpreting mind has nothing to do with this connection, except remarking it, after it is established" (CP 2.299). The relation between iconic and indexical signs constitutes an interesting aspect of theatrical sign systems in that the spectator generally tends to see indexical signs as iconic; as Pladott notes, "while iconicity takes indexical elements, such as gesture, costume, etc., for granted, the viewer tends to see all gestures as iconic" (1982: 36). The symbolic function of the sign rests on the arbitrary and conventional relation of sign to its object; in the theater (as in art in general) this sign function is context bound and is associated with the aesthetic function of work. The symbolic sign "is connected with its object by virtue of the idea of symbol-using mind, without which no such connection would exist" (CP 2.299). In using this trichotomy for purposes of analysis of theatrical signs, it is important to keep in mind a most important fact: a sign may function as icon, index, and symbol simultaneously, and "it is even possible for it to refer to the same object in all three ways at once" (Ransdell 1986: 688). The notion of hierarchy is important here; Peirce, in his description of the phenomenological categories, associates the icon with firstness, the index with secondness, and the symbol with thirdness in a hierarchical structure, the higher category always implying the lower one(s). As we will see in our analysis, most of the signs in the text are all three, but the spectator does not necessarily identify all three at the same time. On the contrary, as we will see in this reading of the text it is the constantly shifting sign function (the tension between the iconic and the symbolic) and the foregrounding and backgrounding of one or the other function in the various theatrical sign systems (cf. Kowzan [1968] who identifies and defines 13 such systems) that create, or at least move toward, an understanding of the sign that the text becomes.

The Emperor Jones revolves around the fall from power of a petty dictator, and his subsequent disintegration as a human being. It is the story of the Black man Brutus Jones who has become the strong man of "an island in the West Indies as yet not self-determined by White Marines." (O'Neill 1954: 2; subsequent references to the text are to this edition). This is pretextual information supplied in bits and pieces in Scene I in an exchange between Jones and Smithers, a cockney trader who has helped Jones reach his success through corruption. Smithers informs Jones that the natives have fled the palace and are preparing to assassinate the Emperor. The remaining seven scenes of the text chronicle the external (iconic and indexical) and internal (symbolic) flights of Jones up to the point of his death.

Various sign systems merge to create the tension and contrast of reality and illusion — the dynamic of the text — as their signs are perceived either as iconic and indexical or symbolic. The most immediate and obvious are the visual (actors, props, decor, gesture, movement, costume) and the auditory (language, sound effects). The spectator must view Jones' journey as an actual flight through a forest on an island at night; at the same time, because of the tension, he is forced to rethink this and see it in its symbolic function, i.e., as a journey through a troubled and frustrated mind, from the personal to the collective, if an understanding beyond the mere mimetic is to be reached. The spectator, in a sense, is placed in the same position as Jones. Certain moments of the performance constitute Jones' interpretants, i.e., the signs produced in his mind as he perceives and interprets the world around him. The spectator, as is Jones, is torn between the reality and illusion of the situation as he views the ghosts of Jones' personal and racial past. However, unlike Jones, who is in this situation because of guilt and fear, the spectator is finally able to discern the real from the illusory of the text and understand that the illusions are produced by the protagonist's guilts and fears. Jones remains entrapped in his situation and becomes a victim of his own devices.

The sets that capture the duality of sign function, and thus Jones' entire being (external and internal), consist of those from Scene II through Scene VII, i.e., those that occur at the edge of and in the Great Forest. The forest, as portrayed on stage, suggests both the external and internal as a place of great

harshness and chaos; it is "a wall of darkness dividing the world." It is a symbolic division between the real and the illusory, night and day, and life and death. The darkness should be intensified, as O'Neill indicates in his sidetext: "Only when the eye becomes accustomed to the gloom can the outlines of separate trunks of the nearest tree be made out, enormous pillars of deeper blackness" (p. 17).

As Jones progresses on his flight through the forest, escaping his supposed pursuers, the iconic is transformed into the symbolic as he enters not only the forest but also himself. The dialogue of Scene I becomes a monologue as characters who could exist only in his mind appear on stage — The Little Formless Fears (Scene II); Jeff, a man whom Jones had killed before the time of the text (Scene III); convicts and a prison guard on a chain gang where Jones had served time (Scene IV); an auctioneer, plantation owners, and slaves at a slave auction of the last century (Scene V); slaves on a slave galley (Scene VI); a Congo Witch-Doctor and a Crocodile God (Scene VII). None of these constitutes independent personalities; they are simply projections of the protagonist's mind (i.e., interpretants) and function at his will as signs of his personal and racial past. The contrast and tension between sign functions are emphasized throughout the text by a number of other contrasts, which Carpenter (1979: 89) refers to as physical and psychological, and Tiusanen as "interaction within and between the scenic images" (1968: 107). The figure of Jones synthesizes all the contrasts as he becomes a symbol of the entire text; all the signs on the stage, which are really Jones' interpretants (his perception of the world around him) create other interpretants for the spectator who attempts to impose order and understanding on the text.

The various scenes in the forest represent different states of mind, both conscious and unconscious, personal and collective (what Carpenter [1979: 88] calls a combination of the "reality of the actual jungle with the confused fantasy of Jones' mind"). Jones serves as the principal unifying element of all the scenes. Although the spectator remains aware that an actual flight is occurring, the unconscious state comes to dominate the events on stage. This is foregrounded by the theatrical sign systems of sound effects, specifically the tom-tom and gun shots, that function indexically and symbolically. In each scene, beginning with the end of Scene II where Jones enters the forest, through Scene VII, where he dies, the stage space is transformed (and this can be done only through the symbolic function) into different physical and temporal spaces (while still functioning as a forest in the present moment, which is a period of one night) in Jones' personal and racial existences.

The scenes represent abrupt, rapid movements back in time, while maintaining the element of the present moment:

Scene I: the present moment; the palace of the Emperor Jones;

Scene II: the present moment; Jones has fled the palace and is on the edge of the Great Forest; this scene, with the Little Formless Fears and the sense of "edge" serves as a transition in the transformation of the stage space that will occur in the following scenes and signals the audience that Jones is beginning to suffer delusions (the Little Formless Fears will assume specific and concrete forms as the text progresses);

Scenes III-VI: Jones is lost in the forest; however, each scene represents a different place and time;

Scene III: Jones has moved to the point in the past in which he kills the negro Jeff; he shoots him again and Jeff disappears in a puff of smoke;

Scene IV: Jones' days on the chain gang when he killed a guard and escaped; Scenes V-VII predate Jones' personal existence; they relate to his racial past;

Scene V: an auction on a southern plantation;

Scene VI: the ocean crossing of a slave ship;

Scene VII: an encounter with a Congo Witch-Doctor and the Crocodile God.

The order of the time sequence is broken, as Tiusanen indicates, with the placing of Jeff before the killing of the guard, which is a more recent event (1968: 105). This interruption of the order, however, simply serves as another sign of Jones' chaotic state of mind in his flight.

On the levels of the iconic and indexical (the mimetic) Jones becomes lost because it is night and he does not know the terrain well. The sense of being physically lost becomes symbolic of his mental confusion, chaos, and ultimate disintegration as a person. As he wanders around, this is reflected in his glorious emperor's uniform ("a light blue uniform coat, sprayed with brass buttons, heavy gold chevrons on his shoulders, gold braid on the collar, etc. His pants are bright red with a light blue stripe down the side. Patent leather laced boots with brass spurs..." [Scene I; p. 6]), which is torn to shreds. This sign of authority is symbolic of Jones' arrogance in this position in life which is unnatural for him; as emperor he pretends to be something that he is not, different from others of his →

race, those whom he dominates and refers to derrogatorily as "low-flung bush niggers". Over the following scenes the outfit becomes symbolic of Jones' disintegration as a human being:

> *"He has lost his panama hat... his brilliant uniform shows several large rents" (Scene III, p. 21);*
>
> *"His uniform is ragged and torn" (Scene IV, p. 23);*
>
> *"His pants are in tatters, his shoes cut and misshapen, flapping about on his feet" (Scene V, p. 26);*
>
> *"His pants have been so torn away that what is left of them is no better than a breech cloth" (Scene VI, p. 29).*

His disintegrating uniform is then indexical of flight through a rough place, while at the same time, it is symbolic of the stripping away of layers of his being, i.e., his state of mind. He regresses from Emperor (i.e., civilized; reflected in the setting of the palace in Scene I) to his racial origins (i.e., primitive; reflected in the forest scenes). The civilized and the primitive are suggested by the name Brutus (irrational; stupid) Jones (a common human name). The disintegration is also reflected in a symbolic fall from the palace, which is described as situated on high ground and where Jones is emperor, to the forest where he is lost and a fugitive.

O'Neill carefully indicates certain kinesic aspects (movements, facial expressions, gestures, etc.) in his sidetext, particularly those that relate to the antinomy of the real and the imagined. The imagined personages who appear in the forest scenes move in such a way as to suggest that they are not real; generally, the descriptions imply corresponding facial expressions and body postures. Although the movements, and the pantomime that occurs, are iconic in that they refer to real movements, they become symbolic of Jones' chaotic confusion of the real and the imagined. In other words, the meaning emerges from the context and is arbitrary, not necessarily signifying the same outside the text. Jones moves around the stage in a manner that is an iconic and indexical representation of a man in flight. On occasion, his movements change and are similar to those of the creations of his mind (in Scene VII he enters into the dance with the Witch-Doctor: "...he beats time with his hands and sways his body to and fro from the waist." [p. 32]). At these moments there is a sense of metaperformance achieved; Jones participates in a drama that his mind creates and then withdraws from this when he realizes that it is not real. In general, however, a contrast is realized to indicate that the other figures on the stage during the forest scenes exist only in Jones' mind at that moment:

> *Scene II: the Little Formless Fears are black and shapeless forms that move around with difficulty and in silence on the stage;*
>
> *Scene III: Jeff moves with mechanical movements like an automaton, in silence, and disappears in a cloud of smoke when Jones fires on him;*
>
> *Scene IV: the convicts' movements are "those of automatons, — rigid, slow, and mechanical" (p. 24); in the same scene, Jones, reliving the killing of the guard, performs this in pantomime with an invisible shovel; he realizes, however, that his hands are empty and for a moment the characters are caught between the illusion and reality of the situation: "They stand fixed in motionless attitudes, their eyes on the ground. The guard seems to wait expectantly, his back turned to the attacker." (p. 24);*
>
> *Scene V: at the slave auction, the planters and spectators of the sale, "exchange greetings in dumb show, and chat silently together. There is something stiff, rigid, unreal, marionettish about their movements" (p. 27); Jones becomes caught up in this silent spectacle and put on the auction block but suddenly realizes that it is not real, as seen in his facial expressions: "He dares to look down and around him. Over his face abject terror gives way to mystification, to gradual realization..." (p. 28);*
>
> *Scene VI: the slaves on the ship are silent and motionless as the scene opens, but "Then they begin to sway slowly forward toward each and back again in unison, as if they were laxly letting themselves follow the long roll of a ship at sea" (p. 29); the only props used to suggest a ship are two rows of chairs and seated figures in loincloths;*
>
> *Scene VII: the place is suggested by the costume and actions of the Witch-Doctor, i.e., his chant and dance that gives way to a narrative pantomime: "...his croon is an incantation, a charm to allay the fierceness of some implacable deity demanding sacrifices. He flees, he is pursued by devils, he hides, he flees again. Ever wilder and wilder becomes his flight, nearer and nearer draws the pursuing evil, more and more the spirit of terror gains possession of him" (p. 31). As Jones observes this, he is seeing a mirror image of himself and his own flight, terror, and fears.* »

As Carpenter has noted, there are two devices that function as unifiers for the various scenes: the two very noticeable sound effects of the tom-tom and the gun shots. This critic sees these in terms of both the physical and psychological (cf. Carpenter 1979: 89), which corresponds somewhat to our notion of the shifting function of the sign. As Tornqvist (1969: 157) says, "we vacillate between regarding the sound as internal and external reality as our minds fluctuate between the rational and the irrational, reason and emotion." Tiusanen (1968: 102) also explains the tom-tom in terms of the real and symbolic: "At this point [in the opening scene] there are no symbolic overtones; the tom-tom is simply a sign that the Emperor's subjects have deserted him and gathered on the hills...". Both the tom-tom and the gun shots, as these critics have pointed out in different terms, are signs that function in different ways. The sounds are physically experienced by the audience, i.e., they are reproduced to serve as iconic signs with indexical functions. They are, in other words, mimetic. However, they also function symbolically in that they come to signify Jones' inner chaos, his being torn between the real of the present moment and the imagined from the past, as he flees through the physical chaos of the forest. The sounds of the tom-tom function indexically as a war call and symbolically as a sign of nervousness, reflecting Jones' heart beat at various moments of the text. The gun shots are indexical in that they point to the fact that a gun has been fired and symbolic in that they signify Jones' fears and nervousness as he tries to dispell the ghosts of his personal and racial past. Both sound effects are used in the forest scenes to punctuate the emotional state of the protagonist, and thus support the underlying tensions of sign function in different sign systems that signify Jones' confusion of the real and the imagined.

O'Neill introduces the sound effect of the tom-tom in Scene I and repeats it in each of the following scenes until Jones' death in the last: Scene I: "From the distant hills comes the faint, steady thump of a tom-tom, low and vibrating. It starts out at a rate exactly corresponding to normal pulse beat — 72 to the minute — and continues at a gradually accelerating rate from this point uninterruptedly to the very end of the play" (p. 14). The significance of this sign, in addition to a purely mimetic function, is established in the written text in the first scene. However, this is perhaps not comprehended by the spectator until Scene II and subsequent ones when the instructions are carefully reiterated by the playwright, usually in conjunction with the gun shots:

> *Scene II: "He fires. There is a flash, a loud report, the silence broken only by the far-off, quickening throb of the tom-tom" (p. 20);*
>
> *Scene III: "He fires... The beat of the far-off tom-tom is perceptibly louder and more rapid" (p. 22);*
>
> *Scene IV: "He frees the revolver and fires point blank at the Guard's back... The only sounds are a crashing in the underbrush... and the throbbing of the tom-tom still far distant, but increased in volume of sound and rapidity of beat" (p. 25);*
>
> *Scene V: "He fires at the Auctioneer and at the Planter... Only blackness remains and silence broken... by the quickened, ever louder beat of the tom-tom" (p. 28);*
>
> *Scene VI: there is no shot in the scene where Jones becomes a part of the imagined aspect of the slaves on the ship; he joins in their wails of despair; the shots up to this point have been established as a pattern and the lack of one in this scene thus is a sign in itself signifying Jones' joining his past and not attempting to "kill" it; the tom-tom is used, however, it accompanies the voices of the slaves, their despair "directed and controlled by the throb of the tom-tom..." (p. 20); as the scene ends and Jones returns to the reality of his physical flight, the tom-tom "beats louder, quicker, with a more insistent, triumphant pulsation" (p. 20);*
>
> *Scene VII: the tom-tom accompanies the dance of the Witch-Doctor: "...the tom-tom grows to a fierce, exultant boom whose throbs seem to fill the air with vibrating rhythm"; as the scene ends Jones fires the last bullet (the silver one that he has used to dupe the natives into thinking that it is the only thing that will kill him) into the head of the crocodile; he lies on the ground "whimpering with fear as the throb of the tom-tom fills the silence about him with a somber pulsation of a baffled but revengeful power" (pp. 32-33);*
>
> *Scene VIII: the tom-tom continues and "seems to be on the very spot, so loud and continuously vibrating are its beats" (p. 33); the sounds here are indexical of the closeness of Jones' pursuers and symbolic of his final moments of life; when the rifle shots are heard, "the beating of the tom-tom abruptly ceases", "indicating that the chase has ended and symbolizing the end of Jones' internal journey.*

Ultimately the Great Forest, as a sign of Jones' internal and external realities, comes to function symbolically as a sign whose object is the protagonist's sense of total entrapment. The stage, divided

between the real and the imagined, the here and now vs. the then and there, becomes in the moments of the imagined (the then and there) interpretant signs in the mind of Jones — i.e., it is what he is actually thinking, his actual perception of reality. These interpretants provoke interpretant signs in the mind of the spectator who becomes caught between the presented interpretants and his own. He synthesizes the interpretants as he compares and contrasts the two states clearly drawn out by the opposing sign functions of iconic and indexical and those converted into symbolic functions in Jones' imagination. The stage space, which is a space of confinement and enclosure in its own right marked off for performance as opposed to other activities, comes to represent a space of confinement and entrapment in which the tensions between sign functions occur. This parallels and reflects the inner sense of Jones' imprisonment as the stage space is transformed into a symbolic sign of his confusion of the real and the imagined. The stage thus constitutes a commentary on the individual's reality as consisting of both the imagined and the actual.

A number of elements support the construction of a final understanding of the text being a sign of man's entrapment and the corresponding feelings of aloneness and frustration. These appear in various sign systems of the performance text: the visual signs of the settings, including the actors; the use of what is essentially a monologue throughout most of the text; the circular plot structure.

The stage decor includes a number of visual images that suggest the overall metaphor of entrapment and isolation. Each scene contains some image in the setting that suggests enclosure or confinement. The physical signs are indicated in his sidetext, beginning with the notion that the entire action is played out on a remote, unknown island. Scene I occurs in the emperor's palace with its "bare, white-washed walls" situated on high ground away from the other inhabitants of the island. The natives, with whom Jones feels no racial solidarity as evidenced in his constant references to them as "low-flung, bush niggers" (p. 7), have fled and abandoned their leader. As Smithers says of the palace, giving it more an air of confinement, "This palace of his is like a bleeding tomb" (p. 4). The remaining scenes take place either on the edge or in the Great Forest. Scene II: the edge of the Great Forest where the world is divided into plain and forest; the forest and the sense of aloneness it manifests visually ("...its brooding, implacable silence" — p. 17) become signs of Jones' physical entrapment as he becomes lost and cannot escape. Within the forest scenes the protagonist is alone with his ghosts; the dialogue of Scene I becomes monologue for the remainder of the text, and the monologue becomes a sign of Jones' aloneness and entrapment. It is language directed to himself since there is no other person in the forest except his ghosts. Language then in the text is a self-expression of all the protagonist's fears and frustrations. When Jones speaks with the figures that appear in his delirium, they do not reply; they are simply projections of his inner self, his own creations that cannot answer him. Scene III: "A dense low wall of underbrush and creepers is in the nearer foreground, fencing in a small triangular clearing. Beyond this is the massed blackness of the forest like an encompassing barrier" (p. 21). Scene IV: "A wide dirt road runs diagonally from right, front, to left, rear. Rising sheer on both sides the forest walls it in" (p. 23). Scene V: "A large circular clearing, enclosed by the serried ranks of gigantic trunks of tall trees whose tops are lost to view" (p. 26). Scene VI: "A cleared space in the forest. The limbs of the trees meet over it forming a low ceiling about five feet from the ground. The interlocked ropes of creepers reaching upward to entwine the tree trunks give an arched appearance to the sides. The space thus enclosed is like the dark, noisome hold of some ancient vessel" (pp. 28-29). Scene VII: the scene represents a space with an altar between a forest and a river.

Other signs, while functioning symbolically signifying Jones' inner disintegration in his journey back in time, serve as indices of enslavement and confinement. The choice of a black man as protagonist, particularly at the moment when the text was written, is significant: O'Neill chose a member of society already recognized as restricted and limited in freedom. Jones' blackness is indexical of his race and symbolic of his lack of freedom. These signs refer to race, both in the past and in the present; some actually occur during Jones' life, others appear in his delirium:

Scene II: the Little Formless Fears of Jones' first hallucination are black; these are "formless" in that Jones' fears have not become concretized and defined into specific forms as they will in the following scenes;

Scene III: Jeff, the man that Jones killed, is a black and dressed in a Pullman's uniform, a sign of a servile profession, limited mostly to blacks at the time of composition of the play;

Scene IV: costumes and guard indicate a prison scene; all the convicts are black;

Scene V: the auction scene — with black slaves being sold to whites;

Scene VI: the slave ship;

Scene VII: the Congo Witch-Doctor, suggesting the black man's earliest ancestry and perhaps an enslavement to beliefs and magic.

In these scenes Jones is torn between the entrapment of the actual moment in the forest and the situation of the enslaved characters of his hallucinations. His entrapment is then both real and imagined. In Scene VIII, Jones enters a final enslavement, the final entrapment: death. This is reiterated by the fact that his journey, internally a regression to his origins and nothingness, is externally circular. Jones has not managed to escape his pursuers and ends up in the exact spot where he entered the forest. A final irony emerges in that Jones is killed by a silver bullet like the one he considered his "rabbit's foot" (p. 10).

Jones is a man torn and trapped between reality and illusion because of his fears and guilts. He is the synthesis of both reality and illusion, as confirmed by the visual aspects of iconic, indexical and symbolic signs of the stage. In a sense, he is like the stage, like theater itself — i.e., a synthesis of the real and the illusory, a sign that the real consists of both the actual and the imagined. ❑

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The Absence of the Rose: Emily, Faulkner and the Reader*

Ausência da Rosa: Emily, Faulkner e o Leitor

Die Abwesenheit der Rose: Emily, Faulkner und der Leser

Maria de Fátima Marçal dos SANTOS**

Summary

The objective of this paper is to analyse some aspects of William Faulkner's short story **"A rose for Emily"** *using as basic theoretical reference some of the concepts developed by C.S. Peirce in his theory of signs and also some of the ideas found in the psychoanalytical work of J. Lacan. As theoretical instruments of analysis they will be used with the specific purpose of elucidating the process of reading and interpreting the literary text.*

Resumo

O objetivo deste trabalho consiste em analisar alguns aspectos do conto **A rose for Emily** *de William Faulkner usando como referência teórica básica alguns dos conceitos desenvolvidos por C. S. Peirce em sua teoria dos signos, assim como algumas das idéias encontradas no trabalho psicanalítico de J. Lacan. Enquanto instrumentos teóricos de análise tais conceitos serão utilizados com o propósito específico de elucidar aspectos do processo de leitura e interpretação do texto literário.*

A rose for Emily[1] is the title given to a story narrated by a first person plural narrator. The point of view seems to be that of a whole town, for whom Miss Emily Grierson is an object of both their admiration and their fear. When she dies all of them go to her funeral: "The men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house"... (Faulkner, 1948, 119). Throughout the story all her movements and acts are observed by this attentive audience, sometimes with sympathy and in other occasions with a mixture of resentment and fear. But all we readers get to know about Miss Emily is that nobody knows who she really is or what exactly she is doing.

What the reader has is a sequence of events organized in such way that he has access to what the townspeople get to know about Miss Emily through the same limited means established by their relationship with the character. We seem to have at least two possible interpretational layers here, one established by the townspeople's observation of Miss Emily's life and the other established by our aprehension of their observations through the narrative itself. Both their curiosity about Miss Emily and our interest in the story through their curiosity converge to determine the relationship between the two layers, which creates a third one, where a more elaborate interpretation takes place.

The reader is informed first that Miss Emily is dead. The story begins with her funeral. She had finally gone "to join those august names where they lay in the cedar-bemused cemetery among the ranked and anonymous graves of Union and Confederate soldiers"... (Faulkner, 1948, 119). Then we are informed that "Alive, she had been a tradition, a duty and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town"... (119). She had had her tax obligations remitted after her father's death. But the new authorities do not find such =>

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record in their books, and thus send a deputation to see her about the matter. At this point we have the first description of Miss Emily's physical appearance and of the interior of her house, by then already inaccessible to the townspeople. Nobody had passed through her door for at least eight years. Through the eyes of the city representatives we can see that she is a small, fat little woman and that she looks "bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water". (121) In this episode her description, sluggish dust and the ticking of an invisible watch together with the fact that Miss Emily refers her visitors to Colonel Sartory, already dead for almost ten years, work as indexical signs[2] of an important interpretant in the text: time.

Time is at the level of narrative that which organizes the reader's aprehension of the events in the text. In Faulkner's story we have a series of time shifts from past to present. We begin with Miss Emily's funeral, go on to the above mentioned episode, then back thirty years before, when a smell developed from her house, bothering the whole community around her. Again retrospectively, from this episode backwards we are told about her father's death and her peculiar attitude towards it. Then we come to the Homer Baron episode, which is retrospective concerning the smell and posterior to her father's death. The limitations encountered by both the reader and the narrator as an observer of a series of events whose interpretation refers always to other events located at a different period, bring about a new perspective concerning the role of time, and contingently of memory, in the significance of the whole text.

In that respect time seems to fit into at least two different categories, which may be illustrated and clarified by resorting to Peirce's idea of secondness and thirdness. According to Peirce

The idea of second is predominant in the ideas of causation and of statical force. For cause and effect are two; and statical forces always occur between pairs. Constraint is a Secondness. In the flow of time in the mind, the past appears to act directly upon the future, its effect being called memory, while the future only acts upon the past through the medium of thirds."[3]

About Thirdness he says that

A fork in a road is a third, it supposes three ways; a straight road, considered merely as a connection between two places is second, but so far as it implies passing through intermediate places it is third. Position is first, velocity or the relation of two successive positions second, acceleration or the relation of three successive positions third. (Peirce, 80)

So we have that in the development of the narrative, time constitutes, in a certain sense, an element of Secondness as it establishes through indexical reference to past events the relationship of cause and effect between what happened before and what is happening now. Miss Emily's refusal to admit the death of her father and her withholding of his body are described by means of a recollection of her past experiences. However, such a recollection is the townspeople's interpretation of her past experiences: "We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will". (Faulkner, 1948, 124). Consequently they did not say that she was crazy then, but they did produce an argument of an abductive nature, a third, on the basis of indexical (dicent) signs.

This shows that when it comes to time as a third what we have is a relation involving meaning. As Peirce says meaning is a triadic relation, inexpressible by means of dyadic relations alone. Therefore time as thirdness involves not just the straight connection between events, as the cause and effect relationship between past and present, but a more elaborate process of understanding which requires a more elaborate interpretation of what had previously been established by such connection. What we have is the future acting upon the past, as we have quoted from Peirce, through the medium of thirds.

In **A rose for Emily** the narrative advances, through a series of time shifts, to the unclosing of a room which had been locked for forty years. The room is forced open by the townspeople and what is revealed to the reader takes him back again in time, now to reconstruct his interpretation of the story. Now, the fact that the narrator, knowing all through the story what was inside the locked room, chooses not to reveal it until the end of his narrative leads the reader to realize that he had been tricked into an interpretive construction that does not correspond to what was "really" happening. It is only by interpreting the text at this new level introduced by the realization of the missing information that the reader can advance to aprehend time as a new interpretant for the text. The narrative device represents, itself, an important clue to this new level of interpretation.

Rimmon-Kenan (1983) makes a very interesting comment about what she calls "the paradoxical position of the text vis-à-vis its reader":

There is one end every text must achieve: it must make certain that it will be read; its very existence, as it were, depends on it. Interestingly, the text is caught here in a double bind. On the one hand, in order to be read it must make itself understood, it must ...

enhance intelligibility by unchoring itself in codes, frames. Gestalten familiar to the reader. But if the text is understood too quickly, it would thereby come to an untimely end.[4]

If we look into the process of exchange within the narrative and between text and reader we may be able to find that such process is based not on the exchange of things, such as a mere sequence of events, but on the exchange of something we could call an absence. In our story, instead of time as a factor of textual coherence, what we have is a series of time shifts interwoven in such a way that what is exchanged between text and reader could be said to be the absence of time. This absence is marked by traces of the deletion of certain events along the temporal axis. The sequence presented by the narrative is a creation, invented by the townspeople and all based on what their own framework of reference made them believe to be true. But that could not in fact be otherwise, for the past, as we realize from their mistaken interpretation, is not what determines the future; it happens that it is the future what determines the past! If we carry on with our interpretation we have that after all there is no such thing as time as linear flow, for it seems to be just an illusion when it comes the realm of literature. Meaning is not related to what is there, but to our interpretation of what is not. It is by reading that we "recover" time, through the filling of meaning gaps.

Returning to Miss Emily, to the townspeople's curiosity about her and to our interest in the story we again come across an absence. Nobody knows exactly who she is or what she means. There is no exchange between Miss Emily and the other inhabitants of Jefferson. The narrator tells us that they had long thought of the Griersons "as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door". (Faulkner, 1948, 123). If we take Peirce's definition of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness as "the being of positive qualitative possibility, the being of actual fact, and the being of law that will govern facts in the future" (Peirce, 75) we seem to be able to relate Miss Emily to Firstness, the presentation of events to Secondness, and narrative and our interpretation to Thirdness.

Peirce (76) explains Firstness as

the mode of being which consists in its subject's being positively such as it is regardless of aught else. That can only be a possibility. For as long as things do not act upon one another there is no sense or meaning in saying that they have any being, unless it be that they are such in themselves that they may perhaps come into relation with others.

We could also try to establish a relation with Lacan's classification of mental processes into the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Within discourse the Real corresponds to that which commands the unknown. It is not an object of definition but one of evocation. It escapes symbolization and is situated outside language. The only way it can be aprehended is through the Symbolic. The Symbolic corresponds to the realm of the exchange between subjects. It is the place of mediation, of triangular relations, of desire and meaning. The Imaginary is the region of relationships forming pairs of mutually exclusive terms, the region of symmetry and oppositional dualities. From this perspective we would be able to take Miss Emily as fitting within the category of the Real, narrative within the Imaginary and interpretation or the exchange between the text and the reader within the Symbolic.

The similarities between Peirce's categories of being, Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness, and Lacan's proposed functions, the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic are striking and deserve further consideration; but this is not our objective here and therefore we will take into account only those aspects that can be used to help with the clarification of the specific points of our analysis of Faulkner's story.

Back to Miss Emily, refusal seems to be what consistently punctuates her behavior and what defines her relationships. She refuses to pay her taxes, refuses to move from her old house, which lifts "its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps — an eyesore among eyesores" (Faulkner, 1948, 119). Time for her does not flow. When she is visited by the representatives of the Board of Alderman about the payment of her taxes she sends them to see Colonel Sartori, who had been dead almost ten years. When her father dies she does not admit of his death. When the ladies came to her house "Miss Emily met them at the door, dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead". (123) In spite of her attitude the townspeople did not say she was crazy.

In psychoanalytical terminology the words rejection, refusal and disavowal are used related to the idea of refusal, which constitutes the point of departure in the development of psychosis. It is opposed to repression, which is the correspondent basic mechanism constituting neurosis. In Lacanian terms the psychotic repudiates the "name-of-the-father", or the Law, and therefore does not access the Symbolic order, which is the domain of language.

According to the theory, it is through the Symbolic relationship of the Oedipus complex that the child is integrated into a dialectical and triangular relationship where the mediation of desire makes possible the emergence of language.

The Symbolic order is constructed around the "name-of-the-father" or the Law. If the Law is rejected (and not repressed) the whole Symbolic order will be rejected with it and therefore there will be no language. In his dellusions the psychotic employs a language in which signifier and signified are not distinguished from one another. His discourse would be then a message about words, instead of a message employing words.

At this point we have seen that there is no exchange between Miss Emily and the townspeople-narrator of the story. Thus we have a lack. The analysis of the temporal signs has led to the conclusion that what we have in fact is another lack. Based on that there should be no difficulty in our understanding the complete absence of a ROSE all through the narrative of **A rose for Emily.** It is by means of our interpretation of the other elements in the story that we arrive at the meaning of the rose. The rose is exactly what is not there and therefore can be exchanged. It refers us to the representation relation itself and can be regarded as the very condition for the existence of the story we have just read or of any other story, each of them their own "emily" and their own "rose". ❑

NOTES

1 FAULKNER, William. *Collected stories of William Faulkner*. New York, Random House, 1948. (p. 119-130). All further references to the story are to be made in the text to page numbers.

2 "An index is a sign, or representation, which refers to its object not so much because of any similarity or analogy with it... as because it is in dynamical (including spacial) connection both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the senses or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign, on the other hand..." (From Peirce's *Collected writings*, p. 107).

3 PEIRCE, C. S. *Philosophical writings*.. Buchler, J. (ed.). New York; Dover. (p. 79). Henceforth mentioned parenthetically in the text.

4 RIMMON-KENAN, Schlomith. *Narrative fiction*: contemporary poetics. New York; Methuen, 1983. (p. 122)

Descentrando a Crítica: A Literatura das Minorias*

Dicentering Criticism: The Literature of Minorities

Dezentralisation der Kritik: Die Literatur der Minoritäten

Eliana Lourenço de Lima REIS**

Resumo

Partindo do conceito de "literatura menor" de Deleuze e Guattari, este trabalho procura mostrar como a literatura e a crítica são encaradas por autores pertencentes ao Terceiro Mundo e a grupos minoritários dentro dos grandes centros. Ao comparar as opiniões do martiniquense Edouard Glissant e do crítico negro americano Henry Louis Gates Jr. com as idéias de autores brasileiros contemporâneos, podemos perceber como, embora originários de culturas diversas, estes autores se aproximam em seus pontos de vista, principalmente na defesa do direito à diferença.

Summary

Writers and critics of the Third World and of minority groups in developed countries, despite representing different cultures, share similar points of view, especially the affirmation of the right to one's difference. In the light of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "minor literature", this paper endeavors to present the ideas of the Martiniquan writer Edouard Glissant and of the Negro critic Henry Louis Gates, Jr., as well as to compare them to the opinions of some contemporary Brazilian writers and critics.

A atitude crítica dos filósofos deste século em relação aos postulados tradicionais da filosofia levou a um questionamento dos conceitos básicos da metafísica ocidental. Consequentemente, abalaram-se muitas das certezas que norteavam as reflexões crítico-filosóficas. Segundo Jacques Derrida, é preciso ler "de uma certa maneira" os textos filosóficos, abandonando a noção de que sua linguagem é transparente; os próprios conceitos teriam um valor de verdade apenas relativo e deveriam ser utilizados unicamente com valor metodológico. Os três conceitos básicos da metafísica ocidental são colocados em dúvida: o fonocentrismo (a fala não pode ser considerada superior à escrita), o logocentrismo (toda linguagem é representação) e, finalmente, o etnocentrismo (a raça branca não tem primazia sobre as outras). Já que, como afirmou Lévi-Strauss, não existe mito de referência, Derrida defende o abandono a uma referência, ou centro, a uma origem ou arquia absolutas. Como não há um significado transcendental ordenando uma estrutura, qualquer signo pode estar no centro. O discurso filosófico, dessacralizado, desconstruído, descentrado, perde então seu estatuto de veículo oficial da verdade.

Se antes a noção de que existe apenas uma verdade induzia à procura de uma ordem normalizadora, que buscava a identidade, passa-se agora à legitimação da diferença. Os resultados desta nova maneira de encarar o discurso filosófico refletem-se logo na literatura. Depois de nivelar fala e escrita, Derrida procura colocar lado a lado o discurso filosófico e literário sem que o primeiro detenha uma posição privilegiada de discurso puro, transparente e, consequentemente, verdadeiro. Além disso, já que não se pode opor margem e centro, não se pode conferir uma superioridade às "grandes »

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literaturas", isto é, à produção artística das culturas dominantes. O resultado é a valorização das literaturas de países de Terceiro Mundo e também daquelas produzidas por grupos "marginais" dentro dos grandes centros.

Ao publicarem *Kafka: por uma literatura menor*, em 1975, Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari fazem uma análise da obra de Franz Kafka sob o ponto de vista de literatura de minoria. As chamadas "literaturas menores" se distinguiriam das grandes literaturas não por serem inferiores ou dependentes, mas apenas por serem diferentes: "Uma literatura menor não é a de uma língua menor, mas antes a que uma minoria faz em uma língua maior." (Deleuze e Guattari, 1977, 25) No adjetivo "menor" não estaria presente um juízo de valor, mas a constatação da inferioridade numérica dos falantes. Na mesma situação de Kafka, judeu escrevendo em alemão em Praga, estão grande número de autores pertencentes a grupos que se vêem na necessidade de usar várias línguas. Na verdade, cada uma delas cumpre uma função diferente em consequência das relações de poder e de ideologia envolvidas. Ao lado da língua vernácula, materna ou territorial, às vezes rural, ligada ao "aqui", alinham-se outras: a veicular, língua urbana do comércio, da burocracia e da sociedade (como o latim no passado e o inglês atualmente), a referencial ou língua da cultura e, finalmente, a língua mítica, de uso religioso. No caso de Kafka, escrever em alemão significa usar uma língua ao mesmo tempo veicular e cultural, que tem atrás de si toda a tradição de uma grande cultura e literatura. No entanto, o alemão de Praga é uma língua desterritorializada, "afastada das massas, como "uma linguagem de papel" ou artificial (...) própria a estranhos usos menores." (Deleuze e Guattari, 1977, 26) Para Deleuze e Guattari, o que caracteriza Kafka é o uso "intensivo"[1] (Deleuze e Guattari, 1977, 35) que ele faz do alemão. Portanto, não importa a língua que o escritor escolhe, mas apenas se a usa de uma maneira não convencional, desfamiliarizando-a para dotá-la de novas significações: "Grande e revolucionário, somente o menor (...) Estar em sua própria língua como estrangeiro (...) Ainda que maior, uma língua é suscetível de um uso intensivo que a faz correr seguindo linhas de fuga criadoras (...)" (Deleuze e Guattari, 1977, 40-41). O conceito de "literatura menor" designaria então "as condições revolucionárias de toda literatura no seio daquela que chamamos de grande (ou estabelecida). Mesmo aquele que tem a infelicidade de nascer no país de uma grande literatura, deve escrever em sua língua, como um judeu tcheco escreve alemão, ou como um usbeque escreve em russo. Escrever como um cão que faz seu buraco, um rato que faz sua toca. E, para isso, encontrar seu próprio ponto de subdesenvolvimento, seu próprio patoá, seu próprio terceiro mundo, seu próprio deserto." (Deleuze e Guattari, 1977, 28-9)

Os conceitos de "grande literatura" e "literatura menor", portanto, embora se oponham, podem conviver numa mesma realidade, achando-se ligados basicamente às idéias de tradição e autoridade. A grande literatura pode ser vista como o veículo da ideologia dominante e da tradição, ou seja, de uma convenção já estabelecida. Já a literatura menor seria a voz emergente que busca um caminho novo, independente e pessoal; uma literatura que, apesar de não se submeter à tradição, não a nega totalmente, pois existe "no seio da grande literatura." Trata-se, pois, de uma questão de escolha, de endossar a posição da maioria ou de assumir-se como minoria que tem voz própria, e que assume sua diferença. É aí que reside o caráter eminentemente político das literaturas menores, em que o caso individual vale na medida em que remete a uma realidade mais ampla e em que a enunciação, ao invés de individuada, passa a ser coletiva.

As idéias de Deleuze e Guattari são bastante úteis como pontos de partida para se examinar como a literatura é encarada atualmente nos países situados fora dos grandes centros culturais ou por grupos minoritários dentro desses mesmos centros. É interessante notar como os escritores e críticos das literaturas menores, mesmo vivendo em países diferentes e expressando-se através de línguas e culturas diversas, aproximam-se em sua maneira de ver a literatura. Tendo isso em vista, pretendo examinar as idéias de Edouard Glissant em entrevista (Glissant, 1984, 83-100) concedida a Wolfgang Bader em 1982 a respeito da literatura das Antilhas, e também as opiniões de Henry Louis Gates Jr. sobre a literatura negra (Gates, 1984, 1-24 e 285-317). Dentro do possível, pretendo relacionar o que os dois autores pensam com linhas de pesquisa semelhantes no Brasil, já que também nos situamos num contexto de país fora dos grandes centros.

O martiniquense Edouard Glissant, militante da descolonização das Antilhas, propõe como base de seu trabalho o que denomina "poética da relação", ou seja, a consciência de que as culturas e civilizações estão em permanente contato umas com as outras. Para ele, o importante é que haja um relacionamento em pé de igualdade, recusando a idéia de que, no encontro entre duas culturas, uma fatalmente irá dominar ou absorver a outra. Glissant condena também o nacionalismo estreito e os engajamentos políticos que impedem o poeta de ver o que se passa realmente no mundo. O escritor precisa se abrir para o mundo todo e não apenas para os antigos eixos: "A mon avis, à l'heure actuelle, un poète n'est poète — pour moi, je ne dis pas que c'est une verité totale — que quand il éprouve dans sa sensibilité et dans son exigence d'expression tout ce qui se passe dans ce champ de la relation mondiale et qu'il essaie d'exprimer à travers lui et à travers les valeurs de sa propre culture." (Glissant, 1984, 84) (É interessante notar como o discurso de Glissant, que procura abertura para visões diferentes da realidade, também na sua enunciação foge de qualquer atitude dogmática e autoritária na -

ressalva de que trata-se somente de sua opinião, que não pode ser tomada como verdade última). Para Glissant, não se trata apenas de descrever a situação específica das Antilhas, mas de trabalhar uma realidade mais ampla a partir do ponto de vista de quem ali vive.

O destinatário de seus livros não é o leitor francês, mas todo o público possível, principalmente o antilhano, para quem quer transmitir a idéia de uma civilização caribenha que existe nos fatos mas nem sempre nas consciências. Através da literatura, Glissant deseja evocar pontos que os antilhanos teriam em comum, mesmo sem estar conscientes disto. Ao tentar unir como participantes de um sentimento de "antilhanidade" os habitantes de todas as ilhas do Caribe, Glissant assume uma atitude à primeira vista um tanto idealista: até que ponto é possível unir grupos de línguas nacionais diferentes (inglês, flamengo, francês) e de tradições culturais provenientes de vários países da Europa? É verdade que as ilhas possuem elementos comuns, como o sistema de plantações como base da sociedade, o problema da dependência político-cultural ou apenas cultural e, sobretudo, o sentimento de que a civilização antilhana está ameaçada de desaparecer devido à assimilação. O papel da literatura seria justamente confirmar e aprofundar os vínculos já existentes.

A questão do francês como língua usada por Glissant remete-nos às idéias de Deleuze e Guattari sobre o uso menor de uma língua maior. Como a língua materna da Martinica, o "créole", é apenas oral, o francês torna-se ao mesmo tempo a língua veicular e cultural. Exprimir-se em francês fora do movimento natural de evolução da literatura francesa acaba por criar uma situação nova, pois a língua passa a ser o veículo de uma minoria que rejeita a ideologia a ela ligada. O francês, desterritorializado na Martinica, é reterritorializado pelo uso particular que dele faz um escritor como Glissant e pela diferença de contexto, de tal maneira que o leitor europeu provavelmente terá dificuldade de compreensão. O francês, ao invés de ser apenas um instrumento de assimilação, pode se tornar um meio de recompor, através da literatura, a história objetiva que se perdeu: "nous devons réinventer la périodisation de notre histoire par divination poétique." (Glissant, 1984) Como, ao contrário de povos da África ou Ásia, as Antilhas não têm tradição ou passado cultural ancestral (a população nativa foi dizimada), a história estudada é a história do Outro. Portanto, é preciso criar uma espécie de inconsciente coletivo, ou memória coletiva, que sirva de traço de união entre os antilhanos.

É justamente através do uso menor das línguas maiores que Glissant acredita unir as Antilhas, pois "quelle que soit la langue que nous employons dans la Caraïbe, il me semble que nous avons le même language." (Glissant, 1984, 91) Ao opor língua e linguagem Glissant procura resolver o problema das diversas línguas faladas na região. Apesar de seu plurilingüismo e das diferenças individuais, os antilhanos falariam uma *linguagem* comum, já que suas palavras exprimiriam uma realidade nova e coletiva, "une réalité qui ne s'est pas encore exprimée." (Glissant, 1984, 91) Por outro lado, os escritores das grandes literaturas "ont trop exprimé une réalité saturée de convention ou de contrainte," (Glissant, 1984, 92) o que empobreceu sua produção literária. Glissant acha que o fechamento dos europeus em si repercute em sua literatura, que se ressentiria da dificuldade que os antigos centros encontram de se adaptar às novas condições políticas nas relações internacionais: "être dans le monde avec les autres et non plus dominer et régenter le monde." (Glissant, 1984, 85) Glissant acredita que muitos elementos da poética européia estão mudando graças à literatura das antigas colônias, e que são os próprios europeus que devem procurar se enriquecer com a produção dos outros países, pois qualquer tentativa de influir diretamente correria o risco de repetir a situação anterior. Portanto, para que a poética da relação funcione, é preciso que os países se coloquem no mesmo nível e aceitem influências culturais recíprocas sem que estas sejam impostas através da tentativa de assimilação.

Já que as culturas devem se relacionar em igualdade de condições, as várias ideologias precisam conviver sem pretender demonstrar que têm o domínio da verdade. Glissant recusa o conceito de Verdade universal e generalizante e advoga o direito de haver vários sistemas de verdade que não se excluem: "je conçois la vérité de l'Autre, même si je n'y ai pas accès directement (...) Je pense que l'Occident petit à petit a accordé aux autres le droit à la différence." (Glissant, 1984, 96) Para tanto é preciso abandonar o hábito de querer tudo compreender como forma de poder; é preciso aceitar as culturas, civilizações e sociedades que não se pode entender, pois elas têm uma verdade que só a elas pertence.

A poética da relação seria, pois, uma poética do diálogo, da pluridiscursividade, da polifonia: o discurso antilhano, como todos os outros, não ficaria fechado em si nem na produção nem na recepção. Ao escrever, Glissant aceita a tradição recebida, seja a língua francesa e a cultura européia, seja a tradição oral de seu povo (tradição ao mesmo tempo africana e "créole"), o que faz com que várias vozes falem através dele. Como dizem Deleuze e Guattari, na sua escrita "não há sujeito, *há apenas agenciamentos coletivos de enunciação*" (Deleuze e Guattari, 1977, 28) de caráter eminentemente político, como em toda literatura menor. A mesma abertura verifica-se na escolha de seu destinatário: Glissant procura escrever para qualquer público possível e não apenas o europeu ou o antilhano. Ele não deseja "privilegiar zonas de receptividade", pois todos os povos se equivalem em importância. Sua obra estará, então, sujeita a leituras variadas, pois feitas a partir de pontos de vista totalmente diferentes.

Como vimos, Glissant procura reunir dentro de um mesmo projeto

político e literário toda a civilização do Caribe a partir de um sentimento de "Antilhanidade", que lhes forneceria "non seulement nos raisons d'être, mais aussi les axes, les tactiques, les voies par lesquelles nous devons parvenir à la réalisation de notre être." (Glissant, 1984, 98) Trata-se, portanto, de colocar o Caribe como centro de *seu* mundo e tomar sua cultura como ponto de referência, sem, no entanto, perder de vista as outras culturas, para as quais é preciso manter uma atitude receptiva.

O americano Henry L. Gates, negro como Glissant, mas oriundo de um diferente contexto, procura examinar outro tipo de literatura menor, a produção literária negra. O ponto de referência passa a ser não a cultura de uma região, mas a raça. No livro que editou em 1984, *Black literature and literary theory*, Gates reuniu artigos de críticos negros norte-americanos e africanos sobre literatura escrita por negros, procurando esclarecer três pontos principais: a questão da relação formal entre as literaturas negras e as ocidentais, o estatuto da obra literária negra e como se deve ler um texto negro. Seu objetivo é mostrar que o negro precisa encontrar uma maneira própria tanto de escrever quanto de analisar a sua obra.

O fato de se caracterizar a literatura negra como de minoria exige alguma reflexão sobre qual seria o sentido de "minoria" nesse caso. Nos Estados Unidos, onde os negros constituem cerca de 12% da população contra 80% de brancos, eles realmente formam um grupo minoritário. Mas o que dizer da situação dos países africanos, onde, obviamente, são maioria? Parece-me que o melhor seria entender "minoria" no sentido de grupo marginal, de menor peso econômico e político, tanto no âmbito nacional quanto no internacional. O problema seria mais de ideologia e de juízos de valor quanto à raça, o que faria com que os negros fossem vistos como seres inferiores, verdadeiros "androides falantes", como observa Gates. Se, desde Platão, a raça negra aparecia como negação e ausência, o movimento de negritude quis reverter a imagem, provar que "black is beautiful" e que há um significado transcendente na raça negra. Usar o discurso de Outro e tentar revertê-lo constituiu uma atitude defensiva, ainda tomando o branco como referência para tentar convencê-lo de que existem razões para se orgulhar de ser negro. Mas os preconceitos de cor marcam ainda uma certa tendência de se retirar do negro o potencial de criar arte. Muito freqüentemente a literatura negra, especialmente a africana, tem sido estudada através de critérios extra-literários, seja como acontecimento político (mais uma manifestação de suas várias lutas), seja como documento de antropologia (em muitas universidades o estudo dos autores africanos é feito nos departamentos de Ciências Sociais).

O objetivo de Gates é dirigir a atenção para o texto negro em si, a fim de observar os usos que os negros fazem da linguagem literária, das línguas ocidentais nas quais escrevem e da tradição literária. Em vez de imitar as "formas brancas" (e aqui ele cita diretamente Cruz e Souza), é preciso procurar definir "formas negras", isto é, formas de linguagem e literatura que fazem parte da tradição negra, mas que se relacionam inevitavelmente com a tradição branca. O escritor negro se inscreve, pois, em ao menos duas tradições: a ocidental (européia e americana), e uma das várias diferentes, porém relacionadas, tradições negras. Sua dupla herança torna-o ao mesmo tempo branco e preto, como diz tão bem Antônio Jacinto: "O meu poema é eu branco montado em mim preto"; ou ainda como o título do livro de Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*. A questão da língua torna-se, então, vital. O inglês (assim como o francês, português ou espanhol) em que escrevem é também uma língua desterritorializada, idioma veicular e cultural ao lado das inúmeras línguas nacionais. Através do "uso menor" que fazem dos idiomas dos grandes centros é que os negros vão conseguir uma escrita própria: "The result (...) is a literature "like" its French or Spanish, American or English antecedents, yet differently "black." (Gates, 1984, 6)

Gates condena o que denomina "bovarismo coletivo", ou seja, a tendência a ser levado pelas sugestões do meio na falta de uma opinião própria. Para evitar esse risco, tanto o escritor quanto o crítico negro precisam procurar uma linguagem própria, embora tenham em vista o fato de que terão que lidar com duas tradições "brancas" já existentes, a literária e a crítica. Assim como Glissant, que propõe que se coloquem as Antilhas como centro do seu mundo, os escritores africanos devem também promover um descentramento: no centro deve ficar primeiro o país, em seguida a região próxima e depois a África. Para isso é preciso recusar que a África seja uma extensão da Europa, e que as línguas e literaturas européias tenham primazia sobre as africanas; as literaturas européias constituem inegavelmente uma fonte de influência, mas ao lado de outras, como a literatura suahili, árabe e asiática e, principalmente, a tradição oral, que constitui a raiz de toda manifestação literária africana. Portanto, é preciso descentrar o lugar da literatura e das línguas ocidentais, pois tudo deve ser visto através de uma perspectiva africana. Gates compara esta atitude à iniciativa das novas edições de *The Times atlas of the world* em que cada país é representado bem no centro do globo para que se vejam os outros em relação a ele. Aqui também a posição de Gates aproxima-se da de Glissant: ambos postulam uma visão a partir de dentro, isto é, a partir de cada realidade particular, mas sem se fechar em um nacionalismo estreito que impeça o interrelacionamento de culturas.

O que mais interessa a Gates na tradição cultural é o cânon literário, que ele define como um conjunto fechado de textos escritos em geral por brancos e ocidentais. Consequentemente, tratar-se-ia de um conceito pedagógico ideologicamente marcado já que usado como mecanismo de controle político: "The question of literary excellence

implies a value judgement as to what is excellence, and from whose point of view" (Gates, 1984, 13), diz o queniano Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, citado por Gates. Junto com as grandes obras, o negro recebe também as teorias críticas ocidentais. Se ele aceitar tudo passivamente, terá a imposição não só do que ler, mas também de *como* ler. Portanto, em lugar de repetir ou aplicar as várias tendências da crítica, é preciso adaptar e questionar as teorias, além de aceitar o fato de que não existe apenas uma leitura correta. Gates tem uma visão bastante aberta nesse ponto. Os artigos que constam do livro pertencem a correntes diversas, pois ele não pretende apresentar um manifesto ou programa com um conjunto de respostas propondo *um* modelo, mas mostrar que é possível a convivência de uma pluralidade de vozes e opiniões. Se as teorias críticas ocidentais constituem instrumentos eficientes para a compreensão dos textos da tradição negra, não há razão para ignorá-las em nome de um racismo estreito que negue tudo o que não é negro. Entretanto, apenas adotar teorias críticas vindas da tradição ocidental é imitar, o que é uma forma de escravidão. É preciso então utilizar também os princípios da tradição negra e o que Gates denomina 'language of blackness', the signifyin(g) difference which makes the black tradition our very own." (Gates, 1984, 8)

Quando um negro usa um método de leitura que não é seu, a sua maneira de "aplicá-lo" para explicar um texto negro carrega muito de sua visão de mundo, o que acaba por mudar a teoria, como afirma Gates: "Theory, like words in a poem, does not 'translate' in a one-to-one relationship of reference" (Gates, 1984, 4). O repertório de conotações, pressuposições e referências do negro cria um determinado tipo de percepção cultural, verdadeiro filtro por onde passam as teorias "brancas", fazendo com que estas se modifiquem: "Ours (our theory) is repetition, but repetition with a difference, a signifying black difference." (Gates, 1984, 3) O importante é não aceitar antes de criticar e evitar usar as teorias apenas porque carregam a autoridade e o status de idéias provenientes das metrópoles culturais, o que poderia ser resumido nesta afirmação de Gates: "Canonical western texts are to be *digested* rather than *regurgitated*, but digested along with canonical black formal and vernacular texts." (Gates, 1984, 6) Impossível não relacioná-la com a citação que Silviano Santiago faz de Paul Valéry: "Rien de plus original, rien de plus *soi*que de se nourrir des autres. Mais il faut les digérer. Le lion est fait de mouton assimilé" (Santiago, 1978, 21). Compreender, analisar e se posicionar diante deste contexto dividido constitui a dificuldade e o desafio do crítico negro e também do crítico das outras literaturas menores. Esta posição mais consciente só pode ser atingida através de um lento processo de descolonização, comparável ao comentário de Marx a respeito do aprendizado de línguas estrangeiras (exemplo dado por Edward Said e citado por Gates). Quando se começa a aprender uma língua, a tendência inicial é traduzir as expressões diretamente da língua materna para a outra. Só se adquire completo domínio sobre a língua estrangeira quando se consegue manipulá-la sem referência a sua própria língua e quando a língua materna é esquecida ao se usar a nova. Do mesmo modo, formar uma teoria da literatura menor demanda tempo e amadurecimento político e literário.

E qual seria o papel do crítico negro? Segundo Gates, "ultimately our subject is literary discourse, and not the blackness of blackness" (Gates, 1984, 8). Portanto, a questão mais importante seria o texto em si e a linguagem literária; porém, como se trata de críticos negros estudando literatura negra, é impossível deixar de pensar na questão da cor, situada, como ele diz, tanto no sujeito quanto no objeto de sua crítica. O crítico negro teria como funções básicas preservar as tradições negras e, ao mesmo tempo, direcioná-las; além disso, estabelecer um cânon negro (no caso dos Estados Unidos) ou africano, muitas vezes fazendo um trabalho de arqueologia da tradição literária, ressuscitando textos esquecidos para depois estudá-los.

Ao mesmo tempo em que o interesse dos críticos se volta para cada literatura menor, modifica-se também a maneira de se encarar as grandes literaturas. Em vez do antigo tratamento cerimonioso das obras canônicas ocidentais, signos da verdadeira literatura e das relações de poder envolvidas, o crítico negro passa a se afastar das leituras já institucionalizadas e a tentar fazer uma interpretação a partir do seu ponto de vista. Há uma dessacralização dos textos canônicos, não no sentido de que eles perdem seu status de grandes obras, mas de que é possível se aproximar deles e usá-los à sua maneira, lendo-os com um código próprio. Um bom exemplo disso está na primeira epígrafe do artigo de Gates, retirada do livro *Mumbo Jumbo*, de Ishmael Reed: "Son, these niggers writing. Profaning our sacred words. Taking them from us and beating them on the anvil of Boogie-Woogie, putting their black hands on them so that they shine like burnished amulets. Taking our words, son, these filthy niggers and using them like they were their god-given pussy. Why... why I of them dared to interpret, critically mind you, the great Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*!" (Gates, 1984, 1) Trata-se de uma visão irônica da provável reação dos brancos à atividade crítica dos negros como seres que ousam raciocinar, ter opinião própria e até mesmo fugir à autoridade das elites culturais institucionalizadas, criticando ou apropriando-se dos textos canônicos. O fato de os negros terem acesso à escrita dá-lhes novo poder, permite-lhes entrar num domínio que até então lhes era vedado e até mesmo usar as "palavras sagradas" da maneira que lhes aprouver. O cânon branco, apossado, passado de mão em mão, modificado pelo uso, acaba tomando uma feição nova, temperada pelos caracteres do negro. E se há brilho, já não é mais porque trata-se de objetos de ouro

iluminados nos altares, mas como resultado da própria profanação e manipulação: trata-se de um brilho "negro" em virtude do componente africano ("they shine like burnished amulets"). O signo cultural do branco perde então sua intangibilidade, mas mantém seu valor, já que se transforma em "amuleto polido", e é aí que reside a diferença.

Embora Gates tome como referência o fator racial para a busca da diferença, o que vale para a literatura negra vale também para as outras literaturas menores. Suas conclusões acabam se aproximando das de Silviano Santiago em "O Entre-Lugar do Discurso Latino-americano", sobretudo na crença em "um novo discurso crítico, o qual (...) esquecerá e negligenciará a caça às fontes e às influências e estabelecerá como único valor crítico a diferença". Ao postular "uma assimilação inquieta e insubordinada, antropófaga", o escritor "tenta surpreender o modelo original nas suas limitações, nas suas fraquezas, nas suas lacunas, desarticula-o e o rearticula de acordo com as suas intenções, segundo sua própria direção ideológica, sua visão do tema apresentado de início pelo original." (Santiago, 1978, 21-22) Tal como o crítico e o escritor negros, o escritor latino-americano arroga-se o direito de dessacralizar e apropriar-se dos textos canônicos, desviando-os de seu sentido inicial e usando-os a seu bel-prazer: "Encontrar a escada e contrair a dívida que pode minimizar a distância insuportável entre ele, mortal, e a imortal estrela: tal seria o papel do artista latino-americano, sua função na sociedade ocidental." (Santiago, 1978, 20) Não se trata de negar o valor das grandes literaturas, mas de mudar a atitude em relação a elas, substituindo uma veneração que acaba conduzindo à imitação generalizada por uma posição mais livre e descolonizada, que considera as obras canônicas como passíveis de uma leitura a partir de outro ângulo e, ao mesmo tempo, como "modelos produtores."

O trabalho do crítico, segundo Silviano Santiago, "se definirá antes de tudo pela análise do uso que o escritor fez de um texto ou de uma técnica literária que pertence ao domínio público, do partido que ele tira, e nossa análise se completará pela descrição da técnica que o mesmo escritor cria no seu movimento de agressão contra o modelo original, fazendo ceder as fundações que o propunham como objeto único e de reprodução impossível." (Santiago, 1978, 22-23) Se antes o que se propunha era a confirmação de um modelo, agora o que se deseja é uma leitura não-inocente ou mesmo uma agressão ao modelo anterior. O crítico e o escritor tornam-se conscientes da necessidade tanto de ter um ponto de vista próprio, sul-americano, quanto de desmistificar o discurso dos grandes centros através de uma leitura mais consciente.

Os termos usados por S. Santiago para descrever a relação do crítico e do escritor de 3° Mundo para com as grandes literaturas remetem-nos para a epígrafe do artigo de Henry Louis Gates: "O escritor latino-americano brinca com os signos de um outro escritor, de uma outra obra. As palavras do outro têm a particularidade de se apresentarem como objetos que fascinam seus olhos, seus dedos, e a escritura do texto segundo é em parte a história de uma experiência sensual com o signo estrangeiro." (Santiago, 1978, 23) Não seria, no fundo, como os negros, que se apropriam dos signos brancos, manipulando-os até que eles brilhem "like burnished amulets"? As duas atitudes seriam sinais de uma transgressão ao modelo, uma reviravolta, o caminho contrário da exploração colonial.

Para Silviano Santiago, nas literaturas sul-americanas "falar, escrever, significa: falar contra, escrever contra." (Santiago, 1978, 19) Consequentemente, muito do que se produz situa-se na linha da paródia ou do pastiche. O mesmo acontece com os escritores negros, principalmente da minoria negra americana. Henry Louis Gates propõe, então, uma teoria de interpretação retirada de dentro da cultura negra, que se baseia na figura do "Signifying Monkey", presente em grande número de contos do folclore afro-americano: "The ironic reversal of a received racist image of the black as simianlike, the Signifying Monkey — he who dwells at the margins of discourse, ever punning, ever troping, ever embodying the ambiguities of language — is our trope for repetition and revision, indeed, is our trope of chiasmus itself, repeating and simultaneously reversing in one deft, discursive act" (Gates, 1984, 286). O macaco na tradição afro-americana, assim como na brasileira, é signo da esperteza, principalmente através da palavra, desvirtuando o sentido do que os outros animais dizem. Seu trunfo é o manejo da linguagem figurada, a mesma que o negro aprendeu a usar quase como uma questão de sobrevivência num mundo dominado pelo branco. Portanto, "signifying", na linguagem dos negros, indica reversão de sentido e ambigüidade: "Signifying turns on the play and chain of signifiers, and not on some supposedly transcendent signified." (Gates, 1984, 287) Consiste em uma técnica de argumentação e persuasão indiretas através da esperteza e da brincadeira ("the language of trickery"), dos jogos verbais e da ironia, atitude que faz parte da vida do negro. Este, sempre em situação de inferioridade, aprende a lidar com códigos complexos e a interpretar tanto a linguagem do branco como os seus próprios "signifying rituals", nas palavras de Gates. Em lugar de rejeitar a semelhança com o macaco, o negro apropria-se da imagem que o branco faz dele para revertê-la e dar-lhe sentido positivo incorporando certas qualidades do animal que, nos contos folclóricos, vence pela astúcia e domínio da linguagem figurada. O escritor e o crítico negros entrariam nesta tradição na medida em que saibam interpretar bem os códigos do cânon literário, lendo-os a partir do ponto de vista negro e expondo-lhes a ideologia. Ou, como afirma S. Santiago, sua presença "se instala na transgressão ao modelo, no movimento imperceptível e sutil de conversão, de perversão, de »-

reviravolta." (Santiago, 1978, 27) Entretanto, consciente de que todo ato de linguagem é apenas representação, Gates procura fazer uma leitura crítica e desmistificadora não só do discurso branco, mas também do negro.

Não se pode deixar de observar aqui a convergência do conceito de crítica negra baseada numa figura de "trickster" com a teoria da carnavalização de Bakhtin, esta "alegre relatividade", em que "os contrários se encontram, se olham mutuamente, refletem-se um no outro, conhecem e compreendem um ao outro." (Bakhtin, 1981, 153) Não seria justamente isso o que acontece com a literatura negra (e também com outras literaturas menores) em relação às grandes literaturas, segundo a visão de Gates? Para este, é preciso uma atitude de apropriação parodística tanto em relação à tradição ocidental quanto à própria tradição negra; para ele, como para S. Santiago, não há leitura inocente, mas uma atitude crítica frente ao texto em geral, uma total reversão de significados. O próprio fato de escolher o "Signifying Monkey" como modelo de interpretação é significativo: longe de apenas "macaquear" para mimetizar, é preciso "macaquear" para reverter e renovar, numa atitude em que está presente o elemento carnavalesco.

Dentro da mesma linha, a teoria de Gates aproxima-se também do conceito de "literatura arlequinal", desenvolvido atualmente por Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna.[2] O "trickster", personagem enganador, menino endiabrado, "eterno Macunaíma" que inverte as coisas, aproxima-se do macaco de Gates enquanto figura "móvel, deslizante e descentrada" (nas palavras de Affonso Romano): ele também é o próprio discurso em movimento e em construção, sem centro e sempre em jogo. A mesma ambigüidade estrutural do arlequim encontra-se no "Signifying Monkey", já que animal, porém dotado de inteligência e argúcia e usando a linguagem no que ela tem de mais fluído e sutil para mostrar o caráter também fluído e deslizante da verdade. A literatura afro-americana e a crítica negra teriam, pois, um caráter eminentemente arlequinal.

O "Signifying Monkey" constitui um equivalente funcional de Exu no discurso profano negro americano, já que é também um "trickster" e, por isso, um mediador. Exu, o mensageiro dos deuses, é manco porque suas pernas têm tamanhos diferentes já que uma fica no reino dos deuses e outra no mundo dos homens, pois é ele quem estabelece a ligação entre o mundo divino e o profano. Esta espécie de Hermes africano é o detentor do logos com o qual o universo foi criado, o guardião das encruzilhadas, mestre do estilo e da escrita. Para Gates, Exu constitui uma metáfora do ato de interpretação e de mediação e, portanto, uma espécie de padroeiro do crítico. Apoiado de um lado na tradição ocidental e de outro na tradição negra, ele procura decifrar os signos, compreender o texto e determinar o entre-lugar do discurso negro. Mas trata-se de um intérprete que não julga deter toda a verdade, idéia comum a Silviano Santiago que, na "Nota Prévia" a *Uma literatura nos trópicos* observa: "O intérprete perdeu hoje a segurança no julgamento, segurança que era o apanágio de gerações anteriores. Sabe ele que seu trabalho (...) é o de saber colocar as idéias no devido lugar (...) O intérprete é, em suma, o *intermediário* entre texto e leitor (...)" (Santiago, 1978, 9-10). Além disso, poderíamos acrescentar que ele é também elemento de ligação entre as diversas tradições culturais, literárias e críticas.

O que os críticos das literaturas menores propõem, em última instância, é o estudo da literatura comparada, ou seja, dos relacionamentos entre as diferentes tradições literárias sem que uma assuma uma posição de superioridade sobre a outra. A literatura comparada, tal como a "poética de relação" de Glissant, nada mais é do que a leitura da relação. Henry Louis Gates também não fica atrás e propõe o estudo comparativo das literaturas negras e seu relacionamento com os textos canônicos oficiais. As linhas mestras de todos eles também são as mesmas: a busca da diferença que confere individualidade a cada uma dessas literaturas menores e a noção de pluridiscursividade ou dialogismo, a convicção de que várias vozes ou várias culturas convivem em cada discurso artístico ou crítico. ❑

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NOTAS

1 "Poderíamos chamar, em geral, de intensivos ou tensores os elementos lingüísticos, por mais variados que sejam, que exprimem "tensões interiores de uma língua".

2 As idéias de Affonso Romano foram apresentadas no I Congresso Internacional da Faculdade de Letras — UFRJ na palestra "Arlequim: o jogo erótico da verdade".

Summary

A feminist, close reading of Walker Percy's The moviegoer.

Resumo

Leitura feminista e minuciosa do livro The moviegoer do escritor americano contemporâneo Walker Percy.

Gesture and Style in The Moviegoer

Gesto e Estilo em *The Moviegoer*

Geste und Stil in *The Moviegoer*

Emory ELLIOTT*

> *My first idea was the building itself. It looks like a miniature bank with its Corinthian pilasters, portico and iron scrolls over the windows. The firm's name, Cutrer, Klostermann & Lejier is lettered in Gothic and below in smaller letters, the names of the Boston mutual funds we represent. It looks far more conservative than the modern banks in Gentilly. It announces to the world: modern methods are no doubt excellent but here is good old-fashioned stability, but stability with imagination. A little bit of old New England with a Creole flavor. The Parthenon façade cost twelve thousand dollars but commissions have doubled. The young man you see inside is clearly the soul of integrity: he asks no more than to be allowed to plan your future. This is true. This is all I ask.*[1]

In the midst of the existential lament of John-Jack-Binx-Rollo-Bolling, the humor of this passage may not at first be apparent. Like an image out of a novel by Fenimore Cooper depicting the comic amalgam of styles in America, the façade blends elements of European and American regional architecture to convey a permanent, ambiguous advertising slogan of puritanical austerity and classical splendor. Behind the façade lurks a paradoxical confidence man/pilgrim who does not believe himself to be the soul of *financial* integrity and stability that he advertises but who does yearn for *psychological* integrity. Encumbered in his search for spiritual meaning and self-knowledge by the very jumble of cultural fragments projected on the façade, Binx does wish ironically on a more profound and idealistic level to plan people's lives, and he waits to plan lives — his own and others. But like his literary forbearers, the unreliable narrators Miles Coverdale, Jake Barnes, and Nick Carraway, and Melville's Pierre and the failed Southern searcher Quentin Compson, Binx may be unable to escape the double-bond of narcissism and self-deception which makes him a self-righteous critic of his world who employs irony to deny the implications of his own participation and responsibility. Or like another set of literary predecessors, Huck Finn, Ike McCaslin, Warren's Jack Burden, and Ellison's Invisible Man, he may be able to cast off some of the layers of the façade of the Puritan, Enlightenment, Euro-American Southern self to discover some remnant of a human soul worthy of a future.

This comic passage points to the conflict between the public and private man which is at the thematic center of *The moviegoer* and of the critical controversies surrounding the text. The problem of the book as it is usually posed is what sort of resolution does Binx achieve at the end of the novel? After all his high-minded talk of malaise, everydayness, cultural collapse, and the need to search for new values and a personal spiritual calling, Binx's situation at the conclusion is ambiguous at best or is at worst a sentimental acceptance of his Aunt Emily's imposed mission. Of his spiritual seeking, Binx says in the Epilogue, "I have not the inclination to say much on the subject" (187).[2]

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and he retreats behind the hard-boiled language of a Hemingway anti-hero: "much too late to edify or do much of anything except plant a foot in the right place as the opportunity presents itself — if indeed asskicking is properly distinguished from edification" (187-88). He seems to have advanced only slightly from the soldier his aunt told him to be when he was eight to the rank of drill sergeant. After seeming to prepare his heart, and the reader, for his spiritual conversion, he is now "shy" on the subject of religion. He appears embarrassed and awkward about all that has gone before and quick to complete his manuscript: "Reticence, therefore, hardly having a place in a document of this kind, it seems as good a time as any to make an end" (188). A reader may well feel that Binx's Celestial Railroad ride from New Orleans to Chicago has merely come full circle to bring its pilgrim-seeker to an unexpected but hardly transformed station in life. Such ambiguity has led many critics to seek out the real Walker Percy himself to ask him what this all means.[2]

When critics prepare for these interviews, they learn the essential biographical facts. Percy had a tragic childhood. His father committed suicide when Walker was eleven, and his mother died in an automobile accident when he was fifteen. He was raised by a second cousin, William Alexander Percy, a "bachelor-poet-lawyer-planter" who imparted to Walker the Greek-Roman Stoic vision expressed by Aunt Emily in *The moviegoer*. Walker went to the University of North Carolina to study chemistry and to Columbia University medical school. During two bouts with tuberculosis, he read extensively in French and Russian literature and philosophy. In the late 1940s he married, converted to Roman Catholicism, settled permanently in Covington, Louisiana, and began to write essays about alienation, existentialism, malaise, and the failure of Christianity in the modern world. He published his first novel *The moviegoer* in 1961.

Noting the obvious autobiographical elements in the novel, critics often assume that Binx's resolution parallels Percy's own quest for answers. Like Percy, Binx is a young man who sees through the sham of public rhetoric and discovers the meaning of alienation, malaise, and nausea. Turning aside from the false values of materialism and empiricism, Binx, like Percy, was led by European philosophy to discover a new sense of purpose upon which to base a radically new plan for life.[3]

The problem with this reading, however, is that it is not borne out by the text, especially that of the final chapter and epilogue. It also overlooks another dimension of Percy's work that he himself sometimes mentions but that criticism has tended to slight — his debt to American writers. At various times, Percy has said that he admires the works of Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Hemingway, Faulkner, O'Connor, Welty, Ellison and Wright, and he dots his works with literary allusions and with references to American history and popular culture. In fact, alertness to the many allusions to American predecessors can reveal some quite delightful parodies of the styles of other writers. *The moviegoer* opens with allusions to the opening of *Absalom, Absalom!* where Quentin is summoned by a note to visit his Aunt Rosa, and Mr. Sartalamaccia's story of the hunting party at Roaring Camp recalls Faulkner's *The bear*, including the breaking of Binx's watch, which alludes to both works. When he tells of how Judge Anse (remember Anse Bundren in *As I lay dying*) ordered him, like Thomas Sutpen, to build him a lodge, Mr. Sartalamaccia "waits until the words, the very words, speak themselves" (177). And, of course, when they speak, they appear in italics. These humorous evocations of America and American literary traditions are not merely part of a veneer of Americanism that Percy lays over the philosophical, European core of his work, in the way that Binx employs the gestures of movie actors to mask his inner emptiness. Instead, style and gesture are an integral part of the work as a whole, and call attention to the subtle forms of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, that operate between the characters. Body movement, physical mannerisms, silences, and shifts in tone often impart coded messages between characters and may suggest to the reader other possible explanations of the novel's resolution.

Close attention to the functions of style and gesture in *The moviegoer* not only provides a key to the novel's ending, but it also can help us account for the intricacy of Binx's relationships with Kate and Aunt Emily and explain the meaning of his comment in the Epilogue that "both women find me comical and laugh a good deal at my expense" (187). Percy himself has been accused by several critics of sexism, and he does admit that his female characters do not fare too well.[4] However, the women in *The moviegoer* may fare better than it at first may appear.

In order to see the roles of Emily and Kate in the novel clearly, it is necessary to make distinction between the narrator and the narrative audience he addresses and the author and his authorial audience. Binx makes certain assumptions about social and cultural attitudes that he believes he shares with his projected narrative audience. For example, Binx assumes that his readers share his liberal attitudes on race and social class and are dismayed, with him, at the racist and aristocratic attitudes Aunt Emily exhibits in her final outburst about the decline of the old South. While it is possible that Percy may also make that assumption about his authorial audience, he makes other assumptions of which Binx is never aware. Percy's literary allusions and parodies of the style of other American writers, for example, are signals to the author's audience of another level of communication at work to which Binx is not privileged.

Once the reader begins to distinguish between these two narrative voices, he or she may also ➤

recognize other elements of the narrative to which Binx is blind. He never records a conscious recognition of the fact, for example, that he never really proposed marriage to Kate but that she transformed his suggestion that she might visit him to watch television into a proposal upon which they finally both act. Binx's belief that Kate is mentally disturbed to the point of not being able to control *her* life may prevent him from seeing the degree to which she controls *his* life. Actually, his life is much more controlled by Emily and Kate than he realizes. The ways in which Kate subtly uses style and gesture to control Binx's destiny are immediately evident because they are never apparent to Binx himself. Focus upon the function of style and gesture within the text reveals the fallacy of the autobiographical interpretation of *The moviegoer* and suggests that Binx is hardly the godlike prime mover that Kate proclaims him to be.

It is at first perhaps hard to imagine that Binx himself could be the victim of another's use of style, for he is so conscious of using externals to represent a chosen image of the self in order to achieve his desires. The most humorous and revealing example of his process of self-projection is his experience in choosing a car. He adheres to the Madison Avenue association of cars with sex. "You say it is a simple thing surely... to pick up a good-looking woman and head for the beach on the first fine day of the year. So say the newspaper poets. Well, it's not such a simple thing..." (99). "The car itself is all important." Initially, he chose a car that fit the image he wished to present of himself as a reliable young businessman. But on his first date with Marcia in his Dodge Ram Six sedan, he "discovered to my dismay that my fine new Dodge was a regular incubator of malaise." He recalls, "We sat frozen in a gelid amiability. Our cheeks ached from smiling.... Marcia and I returned to New Orleans defeated by the malaise. It was weeks before we ventured out again" (100).

Confident that his sexual failure here (which parallels similar failures with Sharon and even Kate) was the fault of a car rather than himself, Binx buys a symbol of sexual potency, a red MG: "My little red MG... is immune to the malaise. You have no idea what happiness Marcia and I experienced as soon as we found ourselves spinning along the highway in this bright little beetle. We looked at each other in astonishment: the malaise was gone!" (100). When Binx sets out to seduce Sharon who, he says, will bring him the greatest "happiness" yet, Percy has his narrator describe their ride in the MG in the imagery of Binx's movie fantasies. The comic linking Binx's hyperbole of the car in battle to the serious notion of cultural malaise signals the gap between the author and his narrator:

> *For the stakes were very high. Either very great happiness lay in store for us, or malaise past all conceiving [Freudian slips on Binx's part? Intentional puns on Percy's part?].... I spin along the precipice with the blackest malaise below and the greenest of valleys ahead.... [I]t seems to me that I catch a whiff of malaise. A little tongue of hellfire licks at our heels and the MG jumps ahead, roaring like a bomber through the sandy pine barrens and across Bay St. Louis. (101)*

Binx assumes that the audience of his document shares his belief in the power of the material object to symbolize his sexual potency and attract Sharon to him, just as he had assumed that the building of Gentilly had brought him business. In the debate between Isabel Archer and Madame Merle in *The portrait of a lady* (a book alluded to through Percy's choice of "Merle" as the name for Kate's psychiatrist), Binx clearly sides with Merle that one's physical objects are an expression of oneself. But just as Gilbert Osmond's house and Binx's office building may present a deceptive façade, so too the gloss of the MG conceals sexual timidity and even impotence. Binx fails to note the contradiction in his theory about the MG's immunity when he and Sharon returned from the failed weekend and "the MG becomes infested with malaise" (133). When Sharon rejects his last desperate overture of his hand on her thigh with her firm "'Son, don't you mess with me'", he reports: "'Very well, I won't,' I say gloomily, as willing not to mess with her as mess with her, to tell the truth" (134). Kate says earlier that Binx is "'Colder [than she]. Cold as the grave'" (70). Sharon, having discovered herself to be a victim of false advertising rather than malaise, rushes back to renew her affair with the man she now intends to marry and over whom Binx expected to triumph. Kate, on the other hand, patiently persists in her own search of the real Binx and in the process to prepare him, not for grace, but for herself.

In spite of his MG, like bravados about his affairs with his secretaries, it is evident that Binx fears women, needs to feel in control in his relations with them, and finds it painfully difficult to communicate with women on a serious level. As he admits at the outset, his affairs with Marcia and Linda were superficial and ended in "telephone conversations... made up mostly of long silences" (15). In such silence he is not unlike his father, who left the marital bed to sleep in the back yard and who took ten-mile hikes alone. When Binx, who like Melville's Pierre is also on a search for his father, asks his mother if his father was a good husband, she answers that "'... he was a good walker'" (123). Lacking a strong self-image as a man, the way that he can conceive of himself with women is by invoking his fantasies of different movie actors and imitating their language and gestures. While he claims to be attracted to the Amazon type of woman with a helmet-like Prince Val haircut whom he sees on the bus and says mockingly that "[m]ost men are afraid of them" (17), he does not approach the girl even when he detects an inviting smile. Instead, he becomes absorbed by his thoughts of the search. Only Kate is able to

reach him, and this is because she knows his secret language and how to appeal to him indirectly through style and gesture.

Kate is first mentioned in the third sentence of the book, and she is constantly in touch with Binx; as Sharon reports, many people say they are married. Yet Binx's efforts to evade Kate's love and the serious commitment she represents causes him to diminish the importance of her presence for his narrative readers. Thus, the authorial reader must infer much about her importance in Binx's life. For example, from the knowledge she displays of his ideas about movies, it is evident that they have lengthy conversations together that Binx does not report. Just as Binx knows the language of the Catholic catechism well enough to banter with Lonnie about sacrifice and grace, Kate knows about Binx's search and understands his notion of repetitions and revolutions. When they attend *Panic in the streets* together, she asks "'Is this part of the repetition? Part of the search?'" (69)

Because he cannot let himself see the degree of her romantic interest in him and of his attachment to her, Binx has developed strategies for ignoring her or dismissing her advances as signs of her mental instability. Like John Marcher in James' *Beast in the jungle*, he seeks for something and yet refuses to recognize what is in front of him. Kate says "'[i]t is possible, you know, that you are overlooking something, the most obvious thing of all. And you would not know it if you fell over it'" (70). Not having read his Henry James and thus unable to recognize the parallels between his search and Marcher's wasted life, Binx answers with a dull "'What?'" and then is puzzled: "She would not tell me. Instead, in the streetcar, she becomes gay and affectionate toward me. She locks her arms around my waist and gives me a kiss on the mouth..." (70). Still Kate has achieved her purpose, for in spite of his insistence to *his* readers that he loves Sharon Kincade, Percy's readers note that it is to Kate that Binx's mind repeatedly returns.

There are three scenes in particular in which Percy zooms his lens in upon Kate's romantic overtures to Binx and his unconscious evasions. One of the frequent hints that Kate and her aunt may actually be scheming to make this match occurs as Binx prepares to speak with Kate for the first time in the action. His aunt has summoned him for the purpose of this meeting, and as he prepares to descend to the basement to speak with Kate, he notes: "...I can see my aunt sitting by the fire.... She opens her eyes and, seeing me, forms a soundless word with her lips." When Kate tells him a few minutes later that she and her aunt talk about him all the time, there is a slight hint that he may be on the verge of suspecting that this whole meeting has been staged, but Kate quickly changes to her "objective" tone which distracts his possible suspicion. Her pose and gestures during this scene, however, are reminiscent of a movie scene played by Bette Davis. As Binx observes, she has even gotten into costume for this tete-à-tete: "As if to emphasize her sallowness and thinness, she has changed into shirt and jeans. She is as frail as a ten year old, except in her thighs" (39). Just as he has shared with her at previous times his search and ideas about moviegoing, perhaps he may also have revealed — as he does throughout the text — the attraction he feels toward certain boyish characteristics in women (he later notices Sharon's boyish cheek and boy's pants) and his weakness for women's hips as their most sexually exciting feature. But her particular costume certainly triggers the appropriate fantasies: he remembers that "Sometimes she speaks of her derriere, sticks it out Beale Street style and gives it a slap and this makes me blush because it is a very good one, marvellously ample and mysterious and nothing to joke about." He says that at the moment "[s]he has the advantage of me..." as she taunts him about his mission from his Aunt to counsel her. "'You're to tell me all sorts of things,'" she says, but when he falters, she says prophetically: "'It will end with me telling you'" (39-49).

Even as Binx reports small details of her appearance and movements he continues to believe that his interest in her is no more than paternal. "She is in tolerable good spirits. It is not necessary to pay too much attention to her." But pay attention he does, in spite of himself, and perform she does: "Kate stretches out a leg to get her cigarettes.... Pushing back her shingled hair, she blows out a plume of gray lung smoke and plucks a grain from her tongue. She reminds me of college girls before the war, how they would sit, seeming old to me and sullen-silent towards men..." (41). Could Kate's pose be consciously designed to give him this repetition and take him back across the void of the last ten years after the war to the vitality of his early twenties? The extent of the couple's past intimacy is suggested when Kate's new scientific tone suddenly reminds him of conversations they used to have about her social work, and one case in particular comes to Binx's mind: he remembers Kate saying "'— and all the while it was perfectly obvious that the poor woman had never experienced an orgasm.' 'Is such a thing possible!' I would cry and we would shake our heads in the strong sense of our new camaraderie.'" Given Kate's appeal and the direction of Binx's thinking, it is not surprising that he brings up the matter of her impending marriage to Walter. But now he is coming too close to her anxieties, and she uses his broach as an opportunity to start a quarrel. The terms of the argument, however, suggest what may be on both of their minds. She accuses him and his aunt of patronizing Walter at lunch. But when she uses the phrase "'[w]hat a lovely pair you are,'" referring to Binx and Emily, he turns it to themselves: "'I thought you and I were the pair,'" to which Kate snaps "'You and I are not a pair of any sort.'" Binx remarks to the reader, "I consider this" (41-43).

Given the fact that only a few minutes before Binx felt that it was "not necessary to pay any attention to Kate," this serious act of consideration of this remark represents

quite a heightening of interest, yet he seems still oblivious to the possible design for him that may underlie her series of sexual gestures. But designs are certainly being made upon him by his aunt, as he discovers in the next scene when she proposes that he move back to her home and prepare to attend medical school. Both his aunt Emily and his mother have long hoped that Kate and Binx should be married. Does Emily have this in mind for Binx's future, as well, and is Kate's approaching wedding date and her real love for Binx the actual source of her present psychic crisis? But marriage is a word that Binx never uses in regard to Kate, until she proposes it.

On the night that Kate comes to see Binx at three A.M., and he fears for her mental state, he tries to humor her by speculating about how they could live together. He has come into money and speculates about buying a service station and living his life in his present apartment: almost casually he says "'We could stay on here at Mrs. Schexnaydre's. It is very comfortable. I might even run the station myself. You could come sit with me at night, if you liked.'" To this rather dreary prospect, which would not at all seem to suit Kate's romantic mood of the moment, she still replies with enthusiasm "'You sweet old Binx! Are you asking me to marry you?'" "'Sure,'" he says while telling the reader "I watch her uneasily." Binx expects her to play off of this bantering remark in their usual language games, but to his surprise and dismay, he sees that she is serious. Kate exclaims, "'Not a bad life you say. It would be the best of all possible lives,'" and Binx despairs: "She speaks in a rapture — something like my aunt. My heart sinks. It is too late." Binx's conclusion is that Kate has slipped over the edge emotionally and is no longer herself, but his mental association with the tone of her voice and that of his aunt is most significant, especially in view of the later situation where she and her aunt live together with him and laugh at his expense. This time Binx recognizes the movie actress that Kate is playing: "— as enraptured and extinguished in her soul, gone, as a character played by Eva Marie Saint," but he fails once more to understand that he is not just a casual observer of her performance but her intended audience (95).

The turning point in their relationship occurs on Monday night when Kate proposes that she accompany him to Chicago. The preparation for that suggestion is especially well-staged. He is again being sent — this time by Sam — to counsel her. Even Sam appears to further the relationship by depicting Kate as a Russian Princess of the old aristocracy and by apparently proposing to her himself, which Kate later reports to Binx to make him jealous. Although Kate is supposed to be in a very disturbed mental state, she seems quite well-prepared for this meeting:

> *Kate sits... and cheerfully makes room for me in the loveseat. Not until later do I think why it is she looks so well: she is all dressed up, for the first time since Christmas. It is the scent of her perfume, her nylon-whispering legs, the white dress against her dark skin, a proper dress fluted and flounced and now gathered by her and folded away from me. (141)*

Though Binx remembers this picture later, at the time he is distracted and appears to pay little attention to her. As she talks on, he is listening to the dinner conversation from downstairs. Perhaps detecting his distraction, she picks up upon the idea that he had proposed marriage again: "'I thought about your proposal and it seemed to me that it might be possible after all'" (143). While Binx appears not even to notice this remark, he does begin to become sleepy — the same reaction he had when his aunt told him of her plans for his life and the same reaction he has later on the train. Like Jack Burden in Warren's *All the king's men*, Binx escapes into sleep. When he awakens, he is on the train with Kate on a kind of pre-marriage mock honeymoon. Binx is still drowsy, and Percy adds a touch of Freudian humor to Binx's dream on the train when Binx imagines standing in line in a crowded bookstore to buy a copy of *Technique in marriage:* "I noticed that nearly all the crowd jamming against me are women, from middle-aged one-fifty pounders" (151). If his fear is that women are pressing in on his life and that he may need such a book in his relationship with Kate, it is soon borne out when Kate seduces him and he proves impotent.

In his non-fiction works, Percy often writes about linguistics and the function of language, and he has commented upon the concept of defamiliarization that he learned from the Russian formalists. Binx plays with the notion of defamiliarization when he speaks of how the movies take aspects of ordinary life and make them more real by putting them on the screen. His experience of seeing *Panic in the streets*, in a theater in the very neighborhood in which the film was shot, defamiliarizes the area for him and enables him to see it more clearly. Similarly, Binx describes his experience of talking with his half-brother Lonnie about religions as decentering language and thus making it better able to be heard: "Lonnie's monotonous speech gives him an advantage, the same advantage foreigners have: his words are not worn out. It is like a code tapped through a wall. Sometimes he asks straight out: do you love me?" (131) By altering the usual form of speaking, Lonnie gets Binx's attention. Lonnie is the only other character besides Kate who also understands Binx's way of reading movies, and the experience of seeing *Fort Dobbs* at the Drive-in with Lonnie is for Binx "a good rotation" (116-17).

Less apparent is the skillful way that Kate uses the process of defamiliarization to get Binx to see her more sharply. By altering her speaking style, tone, and gestures and playing out roles from the stage and screen in the character of her

own person, she alters and varies her self-presentation. For example, in her telephone conversations with Binx she is unconventional: he says "[f]or some reason or another she feels obliged to keep one jump ahead of the conventional. When I answer the phone, instead of hearing 'Hello, this is Kate' [which Kate knows would be everydayness], there comes into my ear a low-pitched voice saying something like: 'Well, the knives have started flying,'" which he then has to interpret: "which means that she and her mother have been aggressive," or "'What do you know, I'm celebrating the rites of spring after all,' which turns out to mean that she has decided in her ironic and reflected way to attend the annual supper given for former queens of the Neptune Ball". She ends this conversation by hanging up abruptly. Binx observes: "There comes a silence and a click. But this doesn't mean anything. Abrupt hang-ups are part of our analytic way of talking." The only danger with Kate's device is that what is first defamiliarized may soon become conventional. But she strives to keep him off guard (57-58).

There are two key passages that would seem to weigh against the suggestion that Binx is guided toward his fate, consciously or unconsciously, by Kate. One is the exchange in which Kate says that she will only be able to survive in marriage if he tells her what to do. First, appealing to his sense of mission and duty, she says she is "never too bad" when she is with him; then, touching his own insecurity and reversing roles, she says that he is "nuttier" than she is. The point that Binx is really sicker than Kate is made throughout the book, and is, I believe, correct. Next, she reminds him of his marriage proposal and successfully provokes his jealousy by saying that Sam has also proposed. Then, she suddenly shifts her tone to a hard-boiled Brett Ashley style, and she risks all by forcing him to defend the notion that they could make a successful marriage: "'Can't you see that for us it is much too late for such ingenious little schemes?'" Binx notes that her voice is steadier, but he attributes this change to the motion of the train. By this tactic, however, she forces Binx for the first time to take a stand in favor of their marriage, but after they debate the issue, it is clear that Binx still does not take her seriously. As he says, "I do not, to tell the truth, pay too much attention to what she says" (153-55).

But shortly Kate takes a new tack: She "shakes her head in the rapt way she got from her stepmother," and she resorts to complete female submission. She tells Binx he is her God ("'You are the unmoved mover'"), and that the marriage will work if in all things he should tell her what to do. She proclaims her total submission to his will and gives him a passionate kiss. This ancient strategy of declaring her own helplessness serves a double function: it assuages Binx's fear of women by making him feel that she is unthreatening, and it encourages him to think of her as easily seduced. She is, like Alice Doan in *The house of the seven gables*, hypnotized by a man's power and open to the suggestion of his will. Meanwhile, lest Percy's readers begin to think that Kate is really not in control of this scene, he has Binx look out the window at a symbol of female power: "The moonlight seems palpable, a dense pure matrix..." (156-57).

Binx, however, is not an easily moved, unmoved mover, so Kate takes a more direct approach: "'I feel awful. Let's go up to your roomette.'" There she tells him of her discussion with her psychiatrist about her desire to have an affair, and calling Binx Whipple, she reports her sexual fantasies sparked by reading "a Frenchy version" of *Tillie the toiler* comics in which Tillie is taken by Whipple in the laundry room. Later when Binx tries to explain his sexual failure with Kate to his imagined Rory Calhoun, he admits: "The truth is I was frightened half to death by her bold [not really bold, nor whorish bold but theorish bold] carrying on." So while on the surface, it may seem that Kate is putting herself in his control, she actually uses shifts in tone and gesture, and antic poses to direct the entire scene; the only thing she cannot control is Binx's libido. The final word goes to Kate, who invokes both Romeo's Juliette and Hamlet's Ophelia in her mocking "'Good night, sweet Whipple. Now you tuck Kate in. Poor Kate.... Good night sweet Whipple, good night, good night, good night.'" Percy, of course, invokes Eliot in *The wasteland* (157-159).

Even if the seduction is a physical failure, however, it is a psychological victory for Kate, for when they arrive in Chicago the next day, Kate assumes firm and permanent command of the relationship. "Kate looks after me," he says (160). Binx has become a submissive husband even before the wedding as Kate attends to the practical details of life, just as she had purchased the train tickets while he slept. The extent of her dominance is most apparent in the scene after his confrontation with Aunt Emily. The meeting itself deserves attention, for Emily is a master of style and gesture, employing the rhetoric of the Puritan jeremiad and the enlightenment language of republican virtue to chastise him while wielding a sword-like letter opener: "We both gaze down at the letter opener, the soft iron sword she has withdrawn from the grasp of the helmeted figure on the inkstand." In a phallic recollection Binx notes that the tip of the sword was bent because as a boy he had used it to try to pry open a drawer, and he still worries that she suspects him. Hypnotized by her gestures, he cannot take his eyes off the sword: "We watch the sword as she lets it fall over the fulcrum of her forefinger.... Then, so suddenly that I almost start, my aunt sheathes the sword and places her hand on the desk. Turning it over, she flexes her fingers and studies the nails...." If Kate has been learning some of her gestures from her stepmother, as Binx earlier suggested, she has a powerful model to imitate (174-76).

When a limp Binx leaves this meeting, he meets a Kate who is =-

"as brisk as a stewardess" flying high as she tells him "You're stupid stupid stupid.... I heard it all, you poor stupid bastard'" (180). She directs him to go home and wait for her, which he dutifully does. But when she does not arrive in fifty minutes, he panics and tries to call Sharon. When her roommate says she is out with her fiancé, he makes a play in Brando style for the roommate. Only when he sees Kate's "stiff little Plymouth" — a car more fitting Binx's puritan nature than his MG — does Binx regain composure. Then, for the first time, he accepts the idea that he will marry Kate by announcing that she is "my own fiancé, Kate Cutrer (183). In case the symbolism of Emily's sword and the name Cutrer which Kate and Emily share is lost on the reader, Percy earlier had Binx meet a knife salesman who exhibits what Binx refers to as his "cutter." It is significant that Binx did not tell his aunt that he was going to marry Kate, since that would have made all the difference in her attitude toward their trip together to Chicago. Kate rebukes him for the oversight, and again calls him an "idiot." While he wants to attribute his silence to stoic heroism, it is more likely that, as perhaps wary-eyed Kate suspects, he still had not accepted the proposal of marriage as genuine. To seal the matter, Kate immediately tells her aunt herself who is then soon reconciled to him, as Emily should be since he is going to do everything she wished.

The other scene that might suggest that Kate is as weak and dependent in their relationship as she pretends to be is the final one in the Epilogue in which she tells him that she cannot go downtown without knowing that he is thinking about her constantly. This is a curious situation, because he has just explained that within the past year she went on her own on a lark to hear Marian Anderson perform in Dallas — certainly a much bolder trip than a streetcar ride downtown. But close reading of the scene suggests another possible motive for her claim of dependency.

In this relationship dependence is mutual, and Kate knows Binx well enough to understand *his* precarious psychic state. She is always in danger of having him drift away into his dreams of the search, into sleep, or into total psychic withdrawal. Just as she had devised strategies to get his attention before marriage, so she must constantly defamiliarize herself to hold his interest and keep the marriage alive. In this final scene Percy has Kate give a small demonstration of her continued use of cinematic gestures. She has Binx pick a cape jasmin with which she then strikes a pose. She tells him to picture her in a very particular way: "'I'm going to sit next to window on the lake side and put the cape jasmin in my lap.... And you'll be thinking of me in just that way?'" (190-91)

By having him think of her in this defamiliarized and highly particular image of her — not a vague image of a wife — she forces herself upon his imagination, just as she had done with her antic poses during their courtship. In the final image of *The moviegoer*, as an entranced Binx watches her, Kate frames herself as in a scene from a movie: "Twenty feet away she turns around. 'Mr. Klostermann? Mr. Klostermann.' I watch her walk toward St. Charles, cape jasmine held against her cheek, until my brothers and sisters call out behind me" (191).

The reasons for the ambiguity of the ending of *The moviegoer*, then, is that for Binx's narrative audience the ending presents only one side of a more complex situation that Percy has inscribed in the text indirectly for his authorial audience. Binx believes that he has made independent and conscious choices, grounded in his reading of Kierkegaard, to move from the aesthetic to the moral and the religious stage of spiritual development. He believes that he has accepted responsibility to take care of Kate and to embrace all of the values that he had so fiercely rejected earlier, including living in "one of the very shotgun cottages done over by my cousin Nell" (187). But even that term "shotgun," which evokes the image of a man marrying against his will, reminds the authorial reader that Binx's final situation was not exactly his idea. He is like Miles Coverdale in *The Blithedale romance*, who thought he was in love with the girlish Priscilla but was actually entranced by the more sexually threatening Zenobia. On Friday, Binx thought he was in love with Sharon, but by Wednesday he was engaged to Kate.

As in all novels with unreliable narrators, the authorial reader is privileged to view the narrator's world in a larger frame than he can himself perceive. In that larger world, it is Kate who saves Binx, and in so doing perhaps also saves herself. For Kate and Emily recognize that he is their white hope for any future the Cutrer family and the South may have. Binx is a Quentin Compson who lives because Kate holds his attention. By learning his secret language of moviegoing, and using the gestures and techniques of communication of the cinema — such as shifts in tone, cuts, framing, and posing — she makes herself into a character in the movie he wishes his life to be. Playacting as Ophelia, Juliette, Eva Marie Saint, a Russian Natasia, Bette Davis, and Tillie Toiler, she gives him the experience of the heightened reality, as he calls it, of the movies that he longed for in his life. Just as her aunt has the power to scare the wits out of Binx in a way that he confesses to find "not altogether unpleasant," Kate keeps herself in his mind so that his document, as he calls the book, is on the conscious level an account of his search for the meaning of life amidst modern malaise and everydayness, but is on the unconscious level a record of how people may learn from art how to survive everydayness and create interest and meaning for one another. ❑

NOTES

1 *The moviegoer* (New York, 1961). All references are to this edition.

2 Of the several existing volumes of interviews with Percy, the most useful for this essay was Lewis A. Lawson and Victor A. Kramer, [eds.] *Conversations with Walker Percy* (Jackson, Miss., 1985).

3 Of the recent studies of Percy's life and thought, I found the following most helpful: Jerome Taylor, *In search of self:* life, death and Walker Percy (Cambridge, Mass., 1986); essays by Harold Bloom and Tony Tanner in *Walker Percy*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York, 1986); William Rodney Allen, *Walker Percy:* a Southern wayfarer (Jackson, Miss., 1986); Jack Tharoe, *Walker Percy* (Boston, 1983) and the collections he edited, *Walker Percy:* art and ethics, (Jackson, Miss., 1980); Panthea Reid Broughton, *The art of Walker Percy:* stratagems for being (Baton Rouge, 1979); Mary K. Sweeny, *Walker Percy and the modern world* (Chicago, 1987); Martin Luschei, *The sovereign wayfarer:* Walker Percy's diagnosis of the malaise (Baton Rouge, 1972); John Edward Hardy, *The fiction of Walker Percy* (Urbana, 1987); Robert Coles, *Walker Percy:* an American search (Boston, 1978: Patricia Lewis Poteat, *Walker Percy and the old modern age:* reflections on language argument, and the telling of stories (Baton Rouge, 1985).

4 Lawson and Kramer, *Conversations with Walker Percy*, p. 278.

The Price of Duty in Hemingway's The Fifth Column

O Preço do Dever na Peça de Hemingway *A Quinta Coluna*

Der Preis der Pflicht in Hemingways *Die Fünfte Kolonne*

Stephen L. TANNER*

Summary

This essay examines Hemingway's The fifth column, *a play he wrote in Madrid during the fall of 1937 while that city was under bombardment. The essay aims at clarifying the motives behind Hemingway's involvement with the Spanish Civil War and at illuminating the significance of that involvement to his artistic development.*

Resumo

Este ensaio analisa a peça denominada A quinta coluna, *escrita em Madrid por Ernest Hemingway, durante a Guerra Civil Espanhola. O ensaio procura esclarecer os motivos do envolvimento político/ideológico do escritor norte-americano, assim como o significado desse envolvimento para a sua carreira artística.*

From January, 1937 to October 1940, when *For whom the bell tolls* appeared, Ernest Hemingway's thoughts and energies were focused in one way or another on the Spanish Civil War. As head of the Ambulance Corp Committee of the American Friends of Spanish Democracy, he contributed time, money, and the prestige of his reputation to the Loyalist cause. Through writing, money, and technical assistance for the battlefield scenes, he contributed to two documentary films, *Spain in flames* and *The Spanish earth*. As an indefatigable promoter of the latter film, he presented it to the Writer's Congress at Carnegie Hall (accompanied by one of his very rare formal speeches), to a group of Hollywood celebrities (from whom he got $17,000 for ambulances), and to President Roosevelt in the White House. Under contract with the North American Newspaper Alliance, he made four trips, each of several months duration, to Spain over a two year period, reporting his experiences in 28 dispatches. His other contributions to the literature of the Spanish Civil War include a three-act play *The fifth column*, a series of angry anti-fascist essays for the short- lived American periodical *Ken*, four semi-autobiographical short stories concerning besieged Madrid during the spring and fall of 1937, and finally *For whom the bell tolls*, perhaps the best novel about the War in any language (Capellán, 1985, 241-44; Baker, 1969, 313-16).

The motivation for Hemingway's involvement with the War was far from simple. Angel Capellán in *Hemingway and the Hispanic world* strongly defends him against accusations or insinuations that his allegiance to the Loyalist cause was not serious and energetic enough, arguing that his commitment was thorough and genuine and founded on a deep love for Spain (243-44). Scott Donaldson, on the other hand, suggests that Hemingway's motives for going to Spain were not entirely altruistic, noting that he carried with him credentials and a generous dollar-a-word contract from the North American Newspaper Alliance. Moreover, he was escaping domestic troubles, he planned to resume a liaison with Martha Gellhorn, and he hoped to gain material for his fiction from close observation of war (100). Although Communists and fellow travelers actively courted Hemingway's support during the thirties and praised his apparent shift from political »

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neutrality to "social consciousness," Carlos Baker provides convincing evidence that he never capitulated to Marxism (1969, 276-82). Donaldson suggests that, "by and large, it was the tide of events rather arguments of 'the persuaders' than the accounted for his seeming drift to the left" and that insofar as the motivation of his involvement in the Spanish Civil War was political, "it derived from two consuming hatreds: of fascism and the horror of modern war" (99-100). Hemingway recognized at least five parties on the Republican side and admitted the difficulty in understanding and evaluating them (Baker, 1956, 228). Perhaps his years of assiduously avoiding politics had left him unprepared for coping with a situation as complex as that in Spain. In any case, he had no party. He favored the Popular Front, mainly because he agreed with its approach to conducting the War and because it provided him the kind of inside information he valued. "I like Communists when they're soldiers," he once said in a political argument in Madrid, "but when they're priests, I hate them" (Baker, 1969, 330). The truth is that his reasons for going to the war in Spain were political only in a qualified sense. In more significant ways they were humanitarian, personal, and artistic.

As a way of clarifying the motives behind Hemingway's involvement with the Spanish Civil War and at the same time illuminating the significance of that involvement to his artistic development, I wish to examine *The fifth column*, the play he wrote in Madrid during the fall of 1937 while that city was under bombardment.

The setting of the play is the Hotel Florida on the Plaza de Callao just off the Gran Via of Madrid. This is where Hemingway was living when he wrote the play. During the period of writing, he tells us in his preface, the hotel "was struck by more than thirty high explosive shells" (v). The protagonist, Philip Rawlings, a correspondent secretly engaged in counterespionage for the Loyalists, is a projection of Hemingway himself. Baker notes the autobiographical parallels and points out that in some of the scenes he used a virtual replica of the room he was occupying at the time (321). The emotion in the play, insofar as it derived from Hemingway's actual experience, was transformed into art without benefit of any sort of Wordsworthian recollection in tranquility.

The fifth column, as critical consensus clearly manifests, is not a success. Perhaps Hemingway was unable to use his material effectively because he was too close to it — he generally allowed his experiences several years to settle in his mind before he tried to write about them — or maybe the main problem was that, although he was a master of dialogue and dramatic situation in the novel, he had not equipped himself with the special techniques and craftsmanship that work for the theater demands. Some believe the real value of *The fifth column* lies in the way it served to purge Hemingway of his intense involvement in the fight against fascism so that in *For whom the bell tolls* he was able to write with the maturity and proper aesthetic distance which made that novel great.

At first, while his experience in Madrid was fresh in mind, he had high expectations for the play and was disappointed at having to publish it before it had appeared on stage. He compared the situation to that of "sending a horse to the dog-meat cannery when you had expected it to win the Kentucky Derby" (Baker, 1969, 333). Later, however, he said, "I think *The fifth column* is probably the most unsatisfactory thing I ever wrote.... It was an attempt to write under what you could honestly call impossible conditions. After it, and after we were beaten in Spain, I came home and cooled out and disciplined myself and wrote *For whom the bell tolls*" (Baker, 1969, 6). The play had a brief run on the New York stage during the spring of 1940, with Franchot Tone in the leading role, and then remained unstaged until a reasonably successful television performance in 1960.

The play's central conflict places Philip's commitment to his counterespionage work, as dangerous and unsavory as it is, in opposition to the attraction of Dorothy Bridges, a Vassar and Junior League-formed spectator of the War who would like to take him and leave the upheaval in Spain for the delights of travel around the continent: steeplechases and fine dinners in France, shooting in Hungary, surfing on the beach at Melindi, and similar pursuits of the idle rich. Although Philip is sick of the war and fed up with his sordid role in it, he ultimately tells Dorothy, "You can go. But I've been to all those places and I've left them all behind. And where I go now I go alone, or with others who go there for the same reason I go" (83). Critics uniformly agree that this love versus duty theme is inadequately realized. Dorothy's vacuity undermines the plausibility of her being a genuine temptation, and the cause at stake is so vaguely defined that talk of it fails to transcend the kind windy praise for bravery and abstract ideals that Hemingway himself taught us in his earlier work to mistrust. The play, according to John M. Muste, contains "a stoic posturing in the face of danger and hardship which almost parodies such earlier Hemingway heroes as Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry" (64). In his 1939 review, Lionel Trilling made the illuminating observation that *The fifth column* was written by Hemingway the "man" rather than Hemingway the "artist": "Hemingway the 'artist' is conscious, Hemingway the 'man' is self-conscious; the 'artist' has a kind of innocence, the 'man' a kind of naivety; the 'artist' is disinterested, the 'man' has a dull personal ax to grind; the 'artist' has a perfect medium and tells the truth even if it be only *his* truth, but the 'man' fumbles at communication and falsifies" (123).

Whatever its strengths or weaknesses, *The fifth column* tells us more about Hemingway than about the war in Spain, and it is more =

interesting for what Hemingway intended it to express than for what it actually does express. The real subject of the play, the subject even more fundamental than the struggle against fascism, is encompassed in two concepts that oriented Hemingway's mind set and consequently his artistic vision: duty and nostalgia.

Duty is the more familiar concept to readers of Hemingway's fiction. It underlies the notions of code behavior and "grace under pressure" that inform so much of the commentary on Hemingway's life and writing. In Hemingway's world, battlefield conditions — both literal and metaphorical — predominate, and conventional ideals and traditional spiritual values are without vitality. Duty takes the place of such ideals and values — not a sense of duty to God or country or partisan cause but rather a sense of duty to self. Consequently, duty became for Hemingway an end in itself, an ultimate value to replace the traditional absolutes that seemed in his age no longer creditable. To behave with courage, integrity, and dignity — to fulfill these duties to self — was a way for the individual to generate meaning and purpose in an otherwise painfully bewildering and purposeless world. Naturally, this metaphysical sense of duty became individuated in Hemingway's life and writing as allegiance to particular principles and causes, notably to the profession of writing itself, but underlying these specific occasions for duty — for example, the Loyalist cause in Spain — was that fundamental need for life-ordering and life-justifying purpose. His fascination with war and military strategy is largely explained by the fact that in this arena duty is so clearly primary.

As much as he loved Spain and detested fascism, the ulterior motive for his involvement with the Spanish Civil War was a desire to be close to the war experience, in which the price and rewards of duty are dramatically delineated. This is intimated in Stephen Spender's review of *The fifth column and four unpublished stories of the Spanish civil war:* "He was expected to write about war because war was his obsession. To him it was a pure condition of being, transcending even his loyalty to the Republican side" (537). It is also suggested by the quarrel between Hemingway and Dos Passos over the filming of *The Spanish earth.* Dos Passos wanted to emphasize the plight of the common people; Hemingway was far more interested in the military aspects (Baker, 1969, 300). Moreover, his trips to Spain afforded Hemingway significant opportunity to exercise his own capacity for duty and pay the price duty exacts. In the preface to *The fifth column and the first forty-nine stories,* he says,

> *In going where you have to go, and doing what you have to do, and seeing what you have to see, you dull and blunt the instrument you write with. But I would rather have it bent and dulled and know I had to put it on the grindstone again and hammer it into shape and put a wheatstone on it, and know that I had something to write about, than to have it bright and shining and nothing to say, or smooth and well- oiled in the closet, but unused. (vii)*

A considerable weakness in *The fifth column* results from the way his experience in Spain in 1937 energized his deep-seated preoccupation with duty, but, being still too close to the experience and also lacking seasoned skills for writing plays, he was unable to transmute his emotions into an artistic form that would evoke similar emotions in his readers.

The second concept at the heart of Hemingway's artistic vision, nostalgia, is less frequently recognized and appreciated. Nevertheless, as Wright Morris once observed, Hemingway's "subject", pushed to its extremity, is nostalgia (25). Remembering was a principal satisfaction for him as a man and a primary wellspring for him as a writer. His workroom, as George Plimpton describes it in his well-known Hemingway interview, reveals "an owner who is basically neat but cannot bear to throw anything away — especially if sentimental value is attached." One book case has an odd assortment of mementos — broken toys, insignificant knick-knacks — a collection much like "the odds and ends which turn up in a shoebox at the back of a boy's closet." It is evident to Plimpton, though, that these tokens, as well as the trophies decorating the walls, have value growing out of their association with a special person, place, or experience in the past. "It cheers me to look at them", Hemingway says (21). Hemingway valued physical activity and sensory experience — travel, outdoor sports, eating, drinking — and a good part of the pleasure of such things for him was reflective, a pleasure in remembering. Malcom Cowley said of him: "Ernesto never learned that you can't go back. He always tried to go back" (Cowley interview). And of course this joy in remembering was a large part of his motivation as a writer, and he clearly recognized the value of such remembering for a writer. He advised his brother Leicester, an aspiring young writer, "Try to remember everything about everything" (Leicester Hemingway, 156).

Nostalgia often serves in his writing as the key to what a man is. It seems to constitute what we call the self, for in terms of Hemingway's naturalism, a man is what he has experienced — what he remembers — and nostalgia seems to be the process by which the most meaningful of those experiences are selected to be actively remembered. In order for a man to be in control of himself, he must be in control of his memories. This explains the frequent and important juxtaposition of duty and nostalgia in Hemingway's fiction. The character, in order to fulfill a duty, must keep the potent attraction of nostalgia in check. Nostalgia can be a source of comfort and stability in times of stress, as when Santiago in *The old man and the sea* remembers his youth during his battle with the great fish — the beaches of Africa

and his victory in the arm wrestle with the strong black man in the tavern at Casablanca — or when Nick Adams, struggling with the effects of shell shock, fishes in his memory the favorite trout stream of his boyhood. But nostalgia must never become an avenue of escape or a cause for dereliction of duty.

Returning now to *The fifth column*, the duty motif is obvious, but what does nostalgia have to do with the play? Hemingway provides the clue in his preface, where he states that Dorothy's name "might also have been Nostalgia" (vi). The price of duty for Philip is not simply Dorothy, but nostalgia and all that concept meant for Hemingway. The principal failure of the play is the author's failure to embody fully and convincingly in Dorothy the very real enticements of nostalgia. Malcolm Cowley sensed this failure when he pointed out that beautiful Dorothy may be the symbol of Philip's nostalgia and might be a symbol for ours if we saw her in the flesh, but she is nothing of the sort in the play. "She is presented there as a chattering, superficial fool, a perfect specimen of the Junior Leaguer pitching woo on the fringes of the radical movement, with the result that she keeps the play from being a tragedy or even a valid conflict between love and duty" (1938, 197).

When *The fifth column* is viewed in the larger context of Hemingway's work, it is obvious that he intended to dramatize the conflict between duty and nostalgia as he understood these concepts in the imaginative reaches of his own experience. It is the conflict that so effectively informs such later works as *For whom the bell tolls*, *The old man and the sea*, and *Islands in the stream*. The play perhaps served as a trial run in which he learned, by failing, that he must understate the aspect of duty and accentuate the allure of nostalgia. In *Islands in the stream* for example, he devotes the first two parts of the novel to establishing in rich detail what nostalgia means in the protagonist's life. Then, in part three, a narrative of military action in which duty is the crucial issue, he strategically counterpoints the action with nostalgic recollection. This provides not only a pulse or rhythm for the narrative, but movingly heightens the reader's appreciation of the price and value of duty, so that when the protagonist says, "Duty is a wonderful thing," the statement rings with some truth and significance. *The old man and the sea* likewise successfully establishes memorable nostalgic recollection as a foil to a powerfully understated portrayal of duty fulfilled.

The degree to which Dorothy fails as an embodiment of nostalgia is readily apparent when contrasted with the way nostalgia functions in *For whom the bell tolls*. Using 471 pages to describe the events of three days, Hemingway had ample space to create layers of nostalgic images revealing the protagonist's inner being and making his commitment to duty poignant. For example, his Montana youth is evoked in a passage like this: "He smelled the odor of the pine boughs under him, the piney smell of the crushed needles and the sharper odor of the resinous sap from the cut limbs.... This is the smell I love. This and fresh-cut clover, the crushed sage as you ride after cattle, wood-smoke and the burning leaves of autumn. That must be the odor of nostalgia, the smell of the smoke from the piles of raked leaves burning in the streets in the fall in Missoula" (260). And in addition to such evocative passages, Hemingway skillfully uses the flask of absinthe, or "giant killer", Robert Jordon carries with him as a symbol of nostalgia:

> *one cup of it took the place of the evening papers, of all the old evenings in cafés, of all chestnut trees that would be in bloom now in this month, of the great slow horses of the outer boulevards, of book shops, of kiosques, and of galleries, of Chaumont, of the Guaranty Trust Company and the Ile de la Cité, of Foyot's old hotel, and of being able to read and relax in the evening; of all the things he had enjoyed and forgotten and that came back to him when he tasted that opaque, bitter, tongue-numbing, brain-warming, stomach-warming, idea-changing liquid alchemy." (51)*

In the final scene, in which he sacrifices his life for the sake of duty, he reaches for the flask and finds it gone. "Then he felt that much more alone because he knew that there was not going to be even that. I guess I'd counted on that, he said" (467).

This is Hemingway the "artist" writing, and the price of duty assumes a moving and even tragic dimension. The novel is art rather than propaganda. *The fifth column* is little more than melodramatic propaganda in which duty and its price remain vaguely defined. The comparison is instructive. Sympathy for a cause and first-hand experience and observation of dramatic life-and-death events are not enough by themselves to guarantee significant literary art. Such things as aesthetic distance, evocative images, and emotional nuance are also essential.

The fifth column has provided ammunition for the critics of Hemingway who complain that the notion that loyalty, bravery, and duty are the cardinal virtues and that physical action as the basis of the good life does not add up to a meaningful philosophy. But, as Tom Stoppard remarked in commenting on the play, Hemingway's philosophy should not be despised by ivory tower philosophers. "The force of a code of behavior, of a personal morality, is that philosophy does not account for it but is accountable to it" (26). The trouble with *The fifth column* is not the essential philosophy that underlies it but that the philosophy was inadequately incarnated, largely because of the pressure for leftist political commitment exerted upon Hemingway by the climate of the thirties and particularly the circumstances of the Spanish Civil War. ❑

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DISSERTAÇÕES DEFENDIDAS NO ANO DE 1988 NA ÁREA DE INGLÊS

1) "Sobre a tradução de cien anõs de soledad para o Inglês: a crítica de uma crítica"
Autor: Lúcia Maria Resende Assumpção
Título obtido: mestre
Orientador: Prof. Carlos Alberto Gohn
Nº de páginas: 100

Sinopse:

Este trabalho é uma crítica a uma crítica de tradução. Tomou-se a tradução de Cien años de soledad para o inglês, feita por Gregory Rabassa. A crítica de Gerardo Vásquez-Ayora (1978) sobre o trabalho de Rabassa é aqui o objeto de estudo. Para Ayora, a tradução feita por Rabassa é inadequada por não utilizar procedimentos técnicos chamados avançados e se circunscrever apenas àqueles chamados elementares. Neste trabalho, considera-se que a "tradução próxima", que caracteriza o trabalaho de Rabassa, é uma exigência do texto de partida e se mostra adequada. Busca-se na crítica literária evidências para confirmar tal ponto de vista, tomando como base a análise de Rodrigues (1985) sobre o fenômeno do espelhismo em Garcia Márquez e aplica-se à teoria da tradução considerações de Possenti (1987) sobre a importância da questão formal na literatura. A principal sustentação deste trabalho é que a tradução é essencialmente um processo de produção de textos, rejeitando-se qualquer segmentação desse processo em fases estanques.

2) "Pushing the boat from within: an analysis of historical and sociological factors in EFLT"
Autor: Herzila Maria de Lima Bastos
Orientador: Prof. Dr. Marco Antônio de Oliveira
Nº de páginas: 182

Sinopse:

Este trabalho, composto de uma parte teórica e outra empírica, trata do ensino do Inglês como lingua estrangeira no Brasil sob uma perspectiva histórica e sócio-cultural.

Quanto ao seu embasamento teórico, esta tese apresenta três divisões: a) a teoria sobre motivação e atitudes na aprendizagem de uma lingua estrangeira, de acordo com Gardner e Lambert (1972); b) estudos de autores brasileiros e africanos sobre o colonialismo e/ou neocolonialismo sob o ponto de vista da formação de imagens estereotipadas do dominador e do próprio dominado; c) MacBride Report, trabalho da UNESCO sobre a comunicação mundial.

Os três grandes grupos teóricos acima mencionados informam e são utilizados na interpretação dos dados coletados através de questionários. Estes foram aplicados em colégios particulares e em cursos de Inglês em Belo Horizonte, numa amostragem que envolve apenas a classe média.

Chegou-se à conclusão que a ênfase na motivação integrativa, ou seja, a identificação do aluno com os valores da cultura estrangeira não é desejável neste contexto de terceiro mundo no qual o Brasil se insere.