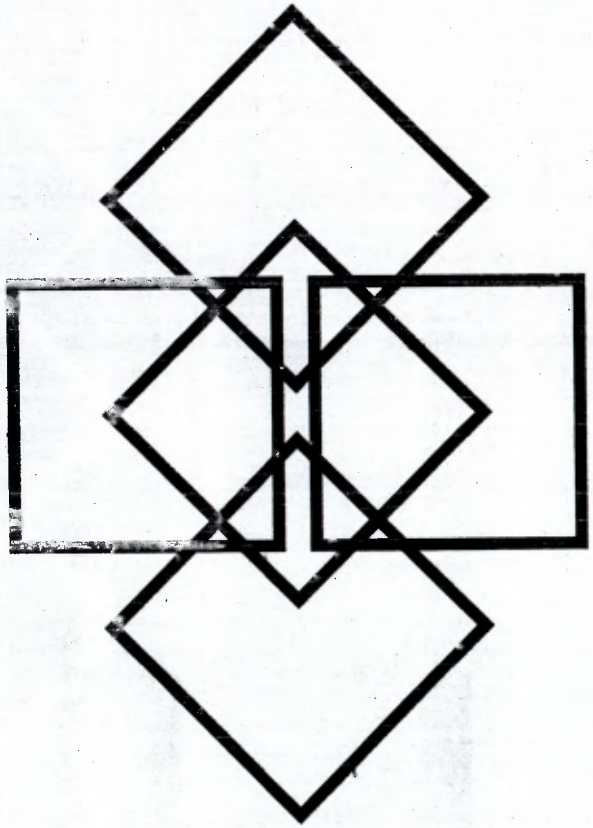
ESTUDOS ANGLO-AMERICANOS



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Agradecemos também ao Conselho Britânico e ao USSIS- Brasília, que contribuiram de maneira decisiva para a publicação deste volume.

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CHEKHOV'S RAIN, HEMINGWAY'S WAR

George Monteiro

Nowhere had he read anything "in that line so graphic, so beautiful, so harrowing" as the childbirth scene in *A Farewell to Arms*, writes Arnold Bennet. "It need not fear comparison with the coming into the world of Anna Karenina's child." [1] Although Tolstoy's novel can be the basis for an interesting comparison, Chekhov's story "The Party" seems to have been Hemingway's primary source. The tittle story of Chekhov's *The Party, and Other Stories* (1925) — in Russian it is called *Imeny,* which in English translates as *The Name-Day*— served Hemingway as a model for his childbirth episode that brings to an end the love story of Frederic Henry and Catherine Barkley.[2]

In 1925, shortly after the publication of *In Our Time* and almost three years before he began writing *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway called to Chekhov "an amateur writer,"one who had written "about 6 good stories,"but who could not to be compared to Tolstoy, who was "a prophet,"Maupassant and Balzac, who were "professional writers," or Turgenev, who was "an artist."[3] Thirty - five years he had relented somewhat. In *A Moveable Feast* he compares Chekov with the British short - story writer Katherine Mansfield.

> I had been told Katherine Mansfield was a good short - story writer, even a great short - story writer, but trying to read her after Chekhov was like hearing the carefully artificial tales of a young old - maid to those of an articulate and knowing physician who was a good and simple writer. Mansfield was like near - beer. It was better to drink water. But Chekhov was not water except for the clarity. There were some stories that seemed to be only journalism. But there were wonderful ones too. [4]

Unfortunately, Hemingway fails to name those "wonderful" Chekhov stories, though there can be little doubt that among them was "The Party."[5] For in that story were hints in useful to him in the treatment of the material he was struggling with in early 1929. The nuances and subtleties of Chekhov's stories, which struck many of the critics as artless and casual, if not careless, seemed to have resonated for Hemingway. Moreover, the Hemingway who always admired in insider's expertise, could not have failed to see the evidence in "The Party" that Chekhov was also a knowledgeable physician. As he fought his own novel through to him Chekhov's "innovative" example of how to handle scenes of labor and childbirth.[6]

Chekhov had the rare ability to stand back from his own stories

and judge them as if they were the work of some other writer. With a judicious eye he could pin - point fine points and more often — deficiences. It saddened him that he seemed never to have the time or patience to work over this or that story. He had not brought a given story to its full and proper realization because he had failed to work out an obligatory scene or two. He was never blind to the ideal narrative for one of his stories, but invariably—usually because he needed money —he forfeited the opportunity to fulfill his best intentions.

"The Party" is a case in point. Good as it is, the story is not good enough, admits Chekhov. He agrees with his friend A. S. Suvorin that he had not done enough with the hero, Pyotr Dmitritch.

> You say that the hero of my "Party" is a character worth developing. Good Lord ! I am not a sense less brute, you know, I understand that. I understand that I cut the throats of my characters and spoil them, and that I waste good material... To tell you the truth , I would gladly have spent six months over the "Party"; I like taking things easy, and see no attaction in publishing at headlong speed. I would willingly, with pleasure, with feeling, in a leisurely way, describe the *whole* of my hero, describe the state of his mind while his wife was in labour, his trial, the horrid feeling he has after he is acquitted; I would describe the midwife and the doctors having tea in the middle of the nigth, I would describe the rain...[7]

If such regrets were not unusual for Chekhov, but he states them in such a way that one might infer that he has forgotten the nature and shape of his narrative. For while "The Party"is not told in the first-person, the story does cohere around a central consciousness. Chekhov limits himself to his heroine's impressions, observations, and speculations, to her feelings of fear, anger and jealousy.

Although it is an exaggeration to say that "setting and mental state, the physiological and psychological, the character's perceptions and the reader's interpenetrate and intensity to the point of inseparability,"[8] it is not too much to point that what Chekhov sacrifices for this interpenetration and intensification is the opportunity to go behind the husband's appearance and outward behavior.

The reader is not made privy to the husband's thoughts, coming no closer to them than in the following passage of narrative speculation.

> Pyotr Dmitritch walked away from her (his wife), looking at her with a softened and melancholy face. He was probably thinking, as he looked at her, of his farm, his solitude, and—who knows?—perhaps he was even thinking how snug and cosy life would be at the farm if his wife had been this girl—young, pure, fresh, not corrupted by higher education, not witth child.[9]

Those words— "probably" and "perhaps"— reveal only that the pregnant wife interpret the look on her husband's face in ways that her own fears. Pyotr Dmitritch cares less for her than he once did. He would have her younger, fresher, and purer, wishing, above all, that she were not pregnant. A good deal of the narrative turns precisely on how the wife interprets and handles such fears. 'It's dreadful having one's first baby,' said Olga Mihalovna after a moment's thought.`I keep feeling as though I shall not get through it, as though I shall die.'"(30) She fights with her husband, seeing perfidy and betrayal (or the desire to betray) in his every move. In the midst of one such fight, she goes into labor. "Her sobs were continually interrupted by fearfull attacks of pain, and each time the pain was more acute and prolonged. At first she held her breath and bit the pillow during the pain, but then she began screaming on an unseemly piercing note." (53) As her pains become more intense, she becomes increasingly vague about what is being done for her. Yet, some moments are lucid. "'It's the birth,' Olga Mihalovna thought...but he won't be born alive!" (55) She drifts off, and comes back. It is "probably about five o'clock in the morning," (55) she thinks, just before she catches a glimpse of a woman in a white apron and guesses that she is the midwife. "(I) must be dying in childbirth,"(55) she thinks, noticing at the same moment that outside it is raining. She worries about her husband. 'What if I really am dying?' thought Olga Mihalovna, looking at her husband's head and the window-panes on which the rain was beating. 'How will he live without me? With whom will he have tea and dinner, talk in the evenings, sleep?'" (56) But her hard and protracted labor affect her ability to think. "The pain and the constant screaming and moaning stupified her. She heard, saw, and sometimes spoke, but hardly understood, and was only conscious that she was in pain or was just going to be in pain. It seemed to her... that her new life of agony... would go on for a long, long time, endlessly." (56-57) There are complications. The midwife cannot carry on alone. The doctors are summoned.

> In the evening two doctors—one bony, bald, with a big redbeard; the other with a swarthy Jewish face and cheap spectacles —performed some sort of operation on Olga Mihalovna. To these unknown men touching her body she felt utterly indifferent. By now she had no feeling of shame, no will, and any one might do what he would with her. If any one had rushed at her with a knife, or had insulted Pyotr Dmitritch, or had robbed her of her right to the little creature she would not have said a word. They gave her chloroform during the operation. When she came to again, the pain was still there and insufferable. It was night. And Olga Mihlovna remenbered that there had been just such a night with the stillness, the lamb, with the midwife sitting motionless by the bed, with the drawers of the chest pulled out, with Pyotr Dmitritch standing by the window, but some time very long ago.... (57 - 58)

The ellipsis in this passage — the author 's — functions as the fourth and penultimate section of the story.

Olga Mihalovna lives. Her baby has not survived. After coming to, with the pain over now begining to understand her surroundings once again, the mother notices that "there was no sound of a child 's crying, no one was congratulating her or rejoicing, it was evident that the little creature had not been born alive." (58) She notes that her husband has been moved deeply by what has happened, particularly the loss of the child. But she still cannot talk to him or of to feel much emotion.

"Nothing mattered to Olga Mihalovna now, there was a mistiness in her brain from the chloroform, an emptiness in her soul . . . . The dull indifference to life which had overcome her when the two doctors were performing the operation still had possession of her. (59)

Thus ends Chekhov's sensitive dramatization of his heroine's excruciating confinement.

The earlier scenes in the story — the gatherings and meetings and picnics during the two months before the heroine comes to term need not be rehearsed here, but, suffice it to say, those incidents and events, like those surrounding the labor and the delivery, are seen consistently through the limited consciousness of the heroine. How could Chekhov have thought seriously, then, that in his haste to finish the story he had lost the opportunity to "describe the whole of my hero, describe the state of his mind while his wife was in labour . . . "or to describe " the midwife and the doctors having tea in the middle of the night "and the " rain" that attends the woman's labor ? Had he done those things, he might well have diminished the unique effect the story has on its readers. Limiting himself at the end to dramatizing the fading - in - and - out - of - conciousness of his heroine during childbirth when she would naturally perceive things only in moments of intermittent clarity and accuracy became the source of the story's power and the main cause, in his day, for its success. "My 'Party' has pleased the ladies," he wrote. "The sing my praises wherever I go. It really isn't bad to be a doctor and to understand what one is writing about. the ladies say the description of the confinement is *true.*"[10]

It was hardly a disadvantage to Chekhov the writer that he was also a doctor who knew enough the difficulties of pregnancy, childbirth, and confinement. The risk he took was in choosing to write his story about those experiences from the point of view of the woman, wife and mother, and not from that of the doctor or the husband. When Hemingway decided to close out *A Farewell to Arms* with a labor - and - birth episode (a decision reached after his wife had undergone delivery by Caesarean section) [11] the retrospective narrative to which he had committed himself limited him to presenting events from the point of view and consciousness of the "husband"and father. This led

him to inventing a way to have Frederic Henry invited into the operation room where it becomes possible to unfold before his eyes the drama of Catherine Barkley's labor, the baby's birth, and the deaths of mother and child. This stratagem allows Hemingway to compensate for whatever (Chekhov's) insider's expertise he lacked. Moreover, Frederic Henry hero has to witness Catherine Barkley's ordeal to complete his own his portrait as grieving hero. The entire narrative is not aimed at conveying the woman's experience (as in Chekhov) but at convincing us that what the man has suffered through — in war and love — has resulted in his "numb survival [12] — the " dull indifference to life" and "emptiness" of "soul" — that Chekhov attributes to Olga Mihalovna.

Frederic Henry's rather easy accessibility to the operating room also enables Hemingway to do something beyond merely depicting his hero in the kind of depth Chekhov had denied his own hero. His presence makes it possible for him to render explicitly the hero's state of mind while the woman suffers in labor.

> Poor, poor dear Cat. And this was the price you paid for sleeping together. This was the end for the trap. This was what people got for loving each other. Thank God for gas, anyway. What must it have been like before there were anesthetics? Once it started, they were in the mill - race. Catherine had a good time in the time of pregnancy. It wasn't bad. She was hardly ever sick. She was not awfully uncomfortable until toward the last. So now they got her in the end. You never got away with anything. Get away hell ! It would have heen the same if we had been married fifty times. And what if she should die? She won't die. People don't die in childbirth nowadays. That was what all husband thought. Yes, but what if she should die?

Then there's a temporary turn in his thinking, as he tells himself that Cat won't die, that she is just having "a bad time."

> The initial labor is usually protracted. She's only having a bad time. Afterward we'd say what a bad time and Catherine would say it wasn't really so bad. But what if she should die ? She can't die. Yes, but what if she should die? She can't, I tell you. Don't be a fool. It's just a bad time. It's just nature giving her hell. It's only the first labor, which is almost always protracted. Yes, but what if she should die? She can't die. Why would she die? What reason is there for her to die? There's just a child that has to be born, the by-product of good nights in Milan. It makes trouble and is born then you look after it and get fond of it maybe. But what if she should die?She won't die. But what if she should die? She won't .
> She's all right. But what if she should die? She can't die. But what if she should die? Hey, what about that? What if she should die?[13]

Like Chekhov's heroine, Catherine Barkley requires surgery. Since the husband must make this decision, we are made a party to Frederic Henry's reaction to the doctor's advice and therefore learn what the operation is—a Caesarean. But in Chekhov's story, because the reader is restricted to the woman's consciousness, he learns only that the doctors performed "some sort of operation." Moreover, the man in Hemingway's novel sees the baby and knows it is a boy. It looks "like a freshly skinned rabbit." (324) Catherine does not see him. Neither does Chekhov's heroine see her baby. And because of the nature of Chekhov's narrative, we do not know if the father in "The Party" gets to see his child. The sex of the baby is not revealed.

Then there is the rain. If Chekhov, restricted to the woman's consciousness, can mention "the window-panes on which the rain was beating" but only when she notices the rain, Hemingway, telling his story from the father's point of view, has the authorial freedom to move his hero in and out of the heavy rain. Catherine might have had psychologically revealing visions of herself lying dead in the rain ("I'm afraid of the rain because sometimes I see me dead in it" [135]), but Hemingway can play the naturalistic rain for all its symbolic worth. Indeed, as one critic puts it, "the rain (the novel is saturated with the misery of rainfall as if all of Nature wept for all the lives to be lost in battle) casts a shadow on the radiance of their love."[14] The near-ubiquity of the falling rain enables the enhanced effect, if understated, of the novel's closing paragraph. Frederic Henry has managed to get the nurses out of the room where Chatherine lies dead, so that he can say his good-byes. That's not how it works out. "But after I had got them out and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-bye to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain." (332) The tears Frederic Henry does not shed are present in the rain that has accompanied Catherine's demise even as it is present during her lover's walk back to the hotel.[15]

It is important to note, as has been shown, that in Hemingway's fictional account of the several days it took for the actual defeat of the Italian army and that army's disastrous retreat at Caporetto, he follows history closely—not just the minutiae of geography and terrain but to details of the weather itself. "Not once during Book Three of *A Farewell to Arms* does fictional rain fall when actual rain did not."[16] Such searches into the historical sources of Hemingway's fictional account of Frederic Henry's and the Italian army's retreat from Caporetto, especially into the facts concerning the almost constant rain, complement the almost exclusively symbolic interpretations of that rain, nearly a half century ago, by Carlos Beker, Philip Young, and—their predecessor—Malcolm Cowley.

In the Viking Portable Library *Hemingway* (1944) Cowley writes:

> [I]n *A Farewell to Arms*, the rain becomes a conscious symbol of disaster. "Things went very badly, the hero tells us in the first chapter. "At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. "Catherine Barkley is afraid of the rain because, she says, "sometimes I see dead in it." Rain falls all during the retreat from Caporetto; it falls while Catherine is trying to have her baby in a Swiss hospital; and it is still falling when she dies and when Frederic pushes the nurses out of the room to be alone with her. "It wasn't any good", he says. "It was like saying goodbye to a statue . After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain." [17]

Baker sees the rain used "as a kind of symbolic obligato,encouraging us to "recognize some kind of disaster - symbol in the return of the rains."[18] Young agrees with Cowley and Baker. He marvels at "the use of an object, rain, in a way that cannot be called symbolic so much as portentous . . . as a signal of disaster." [19] "This is really the old `pathetic fallacy' put to new use," he continues, "and — since there is no need to take it scientifically or philosophically, but simply as a subtle and unobtrusive for unity — quite an acceptable one, too. Good and bad weather go along with good and bad moods and events . . . They [the character] win when it's sunny, and lose in the rain."[20]

> Henry, in his practical realism, professes a disbelief in signs, and tells himself that Catherine's vision of herself dead in the rain is meaningless. But she dies in it and actually, glancing back at the end, one sees that a short, introductory scene at the very start of the book had presented an ominous conjuction of images — rain, pregnancy and death — which set the mood for all that was to follow, prefigured it and bound all the ends of the novel into a perfect and permanent knot. [21]

That there was rain at Caporetto Hemingway found confirmed in the histories, but the rain that falls through the narrative up to and even beyond Catherine's death recalls Chekhov's insistence that he should have done more with the rain in "The Party." [22] It is as if Hemingway is trying to fill this lacuna in Chekhov's narrative.

If Chekhov could not have actually accomplished all the things in "The Party" that he regretted not having done, Hemingway could try to do them some of them. Restricting himself to the pregnant wife as his center of conciousness enable Chekhov to dramatize her confinement as *true*. If Hemingway did less well with Catherine's confinement (despite what he learned from Chekhov's story), it was the price he had pay for having chosen to write his narrative from his hero's point of view — exactly what Chekhov had not done, it should

be emphasized, in "The Party." Frederic Henry reveals the whole of himself in a way that Pyotr Dmitritch cannot be revealed, even as Olga Mihalovna has a richness of character and a complexity of conciousness that escape both Frederic Henry's narrative and Hemingway's when it comes down to their joint creation of the life and death of Catherine Barkley.

Notes

1 Arnold Bennett, [Review of *A Farewell to Arms], Evening Standard* (Nov. 14, 1929), p. 5; reprinted in *Hemingway: The Critical Heritage*. ed. Jeffrey Meyers (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 130-31.

2 Chekhov's story's resemblance to Tolstoy's novel has even been called an embarrassment. See Donald Rayfield, Chekhov and the Literary Tradition and Victor Terras, Chekhov at Home: Russian Literary Criticism, in *A Chekhov Companion*. ed. Toby W. Clyman (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985), pp. 42, 168.

3 *Ernest Hemingway: Sellected Letters, 1917 - 1961*, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Scribners, 1981), p. 179.

4 *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Scribners, 1964), p. 133.

5 In Hemingway's library in Cuba there are five volumes of Chekhov's fiction in Constance Garnett translation, including *The Party, and Other Stories* (James D. Brasch and Joseph Sigman, *Hemingway's Library: A Composite Record*. (New York and London: Garland, 1981), p. 73.

6 John Martin, the publisher of Black Sparrow Press, makes an interesting distinction between "masters" and "innovators."
"Pound made an interesting comment: there are the innovators, the masters, and the imitators. I'm interested in the innovators," he says. I'm not even too interested in the masters, who take what the innovator discovers, and master that form, like Hemingway did with Chekhov." (Neil Gordon, Purity and Survival: John Martin and Black Sparrow Press, *Boston Review*, 17 [Nov./ Dec. 1992], p. 26).

7 *Letters of Anton Chekhov to His Family and Friends*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Macmillan, 1920), pp. 100 - 01.

8 Andrew R. Durkin, Chekhov's Narrative Technique, A Chekhov *Companion*, p. 126.

9 Anton Chekhov, "The Party," in *The Party and Other Stories* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), p. 11. Page numbers for subsequent quotations appear in the text.

10 *Letters of Anton Chekhov*, p. 107.

11 On Hemingway's wife Pauline's Caesarean operation and the operating room scene in *Farewell*, see Michael S. Reynolds, *Hemingway's First War: The Making of A FAREWELL TO ARMS* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press., 1976), pp. 25, 170; Bernard Oldsey, *Hemingway's Hidden Craft: The Writing of A FAREWELL TO ARMS* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1979), p. 46; Carlos Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 4th ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), p. 99; and Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (New York: Scribners, 1969), p. 195. The only literary source for Hemingway's childbirth scene that has been proposed is the one in Theodore Dreiser's novel *The "Genius"* (Robert M. McIlvaine, A Literary Source for the Caesarean Section in *A Farewell to Arms, American Literature*, 43 [Nov. 1971], 444-47). The image of the stillborn baby as a "skinned rabbit" appears in both novels.

12 "Numb survival " is Millicent Bell's phrase; see *A Farewell to Arms:* Pseudoautobiography and Personal Metaphor, in *Ernest Hemingway: The Writer in Context*, ed. James Nagel (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 107-28.

13 Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Scribners, 1929), pp. 320-21. Page numbers for subsequent quotations appear in the text.

14 Charles I. Glicksberg, *The Sexual Revolution in Model American Literature* (The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 88.

15 Kenneth Burke works out an equation in wich "rain" is a "symbol of weeping":
There is even a certain covert apotheosis of the emotion here, making it 'heavenly' thus roundabout. But not that rain may also be a symbol of fertility. It may figure the vernally emergent. To water with one's tears can thus also ambiguously be to prepare for the next phase. Thus, the idea of weeping can be translated into its imaginal equivalent, as rain. But the image of rain in its own right countains also the idea of rebirth. (The sociologist Thomas D. Elliot has noted what he calls a 'ritual of riddance', whereby the very rites that serve to honor the departed also serve as device for cutting the bonds between the mourner and the deceased.) We speak of this plot as hypothetical. But might not the recipe apply to the ending of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* ? Add the fact that the hero is there returning in the rain to his hotel. Does not such a destination stand for the potentiality of new intimacies ?" (*A Grammar of Motives an A Rhetoric of Motives* [Cleveland and New York: World, 1962], p. 850-51).
John Killinger puts an existencial spin on Burke's insight: [I]t is the author himself who is guilty of Catherine's death because of his foundness for the hero, and who makes a scapegoat of the world. The Henry who walks off into

the rainy night at the end of *A Farewell to Arms* is like the Orestes who exists with the Furies in *Les Mouches* he is alone, tormented, but very much alive in an existential sense... I believe that the rain is a symbol of fertility in Hemingway... To Hemingway death means rebirth for the existentialist hero in its presence, and therefore the rain, as an omen of death, at the same time predicts rebirth. The precipitation - death - rebirth combination is especially pertinent to the recurrent use of rain in *A Farewell to Arms*... (*Hemingway and the Dead Gods: A Study in Existentialism* [Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1960], p. 48). One might well take issue with Burke's and Kllinger's readings of the ending of *Farewell* by arguing that the key to Hemingay's attitude toward his hero's grief is that by withholding his tears Frederic Henry tacitly refuses to give Catherine Barkley up, to engage in that (sociologically defined) "ritual of riddance."

16 Michael S. Reynolds, *Hemingway's First War: The MAking of A Farewell to Arms*. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), p. 116

17 Malcolm Cowsley, *Hemingway*, Viking Portable Library (New York: Viking, 1944), p. xvi.

18 Baker, *The Writer as Artist*, pp. 105, 106.

19 Philip Young, *Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Rinehart, 1952), 63.

20 Young, p. 64.

21 Young, pp. 63 - 64.

22 To argue for the primacy of Chekhov's influence on the labor and delivery scene of *Farewell* does not diminish the case for Hemingway's having been influenced as well by the image of rain in the "Western Wind"poem to which Frederic Henry alludes (Charles R. Anderson, Hemingway's Other Style, *Modern Language Notes*, 76 [May 1961], 434 - 42) or in the ballad "The Unquiet Grave" (George Deckker and Joseph Harris, Supernaturalism and the Vernacular Style in *A Farewell to Arms*, *PMLA*, 94 [Mar. 1979], 314).

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WHITMAN: THE PROPHET-POET ANNOUCING ANTI-PURITAN BELIEF (A COMMENT ON SECTION 21 OF "SONG OF MYSELF")

Miguel Nenevé

These are the thoughts of
all men in all ages and lands.
They are not original with me.
(Whitman - SOM, 17)

And nothing, not God, is
greater to one than one's self is.
(Whitman-SOM, 48)

In his essay: "The Poet"Emerson maintains Willian Cullen Bryant's argument that Poetry originally comes from American nature. Differently from Bryant however, Emerson declares that Poetry is not merely a suggestive art through which the poet can teach lessons of wisdom. To Emerson the poet is not a teacher but a receiver of wisdom. The poet is a genius, a superior man. He is a representative and stands among partial men for the complete man.'The poet is thus a prophet, a divine man who absorbs the feelings and needs of common men. He expresses what men need to express. "The man is only half himself, the other half is expression." ("The Poet ",p. 263")

The poet expresses, then, the anxiety, the need and the search of his people. He is "the interpreter", the man who is able to perceive the dream of common people. His qualities are the qualities of a prophet. Emerson adds that the poet is "the sayer, the namer and represents beauty." ("The Poet" , p. 264) It seems possible to understand the "sayer", the "namer" and "one who represents beauty", as the inspired man through whom the creator of the universe reveals his purpose.
Emerson also tells us that

> poetry was all written before time was and wherever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings and attemp to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word, or a verse, and substitute something of our own, and thus miswrite the poem. ("The Poet", p. 265)

Emerson adds that the men of "more delicate ear write down these cadences more faithfully, and these transcripts though imperfect, become the songs of the nations." ("The Poet",p. 265) The poet , then, has a more accurate ear than commom man and the more divine he is, the more perfectly he can transcribe the sounds of nature.

The poet, being a prophet, is important to his age because "the experience of each age a new age requires a new confession nad the word seems always waiting for its poet."("The Poet",p. 267) The poet is the one who reveals the "secrets"of the universe in his time. Thus, he has a message and is able to walk before his people and speak before them [Pro-phain[1]] . As in "Language, the fourth use of *nature*"presented in *Nature*, in "The Poet"Emerson maintains that language reflects nature and that the universe in the externalization of the soul. The poet has the gift of using language and "his speech flows with the flowing of nature."("The Poet", p.275)

The poet, Emerson insists, is the "namer or language-maker, naming things sometimes after their appearance, sometimes after essence. " ("The Poet", p. 276) Further on Emerson explains that the condition of true naming on the poet's part is his resiging himself to the divine aura (p.279) Again, similar to prophets, "poets are liberating gods... They are free and make free. "("The Poet", p.283)

After describing the qualities and virtues of the poet, Emerson says: "I look in vain for the poet whom I describe ... we have yet had no genius in America, with tyrannous eye, which know the values of our imcomparable materials. "("The Poet",p. 287) It seems that Emerson was becoming pessimistic about the possibility of finding a poet with the divine qualites nad virtues he describes in his essay. He, then, calls for somebody to come and be "The Poet": "Doubt not, o poet, but persist."("The Poet",p.289) Then in the paragraph of the essay he says that the new poet should turn to nature not to castle (representing the old nobility.) Nobility to Emerson was not the old wealth and sophistication of castles but simplicity of nature.

Emerson's ideas about poetry and the poet reached Whitman's ear, eyes and mind. Jerome Loving in *Emerson Whitman and The American Muse* suggests that Whitman listened to Emerson's lectures about "The Poet"and obviously read "The Poet."(1844)[2] Whitman then felt he was challenged to respond to Emerson's search. At that time Whitman was engaged with journalism, which was considered a rough profession. He had in fact experienced other rough professions like being a carpenter, printer and a nurse for those injured in the American Civil War. Thus he was

aware of people's sentiments, anxieties and values. He could easily understand Emerson's message. He perceived the necessity of preaching to the new word a new concept of life and of humanity. Loving informs us that "the genisis of *Leaves of Grass* occurred shortly after Emerson's 1842 lecture on the Poet "when he introduced into Whitman's fixed world of journalism the possibility of seeing'higer laws'in the carnival of live he recorded."[3] Perhaps we could say that Whitman was impregnated with Emerson's ideas and let the seed of the poem grow within his body and soul intil 1855 when the first editon of *Leaves of Grass* was published. As is well known Whitman sent a copy of his poems to Emerson who immediately realized the "miracle." The poet he had looked for had finally emerged. Emerson wrote to Whitman :

> It meets the demand I am always making of what seemed the sterile and stingy nature... I find imcomparable things said incomparable well, as they must be... I greet you at the beginning of a great carrer...[4]

If Emerson says that Whitman's poetry lived up to his expectations it is because he recognizes the younger poet's work as a new kind of poetry. It is possible to realize that even in preface for the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* Whitman ratifies Emerson's ideas about the poet: "The Poet is a seer... he is individual ... he is complete." To Whitman and to Emerson, the poet sees things that common people do not see. Whitman also proclaims that "there will soon be no more priests... A new order shall arise and they shall be the priests of man and every man shall be his own priest. The poet would substitute the priest."[5] The poet would the be responsible to preach new life to he new world.

In his first poem of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* which became "Song of Myself ", Whitman expresses his belief that he is the poet of the New World. I would like to take section 21 of the poem "Song of Myself"to show how it is possible to identify Whitman as the Poet or the poet-prophet Emerson was waiting for. As a prophet he uses the language of the Old Testament. If one reads the poem aloud one can realize that it saounds like prophetical preaching. Whitman uses, for example, progressive parallelism, very common in the Old Testament[6]: "I am the poet of the body and I am the poet of the soul" or "Night of the South winds - night of the large few starts", and so on. James P. Warren suggests that by using a syntax cammon to the Bible Whitman connects himself with the "impassioned voices of the Old Testament."Presenting Biblical language in his poem the poet declares that he is the prophet, a man who is able to announce a

new time. The poet also seems to be answering Emerson's question when he begins the poem:

"I am the poet .... " In line 5 he repeats "I am the poet. And, then, believing that the poet is the "sayer" he proclaims:

"And I say!!

And I say "(lines 6 and 7) And the poet says that he utters a chant because as a poet he is inspired by divine thoughts: "I chant of dilation or pride." (line 9) Later in line 13 he says, "I show that size is only development." The poet-prophet can penatrate in the region of "Poetry"and show to his people what they commonly do not see. And in the following line he says: "I call to the earth... " As a representative voice the poet speaks loudly to attention of the listeners, calling to earth.

In the first fourteen lines the poet uses the first person singular "I" eleven times. This fact surely suggests that he is the central figure - the chosen post-chistian prophet through whom God's messages should pass. Thus he is the representative of people. As a poet-prophet he indicates "the path between reality and their souls"as he states in the "Preface": "Moreover, his prophetic qualites make him capable of 'grafiting', 'increasing', 'translating', 'saying', 'chating' and 'showing'. " His mind diffuses its own divinity into the enchatments of nature. He says : "I am he that walks with the tender and growing night." (line 13) He is everywhere and is sensibility is so great that he can modify the image of things. Trees become liquid, matter is dissolved:

Smile o voluptuous cool-breathed earth.
Earth of slumbering and liquid tress. (18-19)

As a superior being, the poet wants to evoke something which he sees behind the "common reality,"perhaps the infinite os space and "the amplitude of time." He was aware that the material world was the expression of the spiritual one. Like the old preachers he uses common language and refers to things close to people in order to talk about divine things. As Loving suggests, Whitman had the advantage of being a journalit and knowing the spoken language of the people. He also knew people's necessities and could express their feelings. The sexual fibre that he shows in the poem ("O voluptuous cool-breathe'd earth") helps him to be among his peoples and to be understood by them.

Far from being sophisticated, the poet's language is the language of common people with whom Whitman got used to live and talk. The poet knows that a too refined language would keep him away from these people. That is the reason why he uses an earthy language. Through this earthy language he reveals that he

feels in harmony with nature like his people. In the following lines, for instance, he refers to earth in a language which commom people can understand:

Earth of the departed senset - earth of the moutains misty-topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark motting the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbowe'd earth - rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

The catalogue which Whitman uses seems to sugget the continuous state of growing of the earth. It also helps the poem to move to a inity uniting the material with the spiritual. The variable lenght of verses suggests the freedom the poet has to talk about common things till they become superior beings. But they also suggest the freedom of things to grow and developed themselves. The poets "are free and they make free" says Emerson and Whitman is aware of that. He is "divine inside and out" as he state in section 24. As a prophet he is the herald's of people's wishes and at the same time God's messenger.

Jerome Loving suggests that Whitman buried his past in order to be a poet. It seems to me that his poetry is an attempt to bury not oly his past but the Americam past. He wants to announce a new life "as Adam early in the morning." I believe that one aspect of the past that the Whitman poet-prophet wants to bury is Puritanism. He wants to announce a new life totally free from the idea of sin caused by Adam's fall.

In order to make the argument clear, perhaps something has to said about Puristanism in North America. I do not propose to present here the history of Puritanism in the New World. However, a brief description of the main ideas cultivated by the Puritans will aid in identifying a reaction against Puritanism in Whitman's poetry.

The term "Puritanism" was applied to denominate people who searched a "pure" reformation of the Church of England in the seventeenth century. Puritans broke from Anglican church because they did not accept moderation in strictness and severity in the community. Of course they received influence from many theologians and religious philosophers. One aspect of the Puritan doctrine, for example, is the manichaeism which has its origin in the Dualism (Body versus Soul, Heaven versus Earth...) introduced by Socrates and Plato and developed by Saint Paul ('The spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh")[8]. These ideas were

later developed by Saint Augustine and in the sixteenth century by John Calvin. The latter developed and preached the doctrine that "man alone can do nothing."After the fall of Adam, man has been in depraved state, and only God's grace could save man from hell. Puritans in England took these ideas very seriouly and because of this they had to separate from the "impure"Anglicans.

Persucuted in Europe, Puritans saw the chance to put in practice their theology in New England which they considered the "Promised Land". Puritan doctrine was taught mainly through sermons which were a kind of institution of Puritanism. The language was very simple so that common people could understand everything. Preachers were taught the "Art of Prophecy"in order to be efficient in bringing God's discipline to the people. These preachers were to leaders of the people. A woman could nener be a priest, because women were not considered strong enough to read and understand the Bible. Women had inferior minds.[9] The subjects of the sermons were the miserable state of man "curst by Adam's fall", the limitless power of God, the necessity of every man to reject the flesh, the body and the worldly things and live for Spirit. The tonge and sex should be refrained probably because they do not belong to the spirit. This is what Jonathan Edwards says in "Images and Shadows of Divine Things": "There is the tongue and another member of the body that have a natural bridle, which is to signify to us the peculiar need we have to bridle and refrain those two members." [10]Edwards does not even dare to mention the masculine sexual member, the just says: "another member of the body"because he wants to refrain himself from talking about "fleshy"things.

Another idea maintained by the Puritans and preached in the pulpit was the infinite misery of man before a powerful god. The idea of hell was very much emphasized. Man was bound to fall to the"bottomless pit" at any time. In "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" Edwards says:

> The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathome insect, over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked...
> O Sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in; it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless, pit full of the fire of wrath...[11]

Hell was dreadfully pictured and constantly described to the listeners went mad pondering too seriously about the possibility of falling into it. Hell was opposite of Heaven as the Devil was the opposite of God, flesh the opposite of spitit and so on. Even in poetry we find the preoccupation of teaching the dualist

doctrine. Anne Bradstreet, for instance, considered an authentic Puritan voice, writes in "The Flesh and The Spirit".

Spirit [talking to he the flesh]:

> Be still thou unregenerated part
> Disturb no more my settled heart
> For I have vowed (and so will do)
> Thee as foe still to pursue.[12]

Flesh was considered the enemy of the spirit. Everything related to the body was begot by the old Adam while the spirit was generated by the powerful Father. The more a man lived according to the body more of a sinner he was.

A common prophet wauld not be able to preach against these deep-rooted ideas. Only an Emersonian poet was capable of annoucing a new belief. This was Whitman. Through his poetry Whitman preaches the innocence of the new man who sleeps together with god, who walks in the garden of paradise, totally "satisfied" The body is also sacred and must be worshiped. These ideas are preached by Whitman in "Song of Myself."In section 21, for example, one finds thoughts that can be read as an anti-Puritan message. In the first line of the poem Whitman declares:

> I am the poet of the body and I am the poet of "the Soul".

In other sections of "Song of Myself"one sees the marriage of the body and the soul and here the poet suggests again that man shoud not treat the body and soul separately. This is juste the opposite of Puritan doctrine. Whitman wanted to preach the opposite of the old doctrine in order to erase the idea of dualism (body versus soul). Whitman's interest in phrenology helped him to formulate the idea that the body and soul are closely connected.[12] If one praises the soul he praises the body too. Differently from Edwards the new poet-preacher proclaims that blessed are not only those to whom Heaven is revealed but also those to whom flesh revelead.[14]The poet does not abhor hell. He does not see it as somenthing dreadful, because hell is translated into a new tongue:

> The pleasure of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me.
> The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.
> Man now can live with heaven and hell. The "great furnace of wrath" has given place to love, because the new man is innocent.

In the new religion preached by Whitman, women are equal to

men. Women can now read the new Bible (Poetry) without being afraid of getting mad. The poet claims:

> I am the poet of the women the same as the man.

Whitman wants to be read by women and men. And in the following lines he declares:

> And I say there is nothing greater than the
> mother of man.

It is possible that feminists think this statement displays an old-fashioned concept about women but I believe that for Whitman to celebrate to birth of new man he should celebrate the "mother of men."The mother gives birth to a man who can be pround and self-reliant because progress is his only derection:

> I chant the chant of dilation or pride,
> We have had ducking and deprecating about enough.
> I show that size is only development.

The new prophet does not want repression but expansion and development. The new-born man can go forward and be equal to the President or even his superior:

> Have you outstrip the rest? are you the President?
> It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one,
> and still pass on.

Everyone is free to move forward to improve himself. Whitman wants to "project the ideal man, the American of the Future."

Whitman is also the seer and the sayer. He, thus, feels responsible to talk to the people. He does not refrain his tongue as Edwards advised. he talks freely about the sexual energy present in everything. In his "new Bible"the poet-prophet procaims that man has to live in harmony and unity with nature, which is the life force and helps man to live fully; the poet says in lines 13-14:

> I am he that walks with the tender and growing night.
> I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

And the poet goes on chating with passionate intensity the sexual impulse identified in nature:

> Press close bare-bosom'd nigth - press close magnetic
> nourishing night!

> Night of South winds- night of the large few stars!
> Still nodding night - mad naked summer night.

It seems taht night instead of suggesting death and darkness, suggests life. Night is similar to an animated being, perhaps the poet's bride. therefore thre is no reason to be afraid of anything. There is no reason to cry either. Earth is not place of torment and suffering but a generative force resposible for the rebirth of the seed, for the recycling of life; in the following lines the poet chants:

> Smile O voluptuous cold-breath'd earth!
> Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
> Earth of the departed sunset - earth otf the moutains
> misty topt!
> Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged
> with blue.
> Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clear
> for my sake.
> Far-swooping elbowed earth - rich apple -blossomed
> earth!
> Smile, for your lover comes!

The small catalogue helps the poem to move to a unity. It unites the material with the spiritual. Earth is not the opposite of the soul anymore. It is earty whic is responsible for the "amelioration."Earth is "generous enough"as the poet affirms in "A Song of Rolling Earth." And the poet ends the poem talking not about the "wrath"but about the love of Earth:

> Prodigal! You have given me love - therefore I to you give love.
> O unspeakable love

It seems that the poet realizes that earthly love is so great that it becomes unpeakable.

I believe that is possible to state that Whitman is the prophet or the poet preacher Emerson was waiting for. This prophet has the function to announce a new era with the reestablishement of the natural unfallen man. He announces that in the present world there is no sin of body, that earty works together with heaven for the happines of man. The Puritan doctrine is buried and the new man becomes able to love the body, the world, the soul and God. The prophet is thus "satisfield", "sees", "dances", "laughs"and "sings"and invites everybody to join the group of new believers:

> Come my children.
> Come boys and girls, my women, household and intimates(s. 24)

And through the eyes of the poet his"fellows" and "camerados" can face a new world, a world free from the Puritan conception of Sin.

NOTES

1 - Emerson, R.W. "The Poet."In : *Emerson's Essays*. Introd. by Irwin Edman N. York: Crowel, 1950 (hereafter to be cited as "The Poet"just after the quotation), p. 263.

2 - Jerome Loving. In *Emerson, Whitman and the American Muse*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1992.

3 - Idem, p. 18

4 - In Miller, James E. *Walt Whitman*. N. Haven: Univ. of Nebraska, 1962, p. 38.

5 - In *Walt Whitman: The Complete Poems*. Francis Murphy ed. N.York: Penguin Books, 1979, p. 760.

6 - See "Better is dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. "(Prov. 15:17)

7 - Warren, J.P. In: The Free Growth of Metrical Laws: Syntactic Parallelism in "Song of Myself. " In *Style* vol. 18, nº 1, Winter 1984.

8 - Rom. 8:13.

9 - See Winthrop. "The Journal of John Winthrop [Ap. 13,1645] in *MacMillan Anthology of American Literature*. George McMichael et. al. N.York: Mac Millan, 1980, p. 73.

10 - Jonathan Edwards in "Images and Shadows of Divine Things" In: *Mac Millan (Antology of American Literature*. vol. 1, McMichael et al N.York: Mac Millan, 1974, p. 262.

11 - Edwards, In: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God". In: *MacMillan Anthology of American Literature*. op. cit.,p.150.

12 - Anne Bradstreet. "The Flesh and Spirit"In: *MacMillan Anthology of American Literature*. op. cit., p.150.

13 - Edwards said the apposite in "A Divine and Supernatural Light", in *America in Literature*. David Levin ed. N. York : Wiley, 1978, p. 314.

APPENDIX

"Song of Myself"
Section 21

1 - I am the poet of the Body nad I am the poet of the Soul.
2 - The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me.
3 - The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.
4 - I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
5 - And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
6 - And I say there is nothing grater than the mother of men.
7 - I chant the chant of dilation or pride,
8 - We have had dicking and deprecating about enough,
9 - I show that size is only development.
10 - Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
11 - It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass on.
12 - I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,
13 - I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.
14 - Press close bare-bosom'd night-press the magnetic nourshing night.
15 - Night of south winds - nigth of the large few starts!
16 - Still nodding night - mad naked summer night.
17 - Smile O voluptuous cool-breathe'd earth!
18 - Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
19 - Earth of departed sunset - earth of the mauntains misty-topt!
20 - Earty of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
21 - Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
22 - Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake.
23 - Far-swooping elbow'd earth - rich apple blossom'd earth!
24 - Smile, for your lover comes.
25 - Prodigal, you have given me love - therefore I to you give love!
26 - O Unspeakable passionate love.

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"HÝBRIS AND THE MANNONS" A STUDY OF EUGENE O'NEILL'S TRILOGY MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA

Carmen Gago Alvarez

If you refuse the energy, you are living a hind of death. If you accent that energ, it destroys you![1]

The purpose of this is to prove that O'Neill's trilogy, *Mourning Becomes Electra* deals with the tragedy of self, or we might say referring back to Greek tragedy, that it is a tragedy of *hýbris* - not the wanton insolence in the Greek sense of the word-but a tragedy of pride, the Mannons'tragic flow. *Mourning Becomes Electra* is not anly a tragedy of blind destiny or character like Aeschylus'*Oresteia*; it also aims to show the individual searching for his "masked self"- his identily - a self revelation that will lead him to frustration and self destruction.

As with the Atreidae, the familial fate of the New England Mannons is an ancestral one, we notice it through references to Abraham (Abe) Mannos, Father of Ezra (Agamemnon) husband to Christine) Clitemnestral, grandfather of Lavinia (Electra) aond Orin (Orestes). In their "House"erected on pride, the playwright sees repeated the desintegration of the family of Agamnon. Abe's younger brother, David, had been involved in an affair with Marie Brantôme, a governess who gave birth to a child, Adan Brant (Aegisthus). David married Marie but Abe Mannon - in Lavinia's words - put them both out of the house, tore the house doun, and built a new one because Abe "wouldn't live where his brother had disgraced the family".O'Neill uses the "mask"symbolism (repeated twenty-three times in the trilogy) to emphasize the idea of the hidden self and we also believe, to demonstrate how far the Mannons are from real love - a forbidden word for the conventional Mannons and their Puritanism...

HOMECOMING

Act One starts with a description of the Mannon, the temple portico, reminding us of the *Oresteia* and the house of the Atreidae. But the temple resembles "an incongruous white mask fixed on the house to hide its somber gray ugliness".[2]

O'Neill uses the image as a foreshadowing the tragedy inside the "somber gray ugliness"of the Mannon house cannot be disguised by the "white mask of purity". Christine Mannon is the first character to be introduced and is decribed as having a beautiful, unusual face "a wonderfully life-like mask, in which only the deep-set eyes, of dark violet-blue are alive ". Anes, one of the servants, refers to her face as "secret looking's - if it was a mask she'd put on. That's the Mannon look"... "They all has it"... "They grow it on their wives"...[3]

Christine wears a mask imposed on her through her husband, Ezra Mannon, a mask she does not altogether accept. Lavinia is the second character to be described: she is bealtuful like her mother but the brand os the Mannons shows in her way of talking and dressing. Her face is also compared to a mask, "Above all, one is struck by the some, life-like mask impression her face gives in repose[4]. Her eyes are described as "Bleach and hard with an intense, bitter enmity". She is repressed, "hidden". Lavinia wears her hair pulled tightly back, as if to conceal its natural curliness, and there is not a touch of allurement to her severely plain get-up. Her haed is the same size as her mother's but on her thin body it looks too large and heavy. She has on her face a "cold disciplined mask"[5], and says,"I don't know anything aboute love! I don't *want* to know... I *hate.*"[6] love.Lavinia denies, all sensuality, anything connected with emotion; she is physically her mother but wears the mask of her father, a cold, proud Mannon she is, Lavinia rejects Peter, a young man in love with her because of her attachment to her father. Christine and Lavinia meet: "their facial resemblance, as they stand there is extraordinary"[7], because no mather how matter how much she wants to hide it from herself and from the others she is half her mother. She keeps this hidden under a mask of indifference. Therefore, Lavinia is

half female	half male
↓	↓
mother	father

Christine does not like the Monnon house, which she describes as, "Each time come back after beina away, it appears more like a sepulchre! The "whited" one of the Bible-pagan temple front sutck like a mask on Puritan grey ugliness!"[8]

The house is a negation of life , it is a kind of crypt where life and its manifestations are unwelcome. It wearsa bealtiful white "mask" to hide from the world the unloving creatures who had lived and live there.

Adam Brant, the pivot of all the tragedy is presented as resembling his father and grandfather Abe Mannon, whom he hates, "Une is struck at glance the peculiar quality his face in repose has of being as life-like mask rather than living flesh". But his wide mouth is "sensual and moody - a mouth that con be strong and weak by turns".[9] Again, the dualism of double-self.

Adam's characterization together with Christine's carries a heavy sensual connotation that menaces the Puritan cold pride of the Mannons. However, both Christine and Adam have unresolved "egos", they are always pretending; the latter pretends to love Lavinia and face life fearlessly, white the former hides under an attitude of cortessness which is absolutedy false. Adam Brant is the first to point out Lavinia's resemblance to her mother; "your face is the dead image of hers".[10]

Does O'Neill want to convey a double sense to the word 'dead'? We may say Lavinia is 'dead'to the world of feelings and she repels Adam's comment, "I'm not a bit like her ! Everybody knows I take after Father!"[11] She behaves coldly, not allowing herself to be like Christine whom she considers sinful though she envies her natural vigour. Adam is the first character to mention the Blessed Isles in the South Seas where love is, free and innocent, the same isles that will make Orin dream.

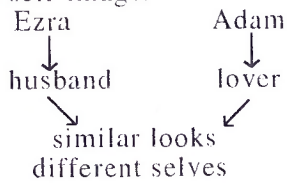
Adam Brant hates his Mannon side, "My only shame is dirty Mannon blood!"[12] But Adam carries with the Mannon's tragic flow, their destructive pride; he accuses Lavinia out of sheer spite, "You' re a coward, are you like all Mannons, when it comes to facing the truth about themselves?"[13] Adam's father is described by him as "He was a coward-like all Mannons once he felt the world looked down on him...","He grew ashamed of my mother and me".[14]

Lavinia	Adam
↓	↓
female with	male with
↓	↓
a male self	a famele self
↓	↓
proud of her	despides his
↓	↓
blood	blood
↓	↓
unnatural	natural

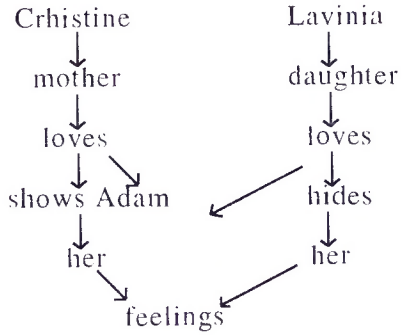
Lavinia, during her talk with Adam, her cousin, assumes all the family characteristics, "She turns her back on him and walks to the steps woodenly erect and square shouldered".[15] The proud Lavinia refuses any relationship with Adam in spite of feeling sexually attraceted to him. The reason: he was born under her, the son of low Canuck girl.

Ezra Mannon presented in a protrait painted ten years before denounces the amazing likeness between him and Adam Brant. Ezra's face is said to be"cold and emotionless", having the same strange semblance of a life -like mask".[16] Ezra is entirely a Mannon, hiding behind a mask of convention... an Eliotic life-in-death reflection...

In her solitude Christine look's for somebody to love and fate directs her towards Adam Brant, a reflection of Ezra, a man within a mask. Ezra and Adam are sometimes a one and person, the representation of a self-image.



Christine notices Lavinia's interest for Brant, but Lavinia hides it even from herself. Christine accuses her of "You've tried to become the wife or your father and the mother of Orin! You've always schemed to steal my place!"[17] and, "You wanted Adam Brant yourself "Mother and daughter fight a duel for the same man, but with adifference: Christine overtly loves Adam, while Lavinia hides her love for him; she will prefer to destroy Adam than give herself to a person she despises for ane single reason: Adam is a low-born man. We have:

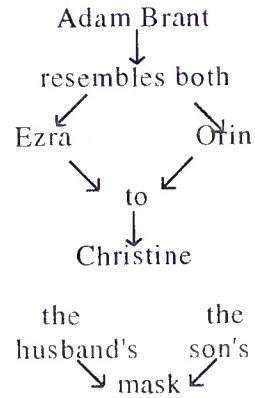


Christine is true to herself and continues struggling to free, to liberate her self from the chains of a seeming life,"And what if

were disgraced myself? I'd have the man I love, at least".[18] Lavinia despises her and is always calling her mother's attention to her duties as the wife of a Monnon,"you ought to see it's your duty to father, not my orders-if you had any honor or decency!" and leaves"square-shouldered and stiff"as an army officer, assuming her father's image. Christine's face "has become like a sinister evil mask "when: her eyes are caught by the eyes of her husband in the portrait; she stares at him with hatred"like Clitemnestra hating Agamemnon...

When Adam Brant appears in the hall, "One is immediately struck by the resemblance between his face and that of the portrait of Ezra Mannon". Not only does he resemble Ezra but Orin as well. Christine 'feels' that Lavinia has noticed this resemblance, "She must have noticed your resemblance to Orin.[19] Brant "unconsciously...takes the same attitude as Mannon", and tells Christine that"it would be damned queer if you fell in love with me because I recalled Ezra Mannon to you".

To this remark she replies, "it was Orin you made me think of! It was Orin!"



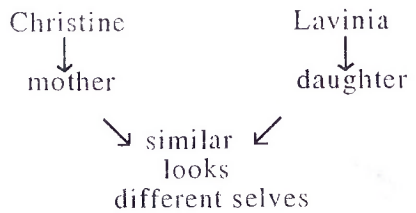
Christine feels incestuous love for Orin who reminds her of Ezra when they were young and happy. She would now prefer that Ezra would never return from war, "Oh, if he were only dead![20] If he had only been killed, we could be married now and I would bring you (Adam) my share of the Mannon estate".[21] She wants to conquer her freedom, discharging her real self from the cold mask of conventional marital love.

Differing from Aegisthus in the *Oresteia* Adam is unwilling to her and eliminate Ezra. Christine is hurt by his attitude,"It must be the Manoon in you coming out!... You're a weak coward like your father..."[22] Adam cannot deny his blood no matter how he tries to be a Brantôme anly; he has unherited all the Mannons'vain pride and weakness...

In Act Three the Mannon house is referred to as "the pure temple front seems more than ever like an inconguous mask fixed in the somber, stone house",[23] and Lavinia dressed severely in black"seated stiffly upright, arms against her sides, the legs close together, the shoulders square, the head up right, is like that of an Egyptian statue".

Lavinia 'belongs'to the samber house; she can be compared to a sphinx, unfeeling, static. She is so repressed that her false image is projected externally; she suffers from a bitter resentment towards love and life.

O'Neill places mother and daughter together to emphasize heir similitary in looks, "the moonlight, falling full on them, accentuates strangely the resemblance between their fuces, and at the same time the hostile dissimilarity in body and dress."[24]



Lavinia's real self will only come out in the last play of the trilogy, *The Haunted*, Crhistine will suffer an inverted process: her self image will be destroyed through death... She mocks Lavinia, "Purilan maidens shouldn't peer too unquisitively into Spring. Isn't beauty an abomination and love a vile thing?"[25]

Ezra Mannon is presented, "one is immediately struck by the mask-like look of his face in repose more pronounced in him than in the others".[26]

Why is it that mask in Ezra is more probounced than in the other characteres in the trilogy? The fact is that he is simply a representation of all his ancestors-a lifeless projection of a repressed self, "his movements are exact and wooden... he has a mannerism of standing and sitting in stiff, posed attitudes that suggest the statues of military 'heroes'. When Lavinia burts into tears because of his arrival from the battefield, Ezra scolds her, "I thought I'd taught you never to cry". He hisses her "with a chill dignity"and orders Lavinia, "March now!"[27] We remember Agamemnom, the cold, military commander who sent his own daughter Ifighenia to death, sacrificed to Artemis.

Christine's cold relationship with Ezra is exposed, "Your eyes have been probing me, as if you were a jugde again and I were a prisoner".[28] She has played the role of the perfect wife, mother sacrificing her individuality to him and his family.

Ezra is pathetic in his effort to act as a common man, trying to set aside his cursed family pride. "God, I want to talk to you", he exclaims. "I 've got to explain some things-inside-to my wife-try to, anyway".[29] Ezra confesses that in the battlefield: "Life was a dying. Being born was starting to die", and that he "came home to surrender to you-what's inside me. I love you".[30] But Lavinia intrudes between them. Ezra realizes that the barrier which exists separating him from Christine stands there because, like all his ancestors, he is unable to express love. It is too late for Ezra for Christine will be the hand of fate, "What must be, must be".[31]

Christine, in the beginning of Act Four, is portrayed as a "pale ghost in the darkness", the ghost of revenge and Ezra has a "dull lifeless voice",[32] already a ghost... He tells her, "you are waiting for semeone... For death-to set you free!"[33] Ezra understands then; he can possess his wife's body but but not her soul. At the end of Act Four we have darmatic irony, just when Ezra Mannon confesses his love and repentance for his cold behaviour towards his wife, he is cowardly poisoned by Christine and Adam, who is Ezra's very image when a young man. Lavinia (Electra) accuses her mother of killing her father and swears revenge, "I'll make you pay for your crime. I'll find a way to punish you!"[34]

From then on Lavinia (Electra) will let off her mighty hatred and perform her role in the tragedy, she will be the avenger of her father...

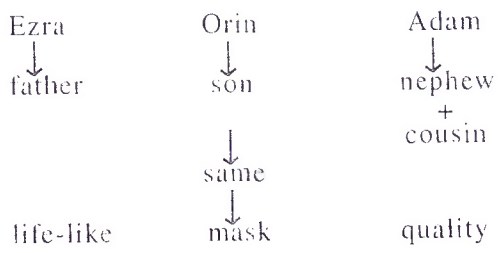
THE HUNTED

Act One starts with the Mannon house with its eerie appearance, the white portico "like a mask in the moonlight".[35] People attendong Ezra's funeral comment on mother and daughter, "Queer the difference in her and Lavinia-the way they take his death. Lavinia looks "cold and calm as an icicle"[36]although she feels his death deeply. Only she's too much of a Monnon to let anyone watch her suffering, and... "You 've said about the Monnons that pride goeth before a fall and that someday God would humble then in their sinful pride". Though Christine is the murderess, she shows more sentiment than Lavinia, the self-controlled, proud Mannon, a true product of the family cursed pride.

Dramatic irony is presented through a character, Dr. Blake, who suspects that love has killed Ezra, when lack of love definitely killed him, "Love made angina kill him if you take my meaning. She's a damned handsome woman and he'd been away a long time. Only natural between man and wife... "[37]At the same time Christine is described "beneath the mask-like venner of her face there are deep lines about her mouth, and her eyes burn with a feverish light"[38] —the light of madness... Society made her wear

the mask of convention and she will continue wearing it to the end... Christine, tortured by her guiltis one of the haunted of the next play...

Orin Mannon's resemblance to his father and cousin is mentioned in the stage directions, "One is at once struck by startling resemblance to Ezra Mannon and Adam Brant" (whose likeness to each other we have seen in *Homecoming*).

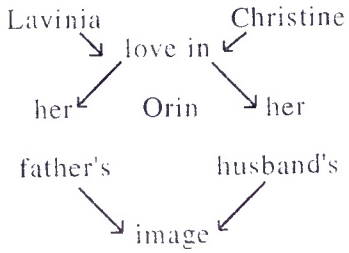


the Mannon mask

"There is the same life-like mask quality of his face in repose... his chin is refined, weakened version of the dead man's"[39]—a repetition... There is something in him of his mother's... "a gentle boyish cham... an ill-fitting uniform"[40]. Orin is divided; he is both a Monnon, with the same lifelike mask quality of his ancestors and sensitive as Christine once had been; he will suffer the more, and will end crushed by his family's tragic flaw and the blind forces of destiny.

Orin envisages the house as tomb where the Mannons have buried not only their physical body but also their souls and feelings. Orin justifies his lack of emotion over Ezra's death by saying that Ezra taught him not to cry. Therefore, Ezra sought to force the Mannon mask in Orin and Lavinia, inhibiting their capacity to show love.

Lavinia and Christine duel for Orin's possession; to Lavinia is a means to revenge her father's murder. Christine, on the other hand, loves Orin deeply transfering her adolescent love for Ezra to her son.



In anguish Christine tries to make her daughter urderstand her, "After all, Vinie I am your mother... You ought to have some feeling for me",[41] She answers with silence, keeping "her body rigid... walks slowly and woodenly",[42] the statue-like Lavinia, all and repression...

The family portraits, in Act Two, have "the same mask quality fo those of the living characters in the play".[43] Lavinia, Ezra, Orin-even Adam are reflections in a mirror-half-living, because we cannot ascertain that they are 'really' ative inside. Lavinia is totally "taken"if we may say so-by her father's mask (self) she talks, acts exactly like him. She commands Orin, "Orin! come and see Father". He replies, in astonisthment,"you sounded just like him".[44]

Christine notices her daughter's assertion in Ezra's self, "She is your father's"[45] she tells Orin while she narrates Adam Brant's story. Orin, after learing Adam is his cousin, suffers a transformation; Christine's beloved son hardens , becoming a real Mannon. You're so like your father "Then, and only then Orin and Lavinia feed the same; because Orin, like Brant and Ezra thinks of Christine as a refuge, a kind of paradise in a dream. Orin loves her and will forgive her anything except sharing her with another man. Being hurt in his pride Orin will join Lavinia in revenge.

Ezra's corpse lies near his portrait over the fireplace; he is once more described as "mask-like face"like the carved face of a statue".[46] Orin, his face in the candle-light bears a striking resemblance to that of the portrait above him ond the dead man's. Orin asks his father, "Who are you?... Death sits so naturaly on you! Death becames the Mannons. You were always like a statue of an eminent dead man"... Orin's monologue, when he questions his father's real self shows that they had never known each other, that were was no love or intimacy between father and son. Unconsciously, Orin had always wanted to kill his father and, in his dream he punishes himself for the crime. This, he confesses to Lavinia. Orin thinks the Mannon house is more fatal and dangerous than the battlefield itself.

Lavinia and Orin hide from society that their father has been murdered; they are afraid of scandal, "It would mean that Father's memory and that of all the Mannons dead would be dragged through the horror of a murder trial!",[47] and the proud Mannons

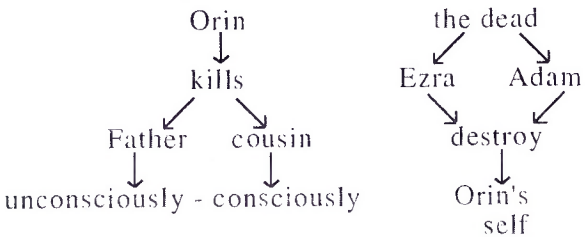
would not a scandal, Christine notices Orin's change, you look so like your father!"[48] Orin menacingly replies, "I am his son, too, remember that!"

Lavinia watches her mother with a "frozen accusing face", turning"rigid square-shouldered, and walks woodenly from the room".[49]

In Act Four, Adam Brant admits that her has something of his father, David Mannon, "I have my father's rotten blood in me, I think!"[50] Adam had left his mother to her own resorts, and Marie died alone. Deep inside Adam is unfeeling as any other Mannon...

Lavinia and Orin kill Adam remorsessly; after this bloody deed Lavinia remains "frozer and expressionless"[51]. Lavinia is hypocritical when she says, "May the soul of our cousin, Adam Mannon, rest in peace". She accepts Adam as her cousin because he is dead, will not interfere with them anymore.

Orin gazes at Adam's body "By God, he does look like Father!"[52]and asks his sister. "Do you remenber telling you the faces of the men I have killed came back and changed to father's face and finally became my own? He looks like me, too! Maybe I've commited suicide", Orin says foreshadowing his tragic end. Orin has violated his self by taking part in Adam's murder. He dimly senses that he has killed his father and himself in Adam; these unnatural deeds will destroy Orin's fragile self.



Lavinia, after eliminating Adam, returns with Orin and torments Christine-Orin reveals he has killed Adam while Lavinia "stands at the left... rigid and erect, her face mask-like"[53] ... the image of her father... She has accomplished her task as a Monnon, *no* scandal and sin will be left unpunished. Lavinia's batred has contaminated Orin and he stands by his sister against Christine, but when Christine commits suicide, Orin's first thought is to follow her into death.

THE HAUNTED

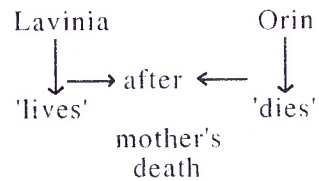
The servants-like a Greek chorus-'feel' the house, ghostly, with "somethin'rottin'in the walls! " The servants remark that, "there's

evil in that house since it was first built in hate; feel something cold grip you..."[54]

After her mother's death, Lavinia has changed, "Her body, formerly so thin and underdeveloped, has filled out. Her movements have lost their square-shouldered stiffness. She now bears a striking resemblance to her mother in every respect".[55] She is dressed in green, her mother's favourite colour; she had always wanted to be her mother and to be loved as she had been. After destroying Christine, Lavinia finds her own self-image.

The opposite process happened to Orin; the once sensitive, loving young man has disappeared and "he carries himself woodenly erect now like a soldier. His movements and attitude have the statue-like quality that was so marked in has father, stiff, lifeless... Orin wears a close-cropped beard in addition to a moustache accentuating his resemblance to Ezra. The Mannon semblance of his face in repose to a mask is more pronouced than ever. Orin obeys Lavinia "who vampirizes his will, his energy". She pats him encouragingly"and treats him as a child".

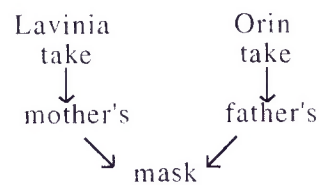
Poor Orin hates the Islands now; they representy life, love dream and he is 'dead' Lavinia, on the contrary, is attracted to the primitive forces of nature.



In the sitting-room the eyes of the Mannons in their portraits stare with a grim forbiddingness-as they watch Lavinia and Orin. At a first glance one would mistake Lavinia for her mother as she appears in the first act of *Homecoming*.

She seems a mature woman, her hair arranged as her mothers's had once been. The movement of her body has the feminine grace her mother's had possessed".[56]

Orin notices Lavinia's change, "little it grew like Mother's soul as if you were stealing hers-as if death had set you free-to become her!"[57]



Lavinia refers to the past,"I was dead then..."I want to get rid

of the past"Orin denies Christine, "I'm not her son any more! I'm Father's! I'm a Mannon!"[58]

He "straightens woodenly to a solidierly attention".[59]

Lavinia loves freely now, and will marry Peter. She affims, "I want to feel love. Love is all beautiful! I never used to know that! I was a fool!"[60]

But Orin is there to remind her of their past, "Love! What right have I - or you - to love?"[61]Orin is the judge now; he will not rest until justice has been done punishing Lavinia and himself. He wil not set Lavinia free from their familial fate.

White sitting in Ezra's chair in the study, Orin is discribed as "almost as old now as his father in the portrait". He is dressed in black, their likeness "uncanny".[62] Orin hates life "I hate the day-light... Perpetually night—darkeness of deat in life". He reminds his sister accusingly, "You believe you can escape that, but I'm not so foolish!",[63]"Were you could escape retribution? You can't!"[64]

Orin 'knows' they doomed, "I've tried to trace to its secret hiding place in the Mannon past the evil destiny behind our lives!" He calls Lavinia the "most interesting criminal of us all"[65] because she had made him kill Adam Brant out of spite and envy of Christine. Orin accuses his sister, "You wanted Brant for your-self!" Lavinia replies that, "I have a right to love".[66] Orin is decisive, "Can't you see I'm now in Father's place and you're Mother? That's the evil destiny out of the past. I'm the Mannon you're chained to!"[67] Orin continues accusing his sister of betray-ing him like Christine did, with a native in the Islands and the ship's officer resembling Adam.

Lavinia repeats the some threat she had goaded her mother to make in Act Two in *Homecoming*... "Take care, Orin!" Brother and sister do not love each other any longer...

The eyes of the Mannons in the portraits on the wall seem to have an intense bitter life "looking over the head of life, cutting it dead for the impropriety of living", as Orin had said of his father in Act Two of *The Hunted* Lavinia looks at the Mannon portraits as if they visible symbol of her god. She is spied her ancestors and will be punished for wanting to scape from them and the house. Like the Mannons, Lavinia is bound to the past and the dead.She now hates Orin."I wish you were dead! You'd kill yourself if you weren't a coward!"[68]

Orin turns away from Hazel, who loves him, to love Lavinia as he loved Christine a sinful love for sisters and mother. "You want to drive me to suicide as drove Mother!" He cannot set free from his guilt complex. "Now you are Mother! She is speaking now through you"... "Mothers's waiting". Soon afterwards Orin kills himsef his torment is over... Lavinia destroys Orin but, with his death, she loses her opportunity to live an existence of love beside

Peter. At the end of the trilogy the Mannon house has much the same appearance it had in the first act of *Homecoming*. We see Lavinia "dressed in deep mouning". She again appears flat-chested and thin. The Mannon-mask semblance of her face is intensified now... congealed into a story emotionless expression.

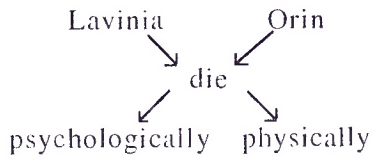
Lavinia, in her dialogue with Seth, an old servant to the Mannons refers to he house, "You know there's no rest in this house which grandfather built as a temple of Hate and Death!"

She wants to forget the 'house', "I' ll close it up and leave it in the sun and rain to die. The portraits of the Mannons will not on the walls and the ghost will fade back into death. And the Mannons will be forgotten! I'm last and I won't ge long! I'll be Mrs. Peter Niles". Lavinia desperately wants to escape her fate. Through love and marriage, "Our love will drive the dead away", she tells Peter "to make up for what's coming!"[69]

Finally, Lavinia realizes that she would only bring suffering to Peter or any man to whom she'd give her affection, she sets Peter free saying that "Love isn't permitted to me. The dead are too strong!"

Lavinia will accept Ate and purge her ancestors 'faults; "I'm not going the way Mother and Orin went.That's escaping punishment! I'm the last Mannon... I've got to punish myself... Living here with the dead is a worse act of justice than death or prision... until the curse is paid out and the last Mannon is let die!"

Lavinia ends alone"stiff and square-shouldered... with frozen eyes... marches woodenly into the house, closing the door behind her...



A BRIEF INTERPRETATION OF THE TWO TRILOGIES

In *Mourning Becomes Electra*, Lavinia dominates as the most important character in the trillogy while Electra is the chief character only of the second play of the*Oresteia*, the*Choephoroe*. Lavinia's love for her is sickly and her jealousy towards her mother turns into hatred. Lavinia seeks the punishment of self-denial; Electra is not punished, she is justified by the gods.

The Greek heroine takes revenge for two reasons; firstly, she had always been neglected and maltreated by Clitemnestra, her mother, secondly, Electra revenges her father's death. Therefore, Electra has motivation, if we way say so, to take revenge against

her mother and her lover, Aegisthus.

Lavinia Mannon leads her to despair not oly because she has a lover and killed her husband, but because she is a rival to Lavinia as a woman in Adam's and Ezra's love. Lavinia envies her mother's attractiveness.

In *Mourning Becomes Electra*, Christine commits suicide after killing her husband; O'Neill cut off the matricide of the *Oresteia* when Clitemnestra is murdered by Orestes. Christine — opposed to Clitemnestra—loves her children deeply; it is her daughter who antagonizes her in all possible ways. Christine anly kills her husband because of her passionate love for Adam, again in opposition to Clitemnestra, who killed Agamemnon in revenge for his giving Iphigenia, their daughter, in sacrifice to the goddes of the hunt, Artemis ten yers before.

Another contrast between Christine and Clitemnestra lises in the way they kill their husbands; Christine poisons Ezra—Clitemnestra slaughters Agamemnon in a scene of great dramtic force. Nor Christine's suicide has the tragic strength of Clitemnestra's murdered by her son Orestes. We believe the reasons are that, in O'Neill's trilogy, Ezra Mannon is guiltlesshe is the Puritan who is unable to show love although he pathetically loves his wife. Ezra is tragic in his incapacity to show love, constantly wearing tke mask of convention; Ezra morrors his Puritan ancestors.

Orin Mannon is the anti-Orestes; brave at war, Orin is a weakling at home. His character develops into a negative, irresolute young man without the energy the of the Greek Orestes, his importance in the *Oresteia*, (Orestes is the chief character in the second and third plays of the trilogy) and his acceptance of fate. Orin seems to live in a wolrd of his own, floating in and out of reality. Opposed to Orestes, he is destroyed by his sisters in her obssession to punish their mother in the last play of Aeschylus ' trilogy, the *Eumenides*, Orestes is haunted by the Erynes (Furies) deities who bring revenge, especially for the murder of blood kindred. But, he will be absolved from his matricide; it was demanded by the god of light, Apollo who intercedes near Palas Athena. The god frees Orestes from the avenging Furies, and the house of the Atreidae is free from its curse too.

Opposed to the Greek hero, Orin perish without expressing his real and the house of the Mannons will remain cursed until the last of them, Lavinia, expiates their crimes through self-denial and the acceptance of Ate...

Adam Brant is attractive, ambitious-a normal young man in love with the pleasures of life. The romantic-looking Adam charms both mother and daughter being one of the reasons why Lavinia goes against her mother.

Adam Brant is not a villan like Aegisthus in the *Oresteia* who treated Electra with cruelty, seeing in her an obstacle to absolute

power and an intruder in his relationship with Clitemnestra. Adam's role is much more important than his Greek counterpart in the *Oresteia*. Adam is the love-bringer and and, without wanting, the death-bringer...

The setting in the *Oresteia* changes in cach play of the trilogy whereas in *Mourning Becomes Electra* this does not happen,

Oresteia

"Agamemnon"

↓

setting: in front of Agamemnon palace in Argos

(Choephoroe)

↓

setting: before the tomb of Agamemnon's palace

Eumenides

↓

Setting: before the temple of Apollo at Delphi / the Areopagus in Athens

Plot develops quite defferently in both trilogies,

Agamemnon

-Agamemnon returns from the Trojan War

-Aegiusthus is ready to help Clitemnestra to kill Agamemnon; he does not hesitate

Choephoroe

-Clitemnestra and Aegisthus rule over Argors

Choephoroe

↓

- Orestes returns to Argos the god Apollo has ordered Orestes to avenge Agamemnon's murder
- Orestes and Electra hate

Mouning Becomes Electra

Homecoming

↓

Setting exterior of the Mannon house in New England, 19 th C.

The Hunted

↓

setting: exterior of the Mannon house.

The Haunted

↓

Setting: exterior of the Mannon house

STATIC

Homecoming

↓

-Ezra Mannon returns from the Civil War

-Adam hesitates in helping Crhistine in anything against Ezra in the beginning; finally helps herpoison Ezra

The Hunted

↓

- Orin Mannon returns from the Civil War

The Hunted

↓

- Lavinia and Orin hide Christine's crime to avoid scandal
- Orin with Lavinia's conspire against Christine and Adam

Clitemnestra and Aegisthus openly
- Aegisthus is killed by Orestes
- Clitemnestra is killed by Orestes

Eumenides

↓

- Orestes has fled to the temple of Apollo at Delphi; he seeks protection from the Furies stirred up by Clitemnestra.
- Orestes is absolved from his crime
- Orestes and Electra love each other.
- the curse on the House of Atreus is over
- Orestes has redeemed his ancestor's crimes

- Orin shoots Adam Brant in his back
- Orin and Lavinia torture their mother making her remenber Ezra and Adam
- Christine commits suicide

The Haunted

↓

-Orin decays phisically and men tally
Lavinia grows in beauty; feels happy
-Orin and Lavinia hate each ther
-remorseful, Orin cannot live with his guilt; he commits suicide
Lavinia becomes cold, inhuman
Lavinia is doomed to live alone; the cursed Mannon house will live till her death...

The differences and similarities indicated are relevant to understand both trilogies. Of great importance is to acknowledge that the *Oresteia* is a religious play where gods intercede and help the mortal's in difficult tasks, situations demanding strength and decisive action, while *Mourning Becomes Electra* like most modern drama, is full of psychological implications...

Aeschylus'Orestes is absolved from matricide by a god, while O'Neill's Orin mantally recedes to childhood in despair for Orestes' same crime. After all, which of them deserves to be pitied more? Which is more tragic?...

Mourning Becomes Electra as tragedy is as complete as the *Oresteia:* Using the Greek trilogy as souce and inpiration just added to O'Neill's greathess thus giving a greater dimension and universality to what we consider his masterpiece.

CONCLUSION

"The tragic hero, according to Aristotle brings about his his oun destruciton through some flaw in his character"[70]- in the self- that is what happens to the Mannons. Their excessive pride was the flaw(hýbris) that made their lives not an action but a self destructive "imitation of an action".[71]

Through the whole of the *Oresteia* and *Mourning Becomes Electra* a theme is developed: the relationship between an individual and his past as well as his future in a particular way-the sins

of the father are visited upon the heads of their children...

Ezra, Orin, Lavinia, even Adam, Brant are projections of their ancestors whose pictures keep them under constant watch on the walls of the house-a symbol of the Puritan coldness of the Mannons.

Lavinia and Orin take their Father's and Mother's images; their own selves are suppressed by the image-mask of one of them,

Lavinia
Homecoming
↓
father's image
the Hunted
↓
father's image
the Haunted
↓
mother's image
+
father's image

Orin
Homecoming
↓
mother's image
the Hunted
↓
mather's image"
the Hauted
↓
father's image

Orin destroys himself because he cannot bear the guilt of having indirectly killed his mather for the sake of his ancestor's pride and Puritanim.

Lavinia, his sister, at the moment of self-knowledge admits and accepts her fate-she locks herself in the ghostly house to purge all the Monnons faults.

Lavinia refused the energy of nature, the ctonic force that might have been transmitted to her through Adam Brant, Peter Niles, even Christine, if she had understood them better and given herself a chance. Lavinia's character does not develop into a new dimension because she does not grow psychologically; she takes the mask of her ancestors- living, partly living in a shadow world...

What is left to us is to agree white Eugene O'Neill that *Mourning Becomes Electra,* alias Lavinia...

NOTES

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MODERNISM AND AMERICAN HISTORY: WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAM'S REARTICULATION OF AMERICAN CULTURE[1]

Anelise R. Corseuil

Modernism, as a literary and artistic mode, has been at the center of polemic debates concerning its cosmopolitan and elitist vein and its political or apolitical function. Within the Anglo-Saxon tradition, a number of critics find a dividing line separating European modernism from its American counterpart. The former is identified as an internationalist and elitist movement that emphasizes craftsmanship and technique; the latter is characterized for its sense of "locality" or rootedness in an American landscape, for its organicism, and "instinctive" qualities.[2] The internationalist modernist vein is constituted by authors such as Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Gertrude Stein, whereas the American trend is represented by Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and Marianne Moore among others. One of the consequences of such a division is that the alleged "internationalism" of Eliot's work and the "localism" of William's come to determine specific ways of addressing these two poetic traditions: the American and the European. In different analyses of Eliot's, Pound's, and Stein's work what is emphasized is its formal devices, languages innovations, and intertextuality; by contrast, in analyses of William's and Stevens's works, a number of critics explore their qualities of being "accessible" and representing the "local."[3]

The corollary of the division between an American and a European modernism is that it oversimplifies the complexities involved in the relations between "localism" and "internationalism." Despite their differences, Williams's poetry is closely related to the new avant-garde language made available by European modernists." Thus, I would argue that there is a cross-bordering between the international and the local in Williams's work. In this context, this paper analyzes Williams's *Paterson* in its use of an internationalist modernist style to rearticulate the American local. The thesis concerns the ways in which the aesthetic newness of a "Europeanized" modernism provides Williams with a language to redefine American history, or sense of "locality" In other words, in Williams's *Paterson* the international and the local are not only intertwined but the latter is also authorized by the former. In this paper I will (1) explain some of the historical reasons why critics have used the terms "internationalism" and "localism" to define the American and European modernist trends; and (2) counterargue this separation by an analysis of Williams's *Paterson*.

Though New York, too, along with Paris and London, was a center of artistic effervescence with an international reach — the International Exhibition of Modern Art at the 69th Regiment Armory Show in New York in 1913, the Stieglitz group and their publication of the avant-garde magazine, *Camera Work*, and their *Little Galleries* called *291* — there is still a critical view of modernism which calls for a cultural division between America and Europe. The general concept of "locality," which is imposed upon the works of Williams, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens, suggests their remoteness from the internationalism and technical innovations of a European modernism. The sense of isolation implied by the word "localism" is partly due to William's own criticism of Eliot's and Pound's expatriation. In reaction to Eliot's rejection of America as "home," Williams says that "we do not have to abandon our familiar and known to achieve distinction."[4] *In The Tale of the Tribe*, Michael Bernstein points out that this negative reaction to Eliot could be interpreted as Williams's rejection of European hegemony in the cultural and artistic fields. Williams's reaction to the erudition and academicism of Eliot can be understood as a "violence...against those who would impose that art ["the art of England and France"] as part of a cultural hegemony upon a radically different setting" (198). Specifically, Williams's reaction against cultural hegemony is also an attempt to put America on the map of an international modernist movement dominated by Europe. But as I will argue, this project can only be accomplished if Williams, like Eliot, uses a modernist language, specifically, in Williams's case, collage, primitivism, cubist devices and surrealist techniques in literature. Williams's new articulation of the local, of America, is made possible through his use of these avant-garde European forms. When Williams affirms that "The New World is Montezuma...or Guatemozin," he is a nativist, but he is also in conformance with European modernist's interest in the primitivism of Pre-Columbian Mexico (*Selected Essays* 22).

The connection between Williams's "localism" and the international modernist style seems to have been neglected by a number of critics. In fact, critics have used the terms "local" to characterize the work of Williams, Moore, and Stevens as different from that which was produced in Europe, regardless of Williams's, Moore's, and Stevens's language awareness, as well as Williams's use of an international modernist aesthetics to rearticulate American history. We can see the isolation of Williams in the Penguin edition of the *Selected Poems of William Carlos Williams*, whose editor emphasizes Williams's '"American roots" and sense of "locality" by associating him with Emerson's, Thoreau's and Whitman's Americanism rather

than with his expatriate contemporaries.[5] In *A History of Modern Poetry*, David Perkins defines Williams's works as close to "'Romantic poetry," and "nature," as a poetry that is "fresh" and unmediated (551). Although Perkins gives equal importance to the work of Stevens and Pound, his analysis emphasizes Stevens's alliance with a Romantic tradition rather than with a modernist form. According to Perkins, Stevens had a Romantic preference for "naturalness, warmth, and enthusiasm" (506). These qualities are, of course, the opposite of the characteristics of good poetry as established by T. S. Eliot's objective correlative since, for Eliot, feelings and emotions need to be replaced by a new aesthetics founded on '"tradition;" '"labor," and "language"(*Selected Essays* 4). Those elements are distanced from the sentimentality and intimacy of the Romantics associated with Steven's poetry or with Williams's "unmediated" language.

The critics' separation of American from European modernists can also be explained by the former's embrace of American technological development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *In Made in America*, Lisa M. Steinman shows that American poets were capable of reaching out to an American audience by embracing technology, for technological development achieved a high status in the American community; technology came to represent the means through which different poets could bridge the gap between poetry and a general public. The high status of technological development allowed poets like Williams, Stevens, and Moore to "connect poetry with quotidian reality" (28). However, technology was also responsible for social changes caused by a proliferation of home appliances, utilities, and other consumer goods, which helped to create the image of a "philistine" America: "...modernity was identified as American, and it was judged responsible for America's lack of culture" (29). Modernity, as represented by the technological advances in the United States, was seen by many American expatriates, as well as by a European audience, as culturally undesirable.

While American technology influenced and changed the world, America herself was seen as far apart from the internationalism and elitist formalism of European modernists. "Modern" qualities associated with America such as business, success, and technology were seen as "philistine" by a European audience. On the other hand, these same elements that were rejected by the expatriates as "philistine" were embraced by poets like Marianne Moore (117). These cultural notions help to understand the reasons why critics have separated the American and the European literary contexts during the modernist period. However, it is still necessary to redefine

"localism" since the local — or the writers' perception of American culture — is revitalized by the ruptures brought by the so called internationalized European modernism. Williams's poetic construction of an American landscape, or its "locality," relies very strongly on the experiments of European cubists with perspective surrealists with collage, and primitivists with the relocation of peripheral cultures such as African, and native aboriginal, or Indian.

The critical tradition separating localism from the modernist international style cannot explain how the high style of international modernism allows Williams to articulate a new notion of "America" — read as locality, American history, or as a sense of community. In this context an analysis of Williams's *Paterson* can show that he inscribes a new perception of America in the modernist style. By the use of collage and a highly self-conscious language, Williams's *Paterson* recounts American history within the context of the epic. My analysis of Williams's text is oriented by the poststructuralist critique of the discourse construct in literary language — a discourse that is seen as interrelated and constitutive of other cultural, social, and historical codes. Likewise, the analysis of modernism presented by postmarxist critics such as Frederic Jameson and Terry Eagleton has been important, for these critics argue for the political function in the highly formalistic and avant-garde language of modernist writers. In many ways Jameson and Eagleton follow Theodor Adorno's definition of the political content in the autonomous modernist work.[6] In this sense, my own reading of Williams attempts to recuperate the historical and political dimension of his text exactly in its use of a less "accessible;" and a more reflexive language.

In different essays Williams emphasizes his opposition to a European cosmopolitanisrn in the arts and its political hegemony. In his essay, "The American Background," he criticizes the early settlers for looking back at Europe to provide the models for their cultural life:

> North America became, in great measure, a colony of England, so to be regarded by the intellect and fashion of the day. While on the part of most of the colonists there would be a reciprocal attitude toward "home." The immediate cultural aspect, in dress, music, manners, soon developed a disdain for the local, as became a colony looking back toward fashion brought to it by its governors and copied in America wherever possible. (136)

Williams's rejection of European cultural hegemony parallels his dislike for Eliot's Pound's cosmopolitanism. Such opposition

to a European domination is a major contribution for literary critic's emphasis on the local in William's work. Furthermore, Williams responded negatively to Eliot's publication of *The Waste Land* (1932) by saying that "I [Williams] felt he [Eliot] had rejected America... I knew he would influence all subsequent American poets and take them out of my sphere..."[7] The passage illustrates Williams's desire to differentiate his work from the Europeanism — read as classicism and erudition — represented by writers like Eliot and De Gourmont. Thus, it is no surprise that the opposition between the local and international is at the core of critical discussions of Williams's poetry. As previously mentioned, critics like Ellmann and Perkins are correct in accepting Williams's desire to establish an "indigenous American art;"[8] however, it is also clear that Williams's poetry and prose use a modernist language made available by European artist. Thus, as Perloff has stated in *The Poetics of Inderteminacy*, it becomes quite impossible to neglect the level of strangement and inderteminacy in Williams poetry — literary qualities that are traditionally seen as an integral part of the aesthetics of high modernism (23).

The correlation between a European avant-garde language and Williams's poetry allow for a new reading of the local in America. The distortion of reality, which is aprpoved by the avant-garde, its intrinsic awareness of the exhaustion of realist codes of representations, and its consequent questiong of the transparency of the language used in official historical narratives allow Williams to rewrite an American epic in *Paterson*. Although throughout the five Books that constitute *Paterson*, Williams uses different modernist devices, this paper focuses on Books I and II to ilustrate his combination of the local as a theme with the high modernist style. Book I explores the life of the immigrants who founded the city of Paterson and focuses on their relation with the Passaic river and with the natives. In this Book, Williams juxtaposes excerpts from older accounts dating from the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century; Book II presents a description of the people living in Paterson at the moment when the poet is writing, interspersed with letters from a new poetess whose initial is C; Book III focuses on power of language as documentation of specific realities: books, libraries, written texts in general constitute its main subject; Book IV discusses the relation between man and woman, love and sex, and science and power; finally, Book V focuses on the work of a number of artists. Although Williams uses devices such as collage throughout the poem, Books I and III to ilustrate his combination of the local as a theme with the high modernist style.

Critics have emphasized not only the metaphorical

organization of *Paterson* but also its diffuseness or openess. They tend to agree that the poem is metaphor for the River, for the city, and for the man. The first lines of the poem affirm this metaphor: "Paterson lies in the valley under the Passaic/Falls its spend waters forming the outline of his back. He/lies on his right side, head near the thunder/ of the waters filling his dreams!"[9] Paterson is a geographical location, like a city, lying on the right side of the river; it is like the River, with its "spent water"; Paterson is also a metaphor for the man who "dreams," like the poet who lives by the River. However, it is also difficult not to accept that the metaphor does not live up to the final Books; it becomes fragmented and it is replaced by the openness and inconclusiveness of later juxtapositions. As Michael Bernstein says,

> Although a catalogue of the different meanings that Williams's metaphors acquire undeniably confirms the poet's drive to order his heterogeneous material, in the end he simply makes too many demands of his figures. They collect ever-increasing clusters of signification. . .their values as signifiers become deflected. . .they are made to carry too large and unsubstantiated a weight of narrative and thematic development. (206-07)

Although there is a problem with the structuring of the poem, since the initial metaphors, "man", "river", and "the city", are disintegrated throughout the poem, the openness of the poem characterizes Williams's epic as a modernist literary piece. Book V may not cohere with the initial metaphor, but the text overtly exposes the immense language collage that constitutes *Paterson*. For example, in Book V, the figure of the "unicorn" in the tapestry not only functions apart from the initial metaphor of the river, but also escapes the frontier of American localism. The following passage illustrates the immense montage of artistic references characteristic of the work: "[t]he Unicorn/ the white once - horned beast/ trashes about/ root toot a toot!/ faceless among the stars.../Paterson, from the air.../across the river.../ What has happened/ since Soupault gave him the novel/ the Dadaist novel..." (208-09). The passage foregrounds a modernist language by its use of a fragmented form: it escapes its American borders to include dadaist Europe, Oriental mithology, and, most importantly, to include within this frontierless collage the image of Paterson. In a *coup d'état*, Williams manages to internationalize the local and to present his own locale as a valid artistic subject.

In Book I, the poetic lines are interpersed with prose descriptions of the life of the first immigrants.Most of the

episodes described evolve around the life of the immigrants with some events dating back to the eighteenth century. The episodes contradict the domesticity of every-day life; most of the prose excerpts describe natural wonders like the appearance of millions of fishes at the pond, or the death of Sam Patch in his fatal jump over the river, or also the monstrosity of the monster fish caught at the river. Moreover, the verses normally add a personalized tone to the realist language used to narrate the fantastic episodes. In other words, the verses defamiliarize the realistic tone of the prose passages giving a personal, intimate perspective to the events. If the prose passages use an impersonal language, the verses personalize the suffering, the amazement, or the revolt by those who lived the events narrated. The realism of the prose passage describing the finding of Sam Patch's body is undermined by the juxtaposed poetic lines used to give voice to Sam Patch's consciousness at the moment of the fall: "Moveless/ he envies the men that ran toward the peripheries—/ to other centers. . ./ a sort of springtime. . ./. . .their minds aspired/ but which he saw,/ within himself — ice bound..." (36). These intimate verses are juxtaposed with the realism of the prose passage used to describe the scene when the body is flnally found: "[s]hortly before two o'clock August 16 1875, Mr Leonard Sandford, of the firm of Post and Sandford...saw what looked like a mass of clothing. He could distinctly see the legs of a man" (36). The prose passage gives historical data such as the locale, the day, the time, the position in which the body was found, whereas the verses reenact Patch's thoughts when he decides to jump the falls. The emotional tone of Patch's thought which is illustrated by his desires such as his need to go to other "centers," and to surpass the average, is reinforced by two opposing groups of imagery: the "ice cake," and the "moveless body" versus the "springtime clarity" desired by the "running men." While the former implies a sense of imprisonment, the latter suggests movement and life.

Although the associations between the verses and the prose passage are not explicit, recurrent motifs authorize a semantic analysis of the juxtapositions presented within the poem. Sam Patch's drowning in the River is depicted in the first part of Book I, whereas the finding of the body is described in Book III. However, the imagery associated with Sam Patch's death is immediately recognized since the act of "leaping," "plunging," or "falling" recurs throughout the poem, making the reader expect the appearance of the body. As an illustration, the disappearance of Sarah Cumming, the new wife of Rev. Hopper Cumming, into the falls parallels the fatal leap of Sam Patch. Thus, the random-seeming collage of different themes, facts,

imagery, and narratives of Williams's epic suggests a pattern of possible associations.

Williams's focus on Sam Patch's fall as historical data leads toward two possible readings: (1) one constructs a non-official or underground history; and (2) the other exposes the inadequacy of realist language in its mimetic aesthetics. Most of the material Williams selected to construct his historical epic consists of isolated episodes which do not follow a pattern of causality or of recognized importance in economical or political terms. Except for Williams's selection of a passage detailing the number of immigrants living in Paterson after Hamilton decided to invest money in the building of an industrial city, his selection of the excerpts relies heavily on what can be called unusual, or isolated events.[10]

Williams's selection of the unusual or the fantastic as historical material suggests not only the newness of his perception, but also his decentering of traditional notions of American history. The inclusion of prose excerpts describing the death of Sam Patch and Mrs. Sarah Cumming points to Williams's interest in the underground or non-rational cultural forces in Paterson. Sam Patch is an exhibitionist who wishes to jump the falls; Mrs. Cumming, the wife of the "Reverend," falls into the River rather mysteriously. The poem suggests that she may have committed suicide. As the persona says, Patch leaped but Mrs. Cumming "shrieked/ and fell — unseen (though/ she had been standing there beside her husband half/ an hour or more twenty feet from the edge)" (*Paterson*, p. 20). If the epic can be defined as a long poem which "presents a narrative of its audience's own cultural, historical, or mythic heritage providing models of exemplary conduct, " then Williams's selection of the historical data is uncommom".[11] The falls of Patch and Cumming imply the agency of incomprehensible or unexplainable historical forces, for there is no relation of cause and effect capable of explaining their deaths. Those are the historical elements that Williams carefully selects to constitute his epic.

The revolutionariness of Williams's view of history can be explained by Michel Foucault's definition of historical "discontinuities," as a new perception of history capable of dismantling Western thought or traditional European rationalization. If historical tradition aims at dissolving the singular event into an ideal continuity —as a teleological movement or a natural process, "effective history deals with events in their uniqueness, thus emphasizing disruption and discontinuity" (153-55). Within this context, historical discontinuities —read as William's rejection of linearity,

causality, and rationality characterize his avant-gardist reading of history, and connect his work to other avant-garde European movements that were bringing about a rupture in traditional forms forms of representation.

Throughout Book I a number of elements characterize Williams's epic as a negation of official history, read as cause and effect. The fishing scene, like Patch's dare, is a singular event that reflects the underground, or dreamlike elements of culture. The following passage illustrates the point:

> by nightfall of the 28th, acres of mud were exposed...The fish did not run into the nets. But a black crowd of people could be seen from the cars, standing about under the willows, watching the men and boys on the drained lake bottom. . . The whole bottom was covered with people, and the big eels...there were millions of fish. (35)

This landscape, constituted by the mud, slippery eels, and the "sticks with which they struck the big eels," suggests a certain violence, quite unlike what one can expect from fishing. As with the imagery of death and darkness in the verses, "...a body found next spring" or "a body/ fished next day from the muddy swirl.. " (20), Williams exchanges the meanings: "fishing" for human bodies and "killing" fish at the pond. As with the deaths of Patch and Cumming, there is a dreamlike or unreal element, since the silence, the cleanliness of the water, and the peaceful atmosphere traditionally associated with fshing have been replaced by the imagery of excess, darkness, and violence.

The collage of historical facts, for, the most part selected from historical documents, offers a pattern of disruption and violence.[12] The collage includes the narrative of the burning of Dalzell's property; the witch hunt by Merselis Van Giesen; the killing of an old couple, Mr. and Mrs. Van Winkle; and the violent killing af a baby by its father, Fred Goodell, a $40-a-week factory worker" (196). Moreover, the juxtaposition of the poetic lines with the prose excerpts creates a shock effect. The lines preceding the description of Goodell's killing are reminiscent of a pastoral scene, with "Breaching trees and ample gardens"; with "narrow, old-fashioned brick walls" and "shading trees..." (lst stanza 195). Indeed, Williams's use of juxtaposed elements emphasizes both the content, or thematics, and the collage as a poetic device. In the rupture created by the collision of the poetic language and the prose passages, discontinuity and rupture take the place of linearity or causality. Thus, Williams offers a new perspective on history, one that is more based on facts that cannot be explained, and do not cohere into a sense of finality, or of a

plan: this historical perspective undermines the ideas of prosperity, or progress that prevail in much of the discourse of his time.

Interestingly enough the prose passage preceding the fishing scene presents an inventory of the property of Gornelius Doremus (1714-1803): "24 shirts at 82 1/2 cents, $ 19.88: 5 sheets, $7.00..." (p.34). The scarcity of the list, which contrasts with the abundance of the fishing, can be seen as an ironic comment on, or a parody of Benjamin Franklin's famous precepts for success: temperance, frugality, and moderation. The fishing scene is pure "waste"; it is the opposite of Franklin's required qualities for a successful community. In fact, if progress and individuality, which Franklin affirms and his life seems to confirm, have become a tradition and a myth in American culture, an intrinsic part of American history, *Paterson* highlights the lived contradiction of tradition and myth by means of the juxtaposition of the inventory list and the fishing description, and uses this as a comment upon official history. Williams introduces fragrnentation, irrationality, and negativeness into this official historical landscape. The irrationality implied by death, disruption, and abnormality helps to constitute the new historical landscape of *Paterson*.

The lack of positiveness in Williams's historical perspective is also revealed by the poetic imagery used to depict nature. The river and the land are idyllic in its pre-colonized state. The country is associated with the "beautiful wilderness where mountain pink/ and wood violet throve: a place inhabited only/ by straggling trappers and wandering Indians" (*Paterson,* 6th stanza, p. 193); however, progress and development have made the River "...purple/ from the factory vents, spewed out hot,/ swirling, bubbling. The dead bank,/ shining mud" (36). The "sand," the "'snowflakes,'" the flowless "cataracts" are replaced with images of dirtiness, death, aridity, and suffocation. Thus, the poem can be seen as depicting a process of colonization has destroyed the original ecological paradise.

Within the contrasts and dissociations created by the poetic language — with its juxtaposed images, collage of prose and verse, and a whole aesthetics of defamiliarizing a familiar language, locale, and history - there is a recurring imagery which presents language as a gap suggesting the disjunction between colonizer and the land: "[a] false language pouring —a language (misunderstood) pouring (misinterpreted) without dignity, without minister, crashing upon a stone ear" (15). The image of bodies dying "incommunicado" can be related to the "divorce" between man and language as "sign of knowledge in our time" (12- 18). Even if the image of destruction by colonization and industrialization may be criticized as a "nostalgia for a golden

age" (203), or for a primitive society, as Bernstein suggests, its effect is to undermine a whole cultural and historical discourse based on positivist, rationalist, and progressive notions, such as the notion of America as the "promised land" or as "the city upon a hill."

Williams's poetic collage introduces a new historical reading of America. At the same time, the collage, as a disruptive device, is related to surrealist readings of culture and representations. Fredrick Karl defines surrealist art as a reaching out for

> areas of enervation, anomie, negation, alternate forms of existence often close to death, or on the edge of suicide. . .The state, political life and the idea of citizenry, ideology, sexual mores, family life, individual and state justice were subverted and tossed aside. (138)

This valorization of negativeness and of the unconscious implies a new historical perspective and, within this context, Williams's poem rereads American history and culture. The exchange between the new European surrealist language and the American location gives Williams the possibility of reaching for his audience with a language that articulates a contemporary vision.

Williams's negation of traditional values, his emphasis on the lack of closure, and on rupture can be seen as a common strategy among European metropolitan modernists. By the turn of the century; European artists show an interest in the primitive, as in Picasso's masks and Gauguin's natives. Yet, even if the exotic is part of a whole colonizing strategy, since these foreign elements are still being colonized for the sake of a European metropolitan aesthetics, there is in this interest for the African and the native a rejection of traditional European aesthetics, Hellenic and Roman:[13] By countering a European tradition, the modernists authorize a recentering of peripheral native ethnic groups, African or Native American. In line with European primitivism, Williams's historical and aesthetic perspective foregrounds the Native American and the Afro-American perspectives. In the historical landscape of *Paterson*, Williams focuses on three ethnic groups: the aborigine, the African, and the European. As previously discussed, the European immigrant is presented as the colonizer in negative terms: through a set of images, the poem suggests that the European has lost contact with the environment and with his own senses - he dies "incommunicado." Even as an active element, he is an automaton who comes with a set of pre-determined values or "language," but he underestimates his own locality. By contrast,

the Indian and the Afro-American are presented in more positive ways. Thus, *Paterson* can be seen within a broader frame of reference that includes the "local," American culture within a Europeanized modernist aesthetics.

This focus on the non-European can also be noted in *Paterson's* construction of an ideal beauty through a set of images related to the Indian and the African. At the same time, the juxtaposition of prose and verse passages communicates differences between ethnic groups within the process of civilization: the destruction of the tribes is juxtaposed with the beauty of natives living in their own tribal culture. The passage on the "violence in Tennessee;" depicting the killing of the Indians and the colonists' presentation of the Six Nations as constituted by slaves, prostitutes, and destitute Indians, details the decadence and alienation of the natives and the slaves. Moreover, its juxtaposition with a remembrance of "a Geographic picture, the 9 women/ of some African chief/..erect, a proud queen, conscious of her power" functions as an ironic comment on the destruction projected in the prose passage; the image in the magazine, is a "remembrance," something that is distant from the reality of the poet (12-13). The collage of these two different realities — the historical and the pictorial — suggests the poet's critical comment on the processes of colonization.

Stressing his negative perspective on the relation between American governmental policies and the Indians, Williams includes a prose passage with a realistically detailed account of a mass killing of Indians. "Shame," "fright,"and "cruelty" describe the mutilation of two Indians by the soldiers in retaliation for an unproved accusation that the Indians had killed two pigs. [14] The narrative conveys and provokes shock. Each step taken by the soldiers is fully detailed; at the end, Williams gives the moral judgment by exemplifying the diferences between the Indians and the settlers with the following description: "They made money of seashells...When a priest died and was buried they encased him with such wealth as he possessed. The Dutch dug up the body, stole the furs and left the carcass to the wolves that roamed the woods" (102). The passage illustrates the sacred values and the coherence of the Indian community, perhaps in an idealistic way since the violence of the Indians is seen as motivated by the need to defend themselves, whereas the Dutch are motivated only by individualistic reasons. For the Dutch all religious or communal values are replaced with commercial ones.

It is significant that one of the most violent descriptive prose passages, depicting the massacre of the Indians, is placed within

Williams's discussion of books, libraries, knowledge, and language. Most of the verses give a sense of the staleness of the library and its books: "[t]he library is desolation, it has a smell of its own/ of stagnation and death" (100). Similarly to the problematization of language presented in Book I, Book III associates knowledge with "lifelessness" — the "library" is depicted as a "lifeless place" - implying the separation between meaning and language. The poem offers a critique of all institutions of knowledge such as libraries, universities, and official history which traditionally presents the settlers as "victims" to "ignoble" Indians. The inclusion of the passage describing the cruel execution of the Indians by the soldiers presents a revisionist historical perspective which inverts the roles traditionally played by Indians and soldiers. In the poem, the Indians are exploited. Similarly, by positioning the captive female Indians as observers of the atrocities committed by the White soldiers, the poem inverts the codes of captivity narratives which generally present the captive white female retelling, the ignobility of the Indians.[15] Thus, at the same time that the Williams criticizes the settlers, he also discloses how literature and history conspire in the construction of stereotypes; the poem begins to function both as language and as metalanguage.

Self-reflexivity is a device widely used by modernists and it commits them to new perspectives on literary language. The many manifestoes by surrealists, cubists, imagists, vorticists represent the self-consciousness of writers who no longer want to ascribe transparency to language, who no longer believe that language represents what is out there, as have it. These manifestoes expose the codes used to construct a certain textual reality. Obviously, realism itself relies on literary codes, but its most powerful code presents literary language as a "copy" of reality, as mimesis. Thus, the modernist manifestoes are also political statements about the nature of the arts since they disrupt the illusion that literary language is a natural "follower" of the real. Within the context of poetry, the exposing of the literary construct by modernist aesthetics reveals the poem as a crafted object capable of creating its own powerful reality.

In relation to self reflexivity or metalanguage, Books I and III assume a pivotal role for the understanding that *Paterson* is a modernist rereading of American history. Book I already presents the problems related to the "divorce" of language and the mind, or the divorce of the signifier from the signified. As the persona says, "How strange you are, you idiot !/So you think because the rose/ is red that ou shall have the mastery?/ The rose is green and will bloom,/ overtopping you, green, livid/ green when you shall one more speak, or/ taste, or even be..."

(1st stanza 30). The lines can be interpreted as a rejection of a mimetic aesthetics, for they emphasize a new role for literary language; a role of defamiliarizing the language or making strange what is familiar: the "rose" loses its traditional connotations, or its "reference."

In the process of unveiling the codes of realist literature, Williams's poetry functions in two ways: (1) his poetry exposes the manipulation or the construction of the real in a language discourse; and (2) it reveals the need to rearticulate the ways in which historical and literary discourse has constructed an audience's notion of reality. Both functions can be exemplified by William's rejection of institutionalized knowledge at the universities, libraries, and official history. In the imagery constructed around the university as a "block" to the "release" of knowledge for "...special interests/ that perpetuate the stasis and make it/ profitable," Williams is critical of the role played by those who manipulate knowledge (34). Manipulation, as a handling of knowledge, is further elaborated in his metaphor of "stagnation," "rest," and "death," and associated with libraries and books: "[t]he library is sanctuary to our fears," says the speaker (101). A "sanctuary" is a "mausoleum," a "burial" of knowledge; it is that which is forever distanced from one's reality, or every-day life; moreover, it is a restricted area where only a few god-like beings can handle knowledge. The recurring image of "blocked" knowledge can be read as a harsh criticism against those who have arrogated to themselves the power to manipulate it.

Unlike the exclusive institutions of knowledge, Williams's poem is open and includes different voices and perspectives. As Linda W. Wagner points out in her *The Prose of Williams Carlos Williams*, his text presents a number of voices; the prose excerpts are taken from history texts; the letters published within the body of the poem were sent to Williams by poets such as Allen Ginsberg and the poetess Cress (187). In one of his letters, Ginsberg criticizes Williams for not including within Paterson some of the underground citizens living in Paterson at the time when it was written. These groups of "negroes, gypsis," and of those living the "peripheral intimacies of political life" form the underground life of the town of Paterson. As Ginsberg notes, except for a few passages like the one when an Afro-American woman cannot find a doctor to help her deliver a baby (*Paterson*, p.33), the poem fails to include Williams's own contemporaries. However, the openness of the poem allows Ginsberg's criticism to be a part of the poem, as just another voice within the web of narratives. By including the letter, Williams voices Ginsberg's own perception of *Paterson*.

Williams's text connotes the opposite of "closure." If closure implies design, beginning, middle, ends, patterns, and exclusion, "unclosure" implies openness and inclusion. Indeed, the historical perspective presented by Williams is highly innovative since it includes prose and poetry as intrinsic parts of the modern epic, and it recenters the importance of Black Americans and Native Americans in the formation of an American culture. Rather than excluding the peripheral, Williams opens up his epic to include the history of peripheral cultures in a style that parallels the collages and defamiliarization prescribed by the European avant-garde. Thus, Williams's poetry renegotiates a place for American poetry within a larger frame of reference that includes a European modernist context.

NOTES

1. Part of this paper was presented at the XXVI SENAPULLI.

2. Linda Welshimer Wagner points out that Williams writes "instinctively" only for critics who do not rely on technique in their analyses of William's poetry, but on William's "feelings" and "instinct" to authorize their views of the poet. *The Poems of William Carlos Williams: A Critical Study* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1964) , pp. 3-5.

3. Well Know anthologies such as *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* call attention to the fact that Williams, unlike Eliot, was more interested in a "indigenous American verse". [3] Similarly, in *A History of Modern Poetry* David Perkins says that " in some essential aspects the appeal of his [Williams's] poetry resembles that of the Georgians and Robert Frost ... Williams, Frost, and the Georgeans were all *accessible and entertaining* ... " My italics. David Perkins, *A History of Modern Poetry* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 544.

4. Quoted from Linda Wagner's *The Poems of William Carlos Williams* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1964), p.8. Originally quoted from an umpublished letter to the editor of the *Quarterly Review of Literature,* p. 1-2, in William Carlos Williams papers, Collection of American Literature, Yale University Library.

5. See Introduction by Charles Tomlinson in *William Carlos Williams: Selected Poems* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), pp. 11-22.

6. Adorno defines the autonomy of the modernist art work in terms of its potential for showing the alienation of the subject within a mass culture society and by showing the endless duplication for the realist myth is, in a final analysis, an image that helps to create specific needs. "The Schema of Mass Culture,"*The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, p.55, The corollary of this view is Jameson's and Eagleton's assertion of the revolutionary role of the high style of modernist writers. See Jameson's *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* and Eagleton's *Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism.*

7. Qtd in The Prose of *William Carlos Williams*, p.33. Originally published in *I Wanted to Write a Poem*, ed. Edith Heal (Boston:Beacon Press, 1958), p.30.

8. Qtd in Wagner, p.34.

9. William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* (New York: A New Directions Paperbook, 1963), p.6. All further quotes from *Paterson* are cited in parenthetical notes.

10. "From the ten houses Hamilton saw when he looked (at the falls!) and kept his counsel, by the middle of the century - the mills had drawn a heterogeneous population. There were in 1870, native born 20,711, which would of course include children of foreign parents; foreign 12,868 of whom 237 were French, 1420 German, 3,343 English - Mr. Lambert who later built the Castle among them), 5,124 Irish, 879 Scotch..." *Paterson*, p.10. It is noticeable that in *The Tale of the Tribe*, Michael Bernstein points out that, except for the production of silk in the 1840s, Paterson cannot be seen as an important or representative town in the United States, p.203.

11. Besides this characteristic of the epic, Michael Bernstein defines the genre as a combination of elements such as: "(b) The dominat voice narrating the poem will... function as a spokesman for values generally acknowledged as significan for communal stability and social well-being... (c) Consequently, the proper audience of an epic is not the individual... but the citizen as participant in a collective linguistic and social nexus... (d) The element of instruction arguably present, if not for implication, in all poetry... is deliberately foregrounded in an epic..." *The Tale the Tribe*, p.14.

12. In *On Paterson, Book One,* Sister M. Bernetta Quinn notes that most of the prose passages were taken verbatim from William Nelson's *History of the City of Paterson and the Country of Passaic.* See *William Carlos Williams: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood-Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p.110.

13. In Preguiça and Power: Mário de Andrade's Macunaíma" Renata Wasserman suggests that there is common strategy in the primitivism of Macunaíma and of the European primitivists. *Luso-Brazilian Review* 1 (Summer 1984): 102.

14. Williams recounts the reaction of the female savages who were taken prisoners and watched the killings: "For shame! for shame! such unheard of cruelty was never known, or even thought of among us."*Paterson*, p.102.

15. Jane Tompkins mentions that captivity narratives functioned for the maintenance of order and for white survival. *Sensational Designs*, (Oxford: University Press, 1985), p.110.

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HENRY MILLER'S GREECE: THE PEOPLE

Stephen Lee Schwartz

The Colossus of Maroussi, published in 1939, is an account of a trip Henry Miller took to Greece at the suggestion of people in a way that goes beyond the travelogue-style, but that takes little or no account of historical or cultural views of Greece's past. Miller does not write about classical Greece, he writes about ancient, (almost) pre-historic Greece and "mythological" Greece; but much of "mythological Greece" is in his own imagination. He takes no notice of Homer or of tragic poetry and the philosophy of classical Greece might as well never have existed for him. Nor does he, for the most part, look at museums and archaelogical sites. He also confuses Minoan Greece with the entire Greek world. Some of this is understandable due to the period in which the book is written, but much of this is due to Miller's own preoccupations, throughtout his writings, with what to him is a special type of a man: the common man. Miller prefers the common man (of all countries); what he thinks is the common man are poor, the self-educated, even the insane (but not necessarily the humble, i. e., the "meek" of the New Testament and certainly not the ego-centered of modern society). He thinks he is just like them: rejecting materialism and society's institutions because he does not and they do not need them —— institutions are unnecessary distortions of the human personality. In short he dislikes anyone and anything in Greece that reminds him of America.

The common man is generally self-educated, or is educated by experience with implies not specific knowledge, but an instinctive way of approaching life. Thus, the mayor of a mountain village in Corfu:

> He came on a day when I was dozing alone in the shade of a ruge rock. I knew about ten words of Greek and he knew about three words of English. We had a remarkable colloquy, considering the limitations of language. Seeing that he was half-cracked I felt at ease and ... I began to do my own cracked song and dance for him, which was to imitate male and female movie stars, a Chinese mandarin, a bronco, a high diver and such like. He seemed to be vastly amused and for some reason was particularly interested in my Chenese performance. I began to talk Chinese to him, not knowing a word of the language, whereupon to my astonishment he answered me in Chinese, his own Chinese which was just as good as mine. [1]

The topics under discussion are not important, nor is the intelligibility of the languages these men are speaking important; what is important is the communication: they understand each other even though they do not really have a common language. Nor is the sanity of the mayor (or, indeed, Miller's own sanity) of any importance, although the reader would do well to assume that Miller does not believe hikmself or the mayor to be insane ("cracked"). Their eccentricities merely make their personalities more open to each other. This instinctive openness is one of the things Miller finds most attractive about life in Greece. The people he holds up as good examples do not hide things from each other as members of more materialistic countries do.

Another example of this (again on Corfu, but at a later time):

> After dinner Karamenaios would drop in. We had about fify words with which to make lingual currency. We didn't even need that many, as I soon discovered. There a re a thousand ways of talking and words don't help if the spirit is absent. Karamenaios and I were eager to talk. It made little difference to me whether we talked about the war or about knives and forks. Sometimes we discovered that a word or phrase which we had been using for days, he in English or I in Greek, meant something entirely different than we had thought it to mean. It made no difference. we understand one another even with the wrong words. I could learn five new words in the evening and forget six or eight in the night during my sleep. The important thing was the warm handclasp, the light in the eyes, the grapes which we devoured in common, the glass we raised to our lips in sign of friendship. Now and then I would get excited and, using a melange of English, Greek, German, French, Choctaw, Eskimo, Swahili or any other tongue I felt would serve the purpose, using the chair, the table, the spoon, the lamp, the bread knife, I would enact for him a fragment of my life in New York, Paris, London, Chula Vista, Canarsie, Hackensack or in some place I had never been or some place I had been in a dream or when lying asleep on the operating table. [2]

But Miller's most prominent example of this type of Greek is Katsimbalis who is, in fact, characterized in the title of the book, for the "colossus of Maroussi"is not a huge statue, a relic of the ancient Greek past, but a man Miller never says who exactly Katsimbalis is, e. g. a writer, a personality—he is more important as a friend who can communicate in words and in something more than words:

> There are men who are so full, so rich , who give themselves so completely that each tive you take leave of them you feel that it is absolutely of no consequence whether the parting is for a day or forever. Then come to you brimming over and they fill you to overflowing. They ask nothing of you except that you participate in their superabundant joy of living. [3]

Katsimbalis has the gift of communicating over and beyond words:

> Many a time, as Katsimbalis talked, I caught that look on the face of a listener which told me that the invisible wires had been connected, that something was being communicated which was over and above language, over and above personality, something magical which we recognize in dream and which makes the face of the sleeper relax and expand with a bloom such as we rarely see in waking life. [4]

Katsimbalis' skill at describing things makes Greece come alive for Miller, at least that part of Greece that Miller wants to hear about: the sounds, the smells, the tastes, the colors and the general atmosphere of things. Katsimbalis does talk about Greece's past, but we are never quite sure of what he says in its details. Examples of his conversational descriptions are more like the following:

> The Attic landscape was best of all for his purpose: it contains the necessary ingredients for the dramatic monologue. One has only to see the open-air theatres buried in the hillsides to understand the importance of this setting. Even if his talk carried him to Paris, for example, to a place like the Faubourg Montmartre, he spiced and flavoured it with his Attic ingredients, with thyme, sage, tufa, asphodel, honey, red clay, blue roofs, acanthus trimmings, violet light, hot rocks, dry winds, dust, *rezina*, arthritis and the electrical crackle that plays over the low hills like a swift serpent with a broken spine. [5]

Museums and archaelogical sites are not part of the description. The people of Greece and the present-day landscape and the general atmosphere—the feel of things are what is most in evidence:

> As he talked I was taking in for the first time with my own eyes the true splendour of the Attic landscape, observing with a growing exhilaration that here and there over the bare brown sward, amidst anomalous and eccentric growths, men and

> women, single, solitary figures, were strolling about in the clear fading light, and for some reason they appeared to me as being very Greek, walking as no other people walk, making clear-cut patterns in their ethereal meandering, patterns such as I had seen earlier in the day on the vases in the museum. [6]

The light and the solitariness of the people in the landscape become very important for Miller. These things typify Greece for him. Greece is a country of light.

> Light acquires a transcendental quality: it is not the light of the Mediterranean alone, it is something more, something unfathomable, something holy. Here the light penetrates directly to the soul, opens the doors and windows of the heart, makes one naked, exposed, isolated in a metaphysical bliss which makes everything clear without being known. No analysis can go on in this light: here the neurotic is either instantly healed or goes mad. [7]

The idea of the light of the Mediterranian countries is a travel-cliche that Miller rejects. The light of Greece for him is a transcendent factor involving knowledge of an instinctive rather than an intellectual sort. There are hints (in passages which cannot be examined within the scope of his essay) that Greece and the light of Greece produces a psychological change in Miller himself and would do the same for any troubled individual. This may, in fact, be an illusion, a non-proven product of Miller's imagination. For the present essay, we might note in passing the analysis of C.G. Jung that "the *uncounscious* conversion of instinctual impulses into religious activity is ethically worthless, and often no more than an hysterical outburst, even though its products may be aesthetically valuable." [8] Miller's metaphysical attitude, which can also be described as semi-religious, probably has little or no value to anyone except himself. The light, however, does bring out clearly the individuality of figues in the Greek landscape, the scenes and the people of Greece:

> In Greece the change are sharp, almos painful. In some places you can pass through all the changes of fifty centuries in the space of five minutes. Everthing is delineated, sculptured, etched. Even the waste lands have an eternal cast about them. You see everything in its uniqueness—a man sitting on a road under a tree: a donkey climbing a path near a mountain: a ship in a harbour in a sea of turquoise: a table on a terrace beneath a cloud. And so on. Whatever you look at you see as if for the first time; it won't run away, it won't be demolished overnight; it won't disintegrate or dissolve or revolutionize itself. Every

> individual thing that exists, whether made by god or man, whether fortuitous or planned, stands out like a nut in a aureole of light, of time and of space. The shrub is the equal of the donkey; a wall is as valid as a belfrey; a melon is as good as a man. [9]

And it is this individuality expressed in the above passage as a sort of democratic relationship things and people as well as person with person that Miller values as part of his examination of the not-so-common common man of Greece. Another example of this inspired by Katsimbalis' conversation:

> As he talked I was taking in for the first time with my own eyes the true splendour of the Attic landscape, observing with a growing exhilaration that here and there over the bare brown sward, amidst anomalous and eccentric growths, men and women, single solitary figures, were strolling about in the clear fading light, and for some reason they appeared to me as very Greek, walking as no other people walk, making clear-cut patterns such as I had seen earlier in the day on the vases of the museum. There are so many ways of walking about and the best, in my opinion, is the Greek way, because it is aimless, anarchic, thoroughly and discordantly human. [10]

The Greeks Miller likes have the gift of conversation in very great evidence. Katsimbalis in particular is a expert in communicating the subtle and individual qualities of people and places. With Katsimbalis' powers of communication influencing Miller's own observation, Miller does not see the Greeks in the mass, but rather he sees them as individuals against the light, and the light of Greece has a particular spiritual quality for Miller that makes the people most important as examples of individuality. He sees then not only as individuals because of their ability to communicate. He values them for their refusal to regard material goods as important as opposed to the way the people of most first world countries regard material goods and especially the way the Americans regard them:

> When the Greek leaves a place he leaves a hole. The American leaves behind him a litter of junk—shoe laces, collar buttons, razor blades, petroleum tins, vaseline jars and so on. The Chinese coolies, as I also said somewhere before, actually feed on the garbage which the Americans throw overboard when they are in port. The poor Greek walks around in the remnants dropped by rich visitors from all parts of the world; he is a true internationalist, disdaining nothing which is made by human

hands, not even the leaky tubs discarded by the British mercantile marine. To try to instil in him a sense of national pride, to ask him to become chauvinistic about national industries, fisheries and so forth seems to be a piece of absurdity. What difference does it make to a man whose heart is filled with light whose clothes he is wearing or whether these clothes be of the latest model or pre-war in design? I have seen Greeks walking about in the most ludicrous and abominable garb imaginable—straw hat from the year 1900, billiard cloth vest with pearl buttons, discarded British ulster, pale dungarees, busted umbrella, hair shirt, bare feet, hair matted and twisted — a make-up which even a Kaffir would disdain, and yet, I say it sincerely and deliberately, I would a thousand times rather be that poor Greel than an American millionaire. [11]

According to Miller, poverty means nothing to the Greeks. They value life too highly, life here meaning the kinds of scenes Katisimbalis describes, the kind of incidents the "cracked"mayor on Corfu talked about, true communication between men, not to be influence by material progress or by money in itself. Throughout Miller's fiction this type of character appears, and in fact, Miller sees himself to be this type of person. He never defines his terms by means of ideas—Plato would not consider him a philosopher, nor does he relate this characteristic of the Greeks to anything in their past, neither the founding of democracy nor of philosophy, for example. What he does is to give detailed incidents with his own implied or specifically stated judgements. His guide in Athens charged a very high price for his dubious services, but Miller was not annoyed because of the spirit in which the fee was offered. Haggling over the fee was "like making service into something tangible and real like a commodity. We weighed it and appraised it, we juggled it like a ripe tomato or an ear of corn. And finally we agreed, not on a fair price, because that would have been an insult to our guide's ability, but we agreed that for this unique occasion, because of the heat, because we had not seen everything, and so on and so forth, that we would fix on thus and such a sum and part good friends." [12]

Kyrios Alexandros who keeps a house for tourists at Phaestos is another example. Alexandros cleans and polishes Miller's muddy shoes, an act which most tourists would regard as an unnecessary service done to extract money. Miller sees it as an act of humanity: "Alexandros appeared with a rag, a shoe brush and a big rusty knife; he got down on his knees and began manicuring my shoes. I was not in the least embarrassed. I thought to myself let him do what he likes, it gives him pleasure." [13] Because of the way Phaestos impresses him, Miller leaves Alexandros a large gratuity. He is

quick to point out in his narrative that it is not for material services rendered. [14]

The lack of money extends to the most basic conditions of human life, and perhaps Miller is being more sentimental and unrealistic about the Greeks in this case than he wishes to impress his readers as being: "I saw people in rags, and that was cleasing too. The Greek knows how to live with his rags: they don't utterly degrade and befoul him as in other countries I have visited."[15]

Miller has other faults as an observer as well, faults that are personal to him and his out look on life and cannot be confined only to Greece. Disdain for wealth is all very well, but Miller, who spent most of his adult life in financial difficulties, seems to have little sympathy for the truly poor. He clearly admits in other works that he has no sense of class justice, but here in *The Colossus of Maroussi*, individuals are at stake. His depiction of a child-beggar at Mycenae, for example, is definitely cruel:

> Suddenly we came upon a little boy crying as if his heart would break. He was standing in the field beside the road. His weeping had absolutely no relation to the hushed and tranquil world in which he stood; it was as if he had been set down in the green field by a spirit from the outside world. What could a little boy be crying about at such an hour in such a wondrous world. Katsimbalis went over and spoke to him. He was crying because his sister had stolen his money. How much money ? Three drachmas. Money, money... Even here there was such a thing as money. The word money never sounded so preposterous to me before. How could one think such a word in this word of terror and beauty and magic ? If he had lost a donkey or a parrot I could have understood. But three drachmas— I just couldn't visualize the meaning of three drachmas. Let him stand there and weep—the spirit would come and fetch him again; he didn't belong, he was an anomaly. [16]

The child and his grief are real; we, as readers, do not have to accept the story of his sister stealing money from him for this is a common beggar's trick to gain sympathy. Miller does not have the slightest sympathy however. He cannot even conceive of the child as a real human being: "he didn't belong." Amidst the spiritual value of Mycenae and not the material remains nor the historical importance of it that impresses him. Sympathy for the individual, for the present-day society and for the poor themselves is entirely missing, and Miller himself comes off in a harsh light.

The evaluation of money and materialism continues throught the book. The Greeks Miller does not like are all connected with this. Some examples: first, the former bookie:

> While we were jabbering away in English a fat fellow who had been listening attentively at the next table suddenly turned round and said to me with an impeccable up-state accent [New York—Miller was born in New York City]—'Where are you from stranger? I'm from Buffalo'. He came over and joined us. His name was Nick. ' How is the good old U.S.A.?' he said, ordering another pint of *rezina*. Jesus, what I would't give to be back there now. I looked at his clothes, obviously American, obviously expensive. 'What did you do there?' I asked. ' I was a bookie,' he said. ' You like this suit? I've got seven more of them at the house. Yeah, I brought a supply of everything along. You can't get anything decent here—you see what a dump it is.' Jesus, did I have a swell time in Buffalo. 'When are you going back?' When I told him that I had no intention of returning he gave me a strange smile. ' Funny,' he said, ' you like it here and I like it there. I wish we could swap passports. I'd give a lot to have an American passport right now.'[17]

The passage has its obvious unpleasantnesses. This Greek is fat, and although the passage is written casually, seems not pleasant to look at. His familiarity seems not to fit into Miller's mood as the conversation of strangers usually does. He has been a bookie, that is, a cheap gangster. He had lived in Buffalo, New York state, a city that at the time of *The Collossus of Maroussi* was by no means as respectable or as important as it is today. He has the typical materialism of gangsters: he is proud to have brought home seven suits besides the one he he is wearing—the sort of low style materialism that would be especially irksome to Miller (or to most people). His name is Nick, a proverbial appelative attached to Greeks in America (Nick the Greek was, in fact, a famous oddssetter and gambler). The whole impression is of shoddiness and of second-rate illegality. Nick seems to be about to make an offer for Miller's American passport. He has, moreover, no love for his own county ("you see what a dump it is"). He is a real displaced person in a ironic sense although the term would not come into common use until after the end of World War II.

A second example (too long to quote from here) is the British Vice-Counsul at Herakleion. [18] The man is a snob proud above all things of having written a book about Crete which Miller admits he cannot read. He plays up to Miller as a fellow writer and is embarrassed when Miller refers to himself in company as a journalist. Only Henry Miller the American writer is important to the Vice-Counsul.

A third example, among others, is the Greek doctor (Miller does

not give him a name) Miller meets on the American ship taking him back to the United States. Miller has been forced to leave Greece by the outbreak of the war; his passport has been invalidated. Perhaps he takes his disappointment out on the doctor:

> I was even more depressed when I found that I was to have opposite me at the table a Greek surgeon who had become an American citizen and who had spent some twenty years or so in America. We hit it off badly right from the start. Everything he said I disagreed with; everything he liked I detested. I never met a man in my life whom I more thoroughly despised than this Greek. Finally, about the end of the second day, after he had got me aside to finish a discussion which had begun at the dinner table, I told him frankly that despite his age, his experience of life, which was vast, despite his knowledge, despite the fact that he was a Greek, I considered him an ignorant fool and that I wanted nothing more to do with him. He was a man approaching seventy, a man who was evidently respected by those who knew him, a man who had been distinguished for bravery on the field of battle and who had been honoured for his contribution to medical science; he was also a man who had travelled to every nook and corner of the world. He was somebody and in his declining years he lived in the realization of that fact. My words therefore produced a veritable shock in him. He said he had never been spoken to that way in his life. He was insulted and outraged. I told him I was glad to hear it, it would do him good. [19]

The doctor is obviously proud of being a man of the world, a cosmopolitan and not just a Greek. Perhaps it is just this attitude that sets Miller off, for his tirade has little that is rational in it, and, in fact, does not try to justify itself. Miller takes delight in contradicting (presumably all) of the doctor's opinions no matter what they are or what experiences they are based on. Naturally, we given no specific examples. The doctor has become an American citizen; this no doubt makes him part of the American materialistic civilization that Miller rejects and which he feels has rejected him. Miller is being forced to go home to the United States after many years of chosen expatiratism, and he takes this out on the doctor, the pseudo-Greek, the American. The doctor is shown as being quite proud of his (seemingly exceptional) achievements and, as such, is egotistic. But Miller is a prime example of egotism. The criticism here is all tied up with capitalism, materialism, American civilization and the complexity of what Miller feels are false values of civilization after the spiritual humanity of the Greeks. But Miller has a perverse streak in him, and, as in the incident of the child at Mycenae, the best thing about the passage is that the reader can

see this clearly.

In regard to the above, it is interesting to note that, after his return to the United States, Miller continues to seek out Greeks on the streets as he happens to put it:

> Everywhere I go I see Greek faces and often I stop a man in the street and ask him if he isn't a Greek. It heartens me to have a little chat with a stranger from Sparta or Corinth or Argos. . . The fact is, the more humble the employment the more interesting I find the Greek to be. The greatest single impression which Greece made upon me is that it is a man-sized world. [20]

This has a strange resemblance to the end of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, at the end of the fourth book, when Gulliver, having been thrown out of the country of the Houyhnhnms returns to England to live a solitary life, his only contentment being the company of some domesticated horses which he takes to reflect the super-civilized Houyhnhnms and whose company he prefers although they are really only horses. So Miller longs for Greece which he came to think of as his true home.

From the personal, Miller moves to the mythological point-of-view. The mythology is mostly caused by the workings of his own imagination, and he does not relate these images and descriptions specifically to what we think of as Greek mythology . But the reader can easily do this. Miller thus "creates" mythology as easily as Plato does although without Plato's conscious attempt at providing a transcedent explanation for the ideas of his philosophy. Consider the following example:

> I drove into the narrow winding streets which led into the open square. I walked right into a crowd which had gathered outside the tent in which freaks were being exhibited. A man squatting beside the tent was playing a weird melody on the flute. He held the flute up towards the moon which had grown larger and brighter in the interval. A belly-dancer came out from the tent, dragging a cretin by the hand. The crowd giggled. Just then I turned my head and to my astonishment I saw a woman with a vase on her shoulder descending a little bluff in bare feet. She had the poise and grace of a figure on an ancient frieze. Behind her came a donkey laden with jars. The flute was getting more weird, more insistent. Turbaned men with long white boots and black frock coats were pushing towards the open tent. The man beside me held two squaking chickens by the legs; he was rooted to the spot, as if hypnotized. To the right of me was evidently a barracks barred by a sentry box before which a soldier in white skirts paraded back and forth. [21]

The flute-player can be related to the god Pan. The passage does not contain examples of the sexual frenzy called panic, but there is enough of a motley confusion of types to fit into a satyr-pattern. Miller insists on the hypnotic effect of the flute music to an extent that brings the passage out of the realistic mode. The various types gather around the music as it were, and although they do not dance to it, they seem about to. As a contrast a woman with "the poise and grace of a figure on an ancient frieze" appears "with the sense of motion that at the same instant seems to belong to a figure fixed in time that is typical of Greek sculpture. She is a classicaly ordered figure in a comic confusion. Adding to the contrast in a different way is the soldier prefiguring the coming war Miller continues meditating on the war until his writing breaks out into a frenzy of death: "Hooray! shouted the Greek. I too yell Hooray! Hooray for civilization! "Hooray! We wil kill you all, everybody, everywhere. Hooray for Death! Hooray! Hooray!" [22]

Pan makes yet another appearance:

> Approaching a lonely house lit up by a smoky kerosine lamp we are suddenly arrested by the queer strains of a flute. We hasten our steps and stand in the middle of the wide street to take in the performance. The door of the house is open, revealing a room filled with men listening to an uncouth figure playing the flute. The man seems to be exalted by his own music, a music such as I have never heard before and probably never will again. It seems like sheer improvisation and, unless his lungs give out, there promises to be no end to it. It is the music of the hills, the wild notes of the solitary man armed with nothing but his instrument. It is the original music for which no notes have been written and for which none is necessary. It is fierce, sad, obsessive, yearning, and defiant. It is not for men's ears but for God's. It is a duet in which the other instrument is silent. [23]

Here the flute player seems by himself for his audience is silent and undescribed. Miller is a equally silent witness. The emphasis is on the music and its strangeness: "the queer strains of a flute," "music such as I have never heard before and probaby never will again." The figure is "uncouth"and seems to be "exalted by his own music." Although the room is filled with men the player is compared to a "solitary" flute player in the hills, adding to the strangeness of the scene. Miller describes the music as "the original music for which no notes have been written and for which none is necessary," emphasizing the uniqueness of the experience. The music is "not for men's ears but for God's." It is one simple step for the reader to assume that the player is himself a god as well. Admittedly this scene and the previous one may be overlooked when

considered by themselves, but together they have a cumulative power and significance.

One further scene in which an individual seems to take on mythological significance is the description of the woman with six toes. She was

> a peasant woman at Corfu, a woman with six toes, decidedly ugly, and considered by everyone as something of a monster. She used to come to the well, as is the custom of the peasant women, to fill her jug, to do her washing, and to gossip... on my rambles through the hills I usually made a point of stopping at the well to slake my thirst. There one day I espied the monster with six toes. She was standing in her bare feet, ankle deep in mud, washing a bundle of clothes. That she was ugly I could not deny, but there are all kinds of ugliness and hers was the sort which instead of repelling attracts. To begin with she was strong, sinewy, vital an animal endowed with a human soul and with indisputable sexual powers. When she bent over to wring out a pair of pants the vitality in her limbs rippled and flashed through the tattered and bedraggled skirt which clung to her swarthy flesh. Her eyes glowed like coals, like the eyes of a Bedouin woman. Her lips were blood red and her strong even teeth as while as chalk. The thick black hair hung over her shoulders in rich, oily strands, as though saturated with olive oil. Renoir would have found her beautiful; he would not have noticed the six toes nor the coarseness of her features. He would have followed the rippling flesh, the full globes of her teats, the easy, swaying stance, the suberabundant strength of her arms, her legs, her torso; he would have been ravished by the full, generous slit of her mouth, by the dark and burning glance of the eye, by the massive contours of the head and the gleaming black waves which fell in cascades down her sturdy, columnar neck, he would have caught the animal lust, the ardour unquenchable, the fire in the guts, the tenacity of the tigress, the hunger, the rapacity, the all-devouring appetite of the oversexed female who is not wanted because she has an extra toe. [24]

Although Miller is generally known for his sexual adventures and descriptions there is nothin of this in *The Colossus of Maroussi.* The woman with six toes is the only significant mention of sexual power in the work. She appears a monster to the normal villagers, and we might note a ressemblance (although it cannot be Miller's observation) to the huge peasant woman who appears in several Fellini films. She has for Miller a power and a aura that belies her origins and her place in society. Although described in a commonplace way, the widening comparisons (e.g., "Renoir would

have found her beautiful") give her a significance beyond the commonplace until she reaches the status of a earth-mother, a Gaea. Centainly, it is not merely Miller's roving eye that is being noted here. Again, without mentioning this specifically or in so many words, Miller is showing how the individual in the landscape, illuminated by the light of Greece takes on mythological characteristics, becomes—however approximately—a god or goddess. These are not classically balanced pictures; there is much of the primitive in them, but they may be compared in spiritual value to impressions other travellers have had of the biblical quality of places and persons in the Judeo-Christian Holly Land.

The mythologizing and mythopoeic tencendies continue throughout the book. Although the development is not in a straight line, Miller does shift the emphasis from the individual as god to explanatory myth involving the Greeks and the gods:

> Silence—century upon century of silence, during which the earth puts on a coat of soft green. A mysterious race out of nowhere swoops down upon the country of Argolis. Mysterious only because men have forgotten the sight of the gods. The gods are returning, in full panoply, man-like, making use of the horse, the buckler, the javelin, carving precious jewels, smelting ores, blowing fresh vivid images of war and love on bright dagger blades. The gods stride forth over the sun-lit swards, full-statured, fearless, the gaze frighteningly candid and open. A world of light is born. Man looks at man with new eyes. He is awed, smitten by his own gleaming image reflected everywhere. It goes on thus, century upon century swallowed like cough-drops, a poem, an heraldic poem, as my friend Durrell would say. While the magic is on the lesser men, the initiates, the Druids of the Peloponnesus, prepare the tombs of the gods, hide them away in the soft flanks of the hillocks and hummocks. The gods will depart one day, as mysteriously as they came, leaving behind the human-like shell which deceives the unbelieving, the poor in spirit, the timid souls who have turned the earth into a furnace and a factory. [25]

Presumabably these gods are to be identified with the Olympian pantheon although Miller does not explicitly say so. The scene is set at Mycenae, and, in a sense, is typical of Miller's mixing of periods. Man recognizes his own image in the faces of the gods: "Man looks at man with new eyes." He is taught by them and given the skills of civilization, and, in fact, as Miller later says, given humanity itself by the gods. The "human-like shell" the gods leave behind would seem to be their images in sculpture and literature, for example (rather than men themselves). The "timid souls who have turned the earth into a furnace and a factory" are modern men, but not to be thought particularly of as the modern Greeks—more,

as would be usual in Miller, as the Americans.

The gods may have taught the Greeks humanity, but they also gave them the skills that led to war. Not that Miller implies that men needed any excuse to wage war. At the end of the book, various ideas that occupy Miller come together: inspired by the coming war, Miller decries the habit men have of killing each other, connects it with the crielty in his own personality and sees that both are directly connected with the money-grubbing and materialistic tendencies of modern society.

> Until he has become fully human, until he learns to conduct himself as a member of the earth, he will continue to create gods who will destroy him. The tragedy of Greece lies not in the destruction of a great culture but in the abortion of a great vision. We say erroneously that the Greeks humanized the gods. It is just the contrary. The gods humanized the Greeks. There was a moment when it seemed as if the real significance of life had been grasped, a breathless moment when the destiny of the whole human race was in jeopardy. The moment was lost in the blaze of power which engulfed the intoxicated Greeks. They made mythology of a reality which was too great for their human comprehension. We forget in our enchantment with the myth, that it is born of reality and is fundamentally no different from any other form of creation except that it has to do with the very quick of life. We too are creating myths, though we are perhaps not aware of it. But in our myths there is no place for the gods. We are building an abstract, dehumanized world out of the ashes of an illusory materialism. We are proving to ouselves that the universe is empty, a task which is justified by our own empty logic. We are determined to conquer and conquer we shall, but the conquest is death. [26]

A new order has for centuries been predicted to come about in America. Miller can not see this, or the creation of any new order for a further considerable period of time. Man must cease to murder man. The individual must cease to hate in his own self as well as cease to hate himself. Part of his was achieved in ancient Greece and part of this can still be seen there in the people, the way they look, act and talk and in their way of life. But part of this is still to be achieved. By examining the people of Greece, their individuality, their ability to communicate and their lack of materialism and by relating their myth-like qualities Miller defines and tries to resolve problems of human beings, society and civilization.

Footnotes

1. Henry Miller, *The Colossus of Maroussi* (Harmondsworth, Middlessex

England: Penguin Books, 1950), p. 21. Hereafter referred to as *Colossus*).

2. *Colossus*, pp. 43-44.

3. *Colossus*, p. 242.

4. *Colossus*, p. 34.

5. *Colossus*, p. 33.
6. *Colossus*, p, 42.

7. *Colossus*, p. 59.

8.C.G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, trans, R.F.C. Hull. *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, V, (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1956), p. 72. Light is an image of religious mysticism. See, for example:

Religious regression makes use of the parental imago, but only as asymbol—that is to say, it clothes the archetype in the image of the parents, just as it bodies forth the archetype's energy by making use of sensuous ideas like fire, light, heat, fecundity, generative power, and so on. In mysticism the inwardly perceived vision of the Divine is often nothing but sun or light, and is rarely, if ever, personified.Ibid, p. 90.

9. *Colossus*, p. 149.

10. *Colossus*, p. 42.

11. *Colossus*, pp. 52-53.

12. *Colossus*, p. 12.

13. *Colossus*, p. 164.

14. See Colossus, pp. 163-168.

15. *Colossus*, pp. 14.

16. *Colossus*, pp. 91-92. See pp. 89-101.

17. *Colossus*, p. 68.

18. See *Colossus*, pp. 119-122.

19. *Colossus*, pp. 237-238.

20. *Colossus*, pp. 238-239.

21. *Colossus*, p. 129.

22. *Colossus*, p. 131. See pp. 129-131.

23. *Colossus*, p. 216.

24. *Colossus*, pp. 111-113.

25. *Colossus*, p. 95. There is a first part to this, but it confuses more than it explains. See p.94.

26. *Colossus*, pp. 239-240.

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HENDERSON THE RAIN KING: ***THE HERO'S "EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION" WITH THE ARNEWI***

Sigrid Renaux

In former issues[1], we have discussed the temporal and spatial setting, and the hero and the anti-hero in Saul Bellow's novel *Henderson the Rain King*, by way of Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of the Menippean satire, the carnivalization of literature and polyphony [2].

We shall now be examining Henderson's adventures in Africa, with the Arnewi tribe, which marks the beginning of his quest, again according to the Menippea's most important characteristic: the creation of extraordinary situations in which to provoke and test the truth[3]. These fantastic adventures, in which the hero is tested, interrogated and attacked, sometimes seeking himself to perform "heroic" deeds, on other occasions being forced into them, will all lead to the answering of his inner voice, to his finding the answer to his quest for truth, for self-knowledge[4], and fulfill his incompleteness. Consequently, the fantastic serves here in the search after the truth, its provocation and its testing, for Henderson, as a Menippean satire hero, not only wanders through unknown fantasy lands, but even descends into the nether world, while his extraordinaty adventures are brought into organic artistic unity with the philosophical idea - his seeking for wisdom - which pervades his quest. The Menippean comic element, with its "specific carnival character" wil be discussed together with Henderson's adventures, for it imbues every situation with carnival's "jolly relativity", breaking the monological seriousness of the quest, in the same manner that Henderson's comic characteristics deflated his heroic side.

The first extraordinary situation in which Henerson is placed happens when he arrives at the Arnewi village, with his guide Romilayu, after having left his friend Charlie. Since his object in coming to Africa was "to leave certain things behind"[5], Henderson's three weeks of camping were enough to make him realize that his discontent and his inner voice "I want!" had returned, and he "was anxious to simplify more and more". Approaching the town, surrounded by naked Arnewi children, Henderson wishes he had brought some treats for them, as he had done when fighting in Italy - "I always carried Hershey bars and peanuts from the PX for the bambini". He is so delighted by the sight of them that, without waiting for Roimilayu's advice,

> I took out the Australian lighter with the drooping wick, spun the tiny wheel with my thumb, and immediately a bush went flaming, almost invisible in the strong sunlight. It roared; it made

brilliant manifestation; it stretched to its limits and became extinct in the sand. I was left holding the lighter with the wick coming out of my fist like a slender white whisker. The kids were unanimously silent, the only looked, and I looked at them. (...) Then suddenly everyone scattered again, and the cows galloped. The embers of the bush had fallen by my boots (44).

Henderson's comic action in this episode —which some critics parallel to God's setting a bush on fire [6]—not only projects his relationship with fire, again as a integral part of his character, but this action is further emphasized by the complete lack of understanding the Arnewi children demonstrate at his pirotechnical performance and by his disappointment at the sudden disappearing of children, cows and embers. His "brilliant manifestation"with fire, as his "heroic deed" with the frogs later on, "became extinct in the sand".

Meeting a party of naked people, Henderson then sees a girl, not much older than his daughter Ricey, he believes, who "burst into loud tears"as soon as she saw him. This sight affects him deeply, for, as he says,

> I would never have expected this to wound me as it did. It wouldn't have been realistic to go into the world without being prepared for trials, ordeals, and sufferings, bur the sight of this young woman hit me very hard. (...) her weeping loosed such a terrible emotion in me. What I thought immediately was "What have I done?"

And Henderson starts to philosophise about his character, and about his past actions:

> Shall I run back into the desert (...) and stay there until the devil has passed out of me and I am fit to meet human kind again without driving it to despair at the first look? I haven't had enough desert yet. Let me throw away my gun and my helmet and the lighter[7] and all this stuff and maybe I can get rid of my fierceness too and live out there on worms. On locusts[8]. Until all the wrong is burned out of me. Oh, the bad! Oh, the wrong, the wrong! What can I do about It? What can I do about all the damage? My character! God help me, I've made a mess of everything, and there's no getting away from the results. One look at me must tell the whole story.

He also realizes that he was still "not ready for society. Society is what beats me. Alone I can be pretty good, but let me go among people and there's the devil to pay". He was ready "to start bawling himself, when confronted with the weeping girl, but as behind her, other natives "were crying along softly", he wonders what is going on. His first

reaction is avoidance, as he avoided death in America by coming to Africa: "Why don't we cut around this town and go back in the desert? I felt a damned sight better out there" he tells Romilayu. But the guide explains to Henderson that "you no mek him cry" - referring to the natives - and Henderson strikes himself in the head saying "'Why sure! I *would*.' (Meaning, 'I *would* think first of myself.')"

For the first time, Henderson becomes aware that he is not the center of attention, and for the first time, too, he wants to help. He asks Romilayu:

> The poor soul is in trouble? Is there somithing I can do for her? She's coming to me for help. I feel it. (...) Ask her, Romilayu. Say that I've come to help (...) and if there are killers in the neighbourhood I'll shoot them.

But Henderson's heroic gesture is comically deflated when he picks up his H and H Magnum with the scope sights, relieved that he was not the cause of their trouble, and decides that "something could be done", saying:

> "Everybody! Leave it to me,"(...). "Look! Look!"And I started to go the manual of arms for them, saying, "Hut, hut, hut,"as the drill instructors always did. (46)

But everyone goes on crying, except the little kids, so Henderson is still at a loss as to why they were mourning. Romilayu then explains to him that the Arnewi are "mourning for cattle which had died in the drought, and that they took responsibility for the drought upon themselves - the gods were offended (...); a curse was mentioned". As strangers, the Arnewi are obliged to confess this to them as ask whether they know the reason for their trouble. Henderson's heart "goes out to them"and he reapets his wish to Tomilayu: "So ask them what they want me to do. I intend to do something, and I really mean it" (...) There must be something that only I can do." This is a clear reference to his heroic qualities again, for, as a civilized white man, Henderson feels superior to the natives.

After having met prince Itelo and accepted his invitation to be their guest, Henderson and Romilayu go to see the prince's aunt, Queen Willatale and her sister Mtalba. On the way, they pass in front of several villagers, tending their dying cattle, and weeping. Henderson is "swayed" again and feels "compassion", but nothing can be done, according to the prince. Seeing their water supply full, Henderson is astonished to hear that it is the frogs in their drinking water that prevent the natives from watering the cattle. They cannot get rid of the frogs, as Henderson suggests, for "nevah touch animal in drink wattah" Itelo explains.

Henderson realizes the "extraordinary situation" he is in, that due to the plague of frogs - which reminds him of the plague of frogs in Egypt[9] - the people greeted him with tears. As he says "it was nothing if

not extraordinary"[10]. Having looked at the great number of frogs in the cistern, Henderson realizes once more he "would never rest until I had dealt with these creatures and lifted the plague"so that Itelo and the Arnewi "would consider me their very greatest benefactor". As he asks Itelo, "You're not alloowed to molest these animals, but what if a stranger came along - me for instance - and took them on for you?

Thus his heroic side again becomes apparent, for Henderson has it in him "to be the doom of those frogs". The extraordinary situation is created to provoke and test the heroic stranger, Henderson feels he is the only one who can do something, just as the Arnewi felt they had to ask strangers for the reason of their trouble - Henderson is the "expected" hero who has to lift the plague, as in myth.

The adventures of the hero in search for truth continue, with Henderson's discussing the frogs with Itelo. First of all, Henderson tells the prince that "survival is survival", while later he reads the prince "a short lecture":

"(...) Should you preserve yourself or the cows, or preserve the custom? I would say, yourself. Live(...) to make another custom. Why should you be ruined by frogs?"

In a way, Henderson is anticipating Queen Willatale's magical words to him, "Grun-tu-molani" - man want to live - as he himself advises Itelo to preserve himself, and not the frogs or the tradition. The death-rebirth theme through change - as we shall see - is already potentially implied in Henderson's advice to Itelo. There is a wish to live in Henderson, even before the queen reveals it to him.

Meeting the queen, Henderson reaffirms his wish to kill the frogs, for his heart is so stirred that "I swore to myself every other minute that I would do something, I would make a contribution here". And he says to himself, "I hope I may die (...) if I don't drive out, exterminate, and crush those frogs". Again during his exchange of gifts with the queen, Henderson intends "to render them a service here that would make the biggest present look silly".

It is during this interview with the queen that the quest theme appears in all its clearness, for Itelo translates to Henderson that

> She say she wish you tell her, sir, why you come. She know you have to come across mountain and walk a very long time. You not young, Mistah Henderson. You weight maybe a hundred-fifty kilogram; your face have many colors. You are built like an old locomotif. Very strong, yes. I know. Sir, I concede. But so much flesh as a big monument...

To this, Henderson sighs and asks Itelo to tell the queen he did it for his "health". But, if at this point Henderson is apparently convinced that he is making this trip because of his physical well-being, for he tells Itelo

> "(...) Oh, it's miserable to be human. You get such queer diseases. Just because you're human and for no other reason. Before you know it, all the years go by, you're just like other people you have seen, with all those peculiar human ailments. Just another vehicle for temper and vanity and rashness and all the rest. Who wants it? Who needs it? These things occupy the place where a man's soul should be. (...)

He will later realize that he also did it for his soul, for his inner want. It is the idea that Dahfu later expresses, that "The spirit of a person is in a sense the author of his body" which here appears in its embryonic form, for Henderson's physical sickness is actually a consequence of his suffering, of his spiritual sickness.

Henderson's wish to render the Arnewi a service is further emphasized after receiving Willatale's "rebirth" message, the "man-want-to-live"revelation - the answer to the hero's quest for truth - for Henderson is so happy he wants to "reward" her himself: "I'll annihilate and blast those frogs out of that cistern, sky-high, they'll wish they had never come down from the mountains to bother you", he says. For in this "mutual-aid deal", "where the Arnewi are irrational I'll help them, and where I'm irrational they'll help me", he thinks.

Henderson then tells Itelo he is going "to have a shot at those animals in the cistern", he will act as "the hinge of fate" on the frogs and even his heart "was already fattening in anticipation of their death". Henderson's - and man's - ambivalent attitude towards death is then projected through his words "we hate death, we fear death, but when you get right down to cases, there's nothing like it", in contrast to his fleeing from death, as before. He now "hungered to let fall the ultimate violence on these creatures in the cistern", as mentioned.

At the same time, while thinking about the bomb, Henderson is aware of the"discrepancies" between himself and the frogs, for he is a millionaire, fighting against harmless frogs. And Daniel's prophecy comes to his mind again as also his past involvement with a cat. This unheroic deed in a way is a forewarning of the unheroic and negative results he is going to have with the frogs. It is further put into evidence by a contrasting scene in wich, after having decided to prepare the bomb, he stays in the hut, grinning both at the surprise of the frogs and at himself. He is, as he says,

> anticipating the gratitude of Willatale and Mtalba and Itelo and all the people; and I went so far as to imagine that the queen would elevate me to a position equal to her own. But I would say, "No, no. I didn't leave home to achieve power or glory, and any little favor I do you is free".

thus mocking the romantic hero or quester of romances. His own dreams of "crowing" will soon be turned upside down, because the disastrous

results of his bomb wil make him leave is disgrace.

Henderson even worries when Mtalba visits him at night, because he will need sleep in order to kill the frogs the next day. He asks Romilayu to let her know it and stresses again: "Don't you see, Romilayu, the thing is up to me alone?". After she leaves, he thinks again on his "task", for his idea is that "when I had performed my great deed against the frogs, the Arnewi would take me to their hearts. (...) what was left was only to prove (...) that I was deserving". He talks like a hero, but his fight is goint to be against frogs - not giants, or monsters - thus deflating the provocation to do something "great" which is then further deflated by the disastrous consequences of the bomb.

On the next day Henderson concentrates on building the bomb. His hunger for violence conveys once more his need to "strike"[11], for sitting on the ground , he is presented with the "challenge"of building a bomb "with the materials at his disposal in the jungle". He breaks open the shells and empties the powder into the flashlight case, "ready to carry out the promise" he has made Itelo and his two aunts. As he realizes and tells Romilayu, "every man feels from his soul that he has got to carry his life to a certain depth", which he hasn't reached yet. And Henderson goes on saying:

> Hah ! Life may think it has got me written off in its records (...) But life may find itself surprised, for after all, we are men. I am Man - I myself, singular as it may look. And man has many times tricked life when life thought it had him taped.

Henderson realizes his chance of redemption is not lost yet, and he intends to use it by showing the Arnewi he is capable of delivering them from their curse.

In a way , we are again prepared for Henderson's failure, for Itelo looks "apprehensive". But Henderson , although realizing why he didn't inspire confidence , has his feelings "stung ". Nevertheless , he repeats to Itelo : "I love these folks. I have to do something to show my friendship (...) coming from the great outside it is up to me to take this on myself ".

Having reached the cistern, together with Romilayu and Itelo, Henderson goes forward alone - like a mythical hero - into the weeds on the edge of the cistern, for "in a crisis a man must be prepared to stand alone, and actually standing alone is the kind of thing I'm good at". He then lits the bomb and, surprised at the effect it had, he starts congratulating himself, as he is "spattered with the mud"from the cistern water. But suddenly luck turns and Henderson gets " more of a result than he could have known in the first instants" : the explosion[12] has blasted out the retainingt wall of the water cistern and the dead frogs settle in the yellow mud[13] of the bottom - this is a "sickening" sight for Henderson, just as the sight of the octopus and the junk in Miss Lenox's room had disgusted him. They all remind Henderson of "death", as if the curse were still following him, in the same way that the frogs[14]

were a curse for the Arnewi. Thus, the dead frogs become, in Henderson's despair, an image not only of his lost hopes of "resurrection", of "grun-tu-molani", but also convey the idea of death and negation, by their association with the octopus and with mud. It is Henderson himself who in a way destroy the anticipation of a new man that is talent in him, by killing the frogs which represent an "anticipation of man". And, as a consequence of this disastrous result, Henderson is completely heartbroken - the natives are gone, and only Itelo and Mtalba remain - and he wishes to be killed, to be punished for his blunder: "Itelo, kill me! All I've got to offer is my life. So take it. Go ahead, I'm waiting".

Intermingled with this climactic scene of Henderson's stay with the Arnewi, we also have a contrapuntal climax of comicality in the same scene, when Henderson starts to throw himself down against the escaping water. He tries "to breast it back and lift the stones into place"but

> the frogs charged into me like so many prunes and fell into my pants and into the open shoe, the lace gone. The cattle started to riot, pulling at their tethers and straining toward the water. But it was polluted and nobody would allow them to drink it.

Performing like "a regular clown"[15] again, he completes this carnivalistic scene by pulling up his wet and stained T-shirt and hiding his face in it - another manifestation of carnival eccentricity. Therefore, the already comic-heroic action of killing the frogs - not giants or wild beasts - to deliver the Arnewi from the curse is even more deflated with the carnivalistic scene that follows the disaster, which also fits exactly into the menippea's characteristics of scandalous scenes[16].

Truth is thus tested through the extraordinary situation the hero is in, for "this way nothing but God's own truth, as if the cistern I had blown up everything else, it seemed". Henderson thinks he has lost his last chance of redemption and waits for Itelo to cut him open. Hearing that Itelo will not kill him because he is a friend, he realizes again he is not fit for society : "It's the same old story with me; as soon as I come amongst people I screw something up - I goof". And he demands: "Why for once, just for once!, couldn't I get my heart's desire ? I have to be doomed always to bungle".

After leaving the village, Henderson also realizes - as he explains to Romilayu - that he cannot go back to the States now, and he might as well "take this.375 and blow my brains out on the spot as go home". He had gone into the world one last time to "accomplish certain purposes" and if he "quit this time"he would probably "turn into a zombie". He leaves it open to Romilayu to decide to follow him once more or go back to Baventai. But the native acts once more as a "helper", for he not only decides to follow Henderson but even suggests where they should go next: to the Wariri.

Turning now to the discussion of the Menippean comic element, which pervades Henderson's adventures in Africa, we realize that these adventures are intermingled not only with the primary carnival performance - "the mock crowing and subequent discrowing of the king of carnival"[17] - but also with secondary carnival rituals, such as that of disguise - the carnivalistic changing of clothing , positions, and destinies in life - mystifications, bloodless carnival wars, exchanges of gifts (abundance as an aspect of carnivalistic utopia), etc. These rituals, transposed into literature, imbue the plot of *Henderson the Rain King* "with symbolic depth and ambivalence, or with jolly relativity and the levity and rapidity of change of carnival"[18]. They also deflate, through their comicality, the high purpose of the quest, for they are placed in constant contrapuntal movement in between the serious aspects of the novel, in a truly oxymoronic combination of high and low, of tragic and comic, of ups and downs and mesalliances of all sorts.

First of all, as a part of Henderson's experiences with the Arnewi, let us discuss the *bloodless carnival wars* which lead to the Hero's first crowning and consequent discrowing. As their guest, he is submitted to a test - his wrestling match with prince Itelo, which is at the same time a perfect example of a bloodless carnival war. Although the prince tells him "when stranger guest comes we always make acquaintance by wrestle. Invariable", Henderson wants to escape from the fight because Itelo has a "tremendous build" and is the champion there; besides, he is not only older than the prince but also feels "completely tuckered out". But he cannot avoid it. The wrestling match takes place inside a hut within a courtyard, in front of Romilayu, and at first Henderson does not react to Itelo's pulls. The prince them climbs over Henderson, who lay on his belly, "face in the dust" - a sign of humiliation - and legs dragging on the gound. Itelo incites Henderson by saying "fight, fight, you Henderson. What is the mattah?"

This wrestling match, inside the hero's extraordinary situation, is again a provocation in which to test a philosophical idea, for Henderson realizes, after having told Itelo he is on a quest, that his condition is due to his former mistakes:

> Oh, my condition! First and last that condition (...) excessive sadness had made me physically heavy, where as I was once light and fast for my weight.

The fight thus serves to provoke Henderson to stop being an avoider[19], to become an active person, for, having rolled in the dust, Henderson sees a " glint " in the corner of Itelo's eyes. Itelo thinks they have already made acquaintance thoroughly, concluding that Henderson is " huge but helpless". Because of this, Henderson decides to fight him after all, in order to regain Itelo's respect: " I must activate myself ", he thinks, paralleling his thoughts when confronted with Miss Lenox's junk - "make a move, Henderson, put forth effort".

Putting aside his helmet and stripping off his T-shirt - Henderson 's trade mark in Africa - he says: "Let's give it a try for real, Your Highness ", and both resolve again in the hurt. The comical element is again stressed when Henderson gives Itelo "a hurt with my belly" while throwing him over by an "elementary surprise": putting the leg behing Itelo and pushing him in the face. Henderson is also glad he did not have to use his " murder technique", one of the "commando tricks" he had learned in the army, and these pompous words provide again a comic contrast *to* the bloodless war he was engaged in. Now it is the angry prince's turn to thrown Henderson on the ground, but the latter takes advantage of such an experience by associating it with the day when he was chopping wood and was struck by a flying log, making him think "Does truth come in blows?". This time, in a metonymical process, another philosophical idea comes up, for "strange"words occur to him: "I do remember well the hour which burst my spirit's sleep". Little by little, Henderson is awakened from his lethargic state of avoidance, reacting to the sadness of his condition.

The fight goes on and Henderson manages to throw Itelo twice on the ground. But seeing "how much bitterness" is in the champion's face, Henderson almost wishes Itelo were the winner. Henderson does not act "like a proud winner, for he feels "almost as bad" as Itelo did; he also realizes he has won not because of nature[20], for Itelo

> was not matched against mere bone and muscle. It was a question of spirit, too, for when it comes to struggling I am in a special class. From earliest times I have struggled without rest.

After Henderson's victory, the prince gets on his knees, exclaiming: "Oh, Mistah Henderson! Henderson, I know you now. Oh, sir, I know you now."

But Henderson's victory brings in another philosophical idea to him, for, in the same way that he does not gloat or act like a "pround winner"- as he did at the beginning of the frog episode - he also realizes his strength is not a "happy strength", and he would like to ask Itelo to take it from him, for the prince is a "better man" than he. He also remembers that "somehow I could never make myself lose any contest, no matter how hard I tried" and he expolains this in a passage which contains in germ all the implications and nuances of carnival mock-crowning and discrowning, in which "the antipode or a real king - a slave or jester - is crowned", which "seems to reveal and sanctify the inside-out world of the carnival"[21]. It is the episode of his playing checkers with his children - another bloodless war in miniature:

> Even playing checkers with my little children, regardless how I maneuvered to let them win and even while their lips trembled with disappointment (...), I would jump all over the board and say rudely, "King me! "though all the while I would be saying to

myself, "Oh, you fool, you fool, you fool!"

Here, Henderson is presented as a king and a fool at the same time, in a truly carnivalistic combination of high and low, in a scene which, is implied above, is a microcosm of carnivalistic performances. This theme of the ambivalence of ritualistic crowning and discrowning, which plays such an important part in the novel, will be developed and enlarged on several other occasions.

Therefore, after the fight, Henderson is "crowned king" by Itelo and he takes the prince's place - by discrowning him - as the Arnewi champion: he is the victor of this bloodless war, while Itelo humiliates himself before Henderson by his symbolic putting dust on his head and Henderson's foot on it, too. Henderson is hit both "by suffering and gratification" when Itelo tells him they are friends - a contradictory statement, after a wrestling match - and he is covered "with a strong flush which is the radiance an older fellow may allowably feel after such a victory", which reminds us again of his fiery temperament taking on a positive quality.

The *exchange of gifts*, another secondary carnival perfomance, is also an integral part of the action of the novel, during Henderson's stay with the Arnewi. After having been acclaimed as champion, Henderson is taken by Itelo by to meet Queen Willatale, the great woman of Bittahness, to whom he offers presents. As he tells Romilayu to start with, the native

> first of all (...) brought out a plastic raincoat in a plastic envelope. I scowled at him, ashamed to offer this cheap stuff to the old queen, but (...) I had a perfectly good excuse, which was that I was traveling light.

This gift introduces a series of other carnevalistic gestures, for the queen and the other ladies "smiled with marvelous constitutional gaiety"and the men "drew their mouths wide, whistling on their fingers harmoniously". But, as Henderson realizes, it's like a "mockery"to bring the queen a raincoat during this drought, and he asks Itelo's forgiveness, for he himself feels the absurdity of the present. As all his gifts are "trinkets and gimmicks", Henderson gives the prince a compass with small binoculars attached, "not much good even for bird watchers", and for Mtalba, the queen's sister, an Austrian lighter with a long white wick, for he has noticed that she smokes. These gifts bring great happiness to the natives, while they convey comicality to us, through their belonging to our age of technology while at the same time being ludicrously out of place, like the raincoat. The free carnivalistic gesture goes together with the comicality in the exchange of gifts, for, in order to prove that the raincoat is "waterproof", Henderson takes hold of the sleeve and licks it:

> Misinterpreting this she [the queen] caught and licked me as well. I started to let out a shout.
> "No yell, sah," said Romilayu, and made it sound urgent.
> Whereupon I submitted, and she licked me on the ear and on the bristled cheek and then pressed my head toward her middle.

Some time later after a conversation with the queen, it is Henderson's turn to receive presents. He is bestowed with "a bolster covered with leopard skin from the sisters, and a basketful of cold baked yams (...) covered with a piece of straw matting" while Mtalba "licked my hand with her small tongue, and I withdrew it and wiped it on my shorts". We see again how the exchange of gifts is always accompanied by carnival gestures, putting into evidence a free, familiar contact among people, free gestures, and suspending all hierarchical distances.

This first scene of the exchange of gifts is later completed with a similar scene, in which Mtalba woos Henderson and visits him at night, for she wants him to buy her, and "realizing that I didn't have the bride price, she had brought it to me tonight".

"Highly unwilling" - for he wants to sleep in order to kill the frogs the next day - Henderson comes out of the hut and is cheered by Mtalba's scort "as if I were the groom already". Here the exchange of presents is combined with carnival's jolly acclamation, for not only were Mtalba's gifts "lying on a big mat, and they made a large mound - robes, ornaments, drums, paints, and dyes", displaying abundance as an aspect of carnivalistic utopia, but this presentation is followed by music and dances.

Carnivalistic *mésalliances* also become apparent in the exchange of gifts, for in them the high and low, the great and insignificant, the sacred and the profane are united: Henderson's shabby gifts in contrast to Mtalba's rich dowry, the queen's and Mtalba's elevated language in contrast to Henderson's colloquial speech and free word, the greatness of Queen Willatale's reading Henderson's character and revealing "grun-tu-molani" to him in contrast to his disastrous performance in the frogs episode.

As to carnival's *changing of clothing and positions in life*, we could mention, first of all, Queen Willatale's being wrapped in a lion's skin:

> It was the skin of a maned lion, with the wide part not on the front where you would have expected it, but on her back. The tail came down over her shoulder while the paw was drawn up from beneath, and these two ends were tied in a knot over her belly. (...) The mane with its plunging hair she wore as a collar, and on this grizzly and probably itching hair she rested her chin.

This lion disguise, with the additional aspect of the carnivalistic category of eccentricity - the utilization of things in reverse is referred to by Henderson as "had I known then what I know now about lions,

this would have told me much about her". It implies not only royal dignity but, more specifically, the lion skin is a solar attribute[22], and therefore related to Willatale's prophetic qualities and to the symbolism of the eye as a king of sun[23].

Mtalba's outfit also strikes us as carnivalistic, not only by the clothes she wears as by her monumental weight. As Henderson describes her,

> In some places, especially in the bust, Mtalba was so heavy that her skin had turned pink from the expansion. (...) She was all gussied up, for at such a weight a woman can't go without the support of clothes. Her hands were dyed with henna and her hair stood up stiffly with indigo; she looked like a very happy and pampered person (...) and she shone and sparkled with fat and moisture and her flesh was puckered or flowered like a regular brocade. At the hips, under the flowing gown she was as broad as a sofa.

But it is in Mtalba's display of wardrobe, in order to "seduce"Henderson, that, complementing the changing of clothing and positions in life, the carnivalistic ritual of *mystification* also takes place:

> To display the greatness of her dowry, Mtalba began to put on some of the robes to the accompaniment of a xylophone made of bones played by one of her party, a fellow with a big knobby ring on his knuckle. He smiled as if he were giving the woman of Bittahness away, and she meantime showing off the gowns and wrappers, gathering them around her shoulders, and winding them about her hips,which required a separate and broader movement. Sometimes she wore a half-veil across the bridge of her nose, Arab style, which set off her loving eyes and occasionally as she jingled with her hennaed hands she took off, huge but gay, looking back at me over her shoulder with those signs of suffering about her nose and lips which come from love only. She would saunter, she would teeter, depending on the rhythm given by the little xylophone (...) All this was performed by a bluish moonlight.

Mtalba feels herself metamorphosed into a bride , while she dances[24], as she also is in love with an "imaginary Henderson" , as he later comments. Even the fellow who plays the xylophone smiles , "as if he were giving the woman of Bittahness away ".

But it is when Mtalda returns, at an early hour of the morning, that her outfit must have reached the highest point of carnivalistic changing of clothing, together with Utopian abundance and also one of those veils over her nose", serenaded by the xylophone and a chorus of finger whistles - in which the incongruity of her outfit in relation to her enormous weight and size is stressed - Mtalba begins to dance again.

"Shaking and jolting her rich flesh, her face ornamented with a smile of coquetry and love" [25], she again offers Henderson her love, reciting to the court "what she was doing and what I was doing" and thus projecting once more the Utopian abundance with which Henderson is surrounded:

> "The woman of Bittahness who loves the great wrestler (...) came to him in the night". "She brought him the bride price" here followed an inventory which included about twenty head of cattle who were all named and their genealogy given - "and the bride price was very noble (...)"

Itelo, too, is dressed in "roomy white pants and the short middy", while Henderson's T-shirt, helmet and stained jockey shorts, together with his rubber shoes and socks, also provide us with a carnivalistic outfit, by the fact that they become worn out, stained, torn, and are used for other ends. In his helmet, for example, he carries his documents, four one-thousand-dollar bills, and later on a lion cub. With his T-shirt, he covers his head to hide his shame, after the frog disaster. Even his manufacturing a bomb with his flashlight case, filling it with powder from the shells of his. 375 H and H Magnum and using a wax shoelace from his desert boots as fuse, is a manifestation of carnival eccentricity - the use of household utensils as weapons.

Turning now to carnival's primary performance — *crowings and discrownings*[26] —Henderson's first "crowning" scene takes place in public, for "the main arena for the carnival performances was the square and the adjoining streets". In this manner, if the exchange of gifts took place in front of the whole tribe - as with Willatale, in the courtyard (symbolizing the carnival square) - and the aplause Henderson receives on defeating Itelo takes place in the streets, while Mtalba's gifts are presented in front of her "escort "and a party of musicians, Henderson's crowning and discrownings are also in front of the Arnewi crowd.

When Henderson and Itelo, Victor and loser, both the newly crowed and the discrowned "kings", walk side by side after leaving the hut, the people applauded him while - as he says -

> I came into the sunshine, pulling my T-shirt and setting the helmet back into place. The women flapped their hands at me (...) The men made whistling noises on their fingers (...) Far from looking hangdog or grudging, the prince himself participated in the ovation, pointing at me and smiling (62-3).

This public crowing is truly carnivalistic in all its aspects : Henderson wears his "crown"—the helmet —the public applauds, victor and loser join in friendship, the natives make carnivalistic gestures as clapping hands, whistling, laughing. It is the change of positions in life again, for the "fool" has become king, and the prince has become discrowned.

But like all carnival rituals, changes of station quickly follow one

another, and this crowning is soon followed by a discrowning scene, after Henderson's defeat with the frogs. For the "big event" of discrowning, the villagers turned out in great numbers, again "chattering or clapping their hands and singing out". Yet in this second carnivalistic performance, discrowning - as the comic result of Henderson's dreams of crowning (for the testing of the hero is at the same time the propitiator of his discrowning, because the bomb fails to produce the expected results) - is even associated with death, as crowning is with rebirth, for Henderson expects to be killed, after his blunder. In this manner, discrowning quickly follows his crowning, as his heroic deed has a bathetic end. In contrast to his arriving at the Arnewi village, Henderson walks out of the "deserted town", for there is not " a soul in any of the lanes, and even the cattle had been pulled indoors so that they would not have to see me again". Henderson leaves "in disgrace and humiliation, having demolished both their water and my hopes". He is sure he will never learn more about the "grunt-molani", as his discrowning has also become a symbol of his spiritual death.

Henderson's crownings and discrownings, in this first part of his adventures in Africa, thus exemplify perfectly well Bakhtin's further commentary about this main carnivalistic performance, when he says that:

> The idea of immanent discrowning is contained already in the crowning: it is ambivalent from the very beginning. (...) The ritual of discrowning as it were finalizes the coronation, and is inseparable from it (...) And a new coronation shows through it.[27]

Looking forward, then, to Henderson's future coronation as rain king - for the "new crowning " shows through his discrowning - let us now examine another seminal aspect of carnival, deeply related again to the performances described above as also to the Menippean characteristics: *carnival images*, and their ambivalent nature. For, by the fact that these images "always include within themselves the perspective of negation (death), or its opposite. Birth is fraught with death, and death with new birth"[28], we will at the same time be further exploring the death- rebirth theme in the novel, as a sequence to the curse and madness theme which has taken Henderson to Africa, in this quest for wisdom. And these images are again connected to the fire and earth imagery already discussed in relation to Henderson's character, stressing once more the internal unity of all these diverse aspects in character and plot.

The death-rebirth imagery, projecting "the pathos of vicissitudes and changes, of death and renewal" of carnival, breaks out in all its force in Henderson's meeting with Queen Willatale, when she takes his hand and "burries it between her breasts"— the normal form of greeting of the Arnewi. Henderson feels and receives "radiant heat and

monumental weight "from the queen, besides perceiving

> the calm pulsation of her heart participating in the introduction. This was as regular as the rotation of the earth, and it was a surprise to me, my mouth came open and my eyes grew fixed as if I were touching the secrets of life.

The relationship there is between this image of the heart as the center[29], the symbol of eternity, and Henderson's experiences with earth and fire, as positive elements, becomes apparent by the fact that the heat he receives is "radiant" and the weight is "monumental". Willatale's heart is compared to mother earth, with its stability and calm pulsation, transmitting "the secrets of life ", and Henderson receives from Willatale's center not only radiant heat but peace - the calm pulsation of her heart - in contrast to his restlessness. From the center or her being also emanate the "secrets of life ".

The regenerating power of fire and earth - in contrast to Henderson's first experiences with them[30] - is further developed in relation to the death-rebirth imagery in this same scene when, after the exchange of gifts, the qeen presses Henderson's head toward her middle. And, as a "special mark of the old lady's favor", Henderson was expected to kiss her on the belly. He kissed and shivered at the heat he encountered. As he goes on saying,

> the knot on the lion's skin was pushed aside by my face, which sank inward. I was aware of sounds of submergence. I felt as though I were riding in a exotic odors arose from below. My own whiskers pierced me inward, in the lip. When I drew back from this significant experience (having made contact with a certain power-un-mistakable ! - which emanated from the woman's middle) Mtalba also reached for my head (...) but I pretended I didn't understand.

Fire becomes equated with life, with the power of life which emanates from willatale's center, while the double image of death and rebirth is again contained in Willtale's grotesque body. As Bakhtin explains grotesque imagery,

> one of the fundamental tendencies of the grotesque image of the body is to show two bodies in one: the one giving birth and dying, the other conceived, generated, and born. This is the pregnant and begetting bofy, or at least a body ready for conception and fertilization (...). From one body a new body always emerges in some form or other.
> The unfinished and open body (dying, bringing forth and being born) is not separated from the world, with animals, with objects. It is comic, it represents the entire material bodily world in all

its elements. It is an incarnation of this world at the absolute lower stratum, as the swallowing up and generating principle, as the bodily grave and bosom, as a field which has been sown and in which new shoots are preparing to sprout[31].

The grotesque imagery of the body, giving birth and dying, can also be associated with the symbolism of the cave - the interior of the body, the belly, the place where transformations take place[32] - for kissing Willatale's belly equals kissing the seat of life, from which Henderson symbolically receives power. At the same time, Henderson's brying his head in the queen's belly is like a "voyage to the centre of the earth", a return to the mother body of the earth - the cave again, as later he is going down into the lion's cave. And, by receiving not only positive fire from the queen, but also earth's healing power that emanated from her middle, Henderson is cured through the same elements which predominated in his temperament, through contact with the queen's internal organs, by penetrating the "cave" of her body, that seat of life, and receiving its "secrets" from her. Thus, the negative imagery of earth and fire in relation to death and curse[33] is here transformed into a positive rebirth imagery, evidencing again the ambivalent qualities of these two elements.

The death-rebirth theme and imagery continue in Henderson's receiving not only physical strength through direct contact with Willatale's body, but also spiritual strength from her, for in this "beautiful, strange, special place", Henderson is sure the queen can straighten him out by showing him "the thing, the source, the germ - the cipher. The mystery, you know". In contrast to him and to us, who feel we have to move together with the earth, Willatale is "sustained", and it "comforted" Henderson just to see her, to learn to be sustained, too.

Thus, after Henderson's first positive experiences in his quest for "the source" of things, he asks Itelo to arrange a "real talk" with the queen, "about the wisdom of life. Because I know she's got it and I wouldn't leave without a sample of it". The scene that follows, of Henderson's dialogue with Queen Willatale, is also a prefect example of the menippea's "threshold dialogues" - at the gates of Olympus and on the threshold of the nether world - for Henderson is at the threshold of discovering the truth about himself , when he asks her what she sees in him, "since I find it so hard to tell her who I am". Then , after confirming his frenezy, his large personality, his mind full of thought, the queen tells him "world is strange to a child. You not a child, sir ?" And Henderson philosophises again on her answer :

> The world may be strange to a child, but he does not fear it the way a man fears[34]. He marvels at it. But the grown man mainly dreads it. And why ? Because of death. So he arranges to have himself abducted like a child. So what hapens will not be his fault. And who is this kidnaper - this gipsy ? It is the strangeness of life - a thing that makes death more remote, as in childhood.

The deep relevance and significance of this passage will only be completed by comparing it with the end of the novel, when Henderson "abducts " a Persian child, in whose eyes he has seen the "new luster" of life, for the boy does not fear death. In the same manner, Henderson - a great child himself - was abducted, for he fled death and found the strangeness of life in Africa. A child, an image of new life, of rebirth, is what the queen also sees in him.

The death-rebirth theme is then completed when Willatale tells him - after hearing him sing the Messiah to her ("He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief", and "For who shall abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth?"[35] - that "you want to live. Gruntu-molani. Man want to live". Henderson in his happiness confirms her revelation of rebirth: "I could not bear how sad things have become in the world and so I set out because of this molani", thus revealing to himself the reason of his quest. It was not only a flight from death, but also a search for new life, for regeneration.

But death-rebirth imagery is not only conveyed through the physical and spiritual strength Henderson receives from the queen. His rebirth is further confirmed by the "object world itself ", which gave him "a kind of go-ahead sign". For after the enchantment and poetry of the night before, when Mtalba dance for Henderson during their nightly "*rendez-vous*", he has a flash of mystical revelation, in a fiery dawn scene which confirms his being "bathed in high feeling":

> This did not come about as I had expected it to with Willatale. I thought that she could open her hand and show me the germ, the true cipher (...). No, what happened was like nothing previously conceived; it took the form merely of the light at daybreak against the white clay of the wall beside me and had an extraordinary effect, for right away I began to feel the sensation in my gums warning of something lovely, and with it a closer painful feeling in the chest. (...) the cause that morning was the color of the wall with the sunrise on it, and when it became deeper I had to put down the baked yam I was chewing and support myself with my hands on the ground, for I felt the world sway under me (...) Some powerful magnificence not human, in other words, seemed under me. And it was the same mild pink color, like the water of watermelon, that did it.

This positive imagery of rebirth through fire and earth again bears a stricking parallelism to Bachelard's explanation of the mineral power of stones, for "le même rêve fait la pierre et la montagne", as also "la terre entière est une immense géode, un cailloux creux"[36]. Bachelard

further comments that

> cette inattendue théorie *géologique* des aurores boréales peut nous servir à la fois la folie scientifique du rêve et l'audace de ses synthèses. (...) Mais las cosmicité de l'imagination est moins sévère. (...) Le ciel est ici le reflet de la terre; l'aurore boréale est une projection lumineuse des splendeurs cristallines du centre de la terre. (...) Tout le ciel devient minerai. Le ciel est "de gypse rose", il est frangé "d'améthystes". Cette immense lumière petrifiée enferme la terre et le ciel dans une même unité. Et c'est la lumière minérale qui colore le ciel"[37].

As we can see in Henderson's mystical experience related to nature, the projection of the fiery dawn light on the white clay wall can be explained by the effect of the lumious casting of crystal glitter from the center of the earth onto nature, crystalizing not only the mountain but the whole light of the sky - "la lumière minérale de la terre qui colore le ciel": the white clay wall illuminating the sky. The intimate relationship between the pink light and the white clay wall, "the color of the wall with the sunrise on it" suggesting the wall illuminating the sky in a doubly illuminating process is thus corroborated by Bachelard's affirmation that the mineral light of the earth colors the sky. Thus, the metaphorical use of the pink light in its poetic opposition to the octopus experience[38] —as Henderson himself states, "it was exactly the opposite at Banyules-sur-Mer with the octopus in the tank. That had spoken to me of death"—brings him not only into a dream state[39] but conveys again the death-rebirth theme.

Henderson himself also confirms this force of the earth acting on and being influenced by the "fiery dawn", for he refers to tha "powerful magnificience not human (...) that seemed under me", as he also refers to his recognition of the importance of this,

> as throughout my life I had known these moments when the dumb begins to speak, when I hear the voices of objects and colors; then the physical universe starts to wrinkle and change and heave and rise and smooth, (...) Thus on this white wall with its prickles, like the gooseflesh of matter, was the pink light.

This earthly power affects not only human beings but also animals, for "even dogs have to lean against a tree, shivering".

But this mystical experience related to the death-rebirth imagery is taken even one step further, when Henderson - after remebering the two other occasions, fifty years back, on which he saw this pink light [40] - suddenly puts his face, his nose to the surface of the clay wall, in order to absorb this power to the utmost:

> I pressed my nose to it as though it were a precious rose, and knelt

> there on those old knees, lined and grieved - looking (...) and I inhaled, I snuckered through my nose and caressed the wall with my cheek. My soul was in quite a condition, but not hectically excited, it was a state as mild as the colo itself.

Earth and fire, then, in the form of a white clay wall and pink light from the red dawn, exert a positive influence on Henderson, in contrast to their negative influence projected through the curse and death theme, and Henderson feels young again, he feels reborn, he feels he could let the light go

> without a struggle, hoping it come again before another fifty years had passed. As otherwise I would be condemned to die a mere old rioter or dumb-sock with three million dollars, a slave to low-grade fear and turbulence.

Having thus been absorbed into the supreme spirit - "like the fringe of the Nirvana"[41] - into a beatific state, Henderson feels at peace with himself, and he is "a different person", for he has passed through "a vital experience".

These first instances of death-rebirth imagery, conveyed through Willatale's body and dawn, through a human being and through nature, help to project then not only this movement from death to rebirth, which is the core of the carnivalistic attitude to the world, but also convey the Menippean characteristic of provoking or testing the truth, through the hero's extraordinary situations. For it is after feeling the secret power emanating from the queen, that Henderson thinks about "the hour that burst the spirit's sleep" [42] - truth comes in blows. As he further realizes, and repeats, "suffering [43] is about the only reliable burster of the spirit's sleep. There is a rumor of long standing that love also does it". Suffering and love, in an oxymoronic combination, are the two experiences which will bring about Henderson's change - as he later confirms, "Whatever gains I ever made were always due to love and nothing else " on his plane back to America: love, which he receives from Willatale and later from Dahfu; suffering, through his ordeals. Again, it is after feeling the "powerful magnificence " of the sunrise that his spirit becomes alert - "my spirit was not sleeping then, I can tell you, but was saying, Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho !".

Continuing our examination of the carnival imagery which permeats this first part of Henderson's adventures in Africa, conveying to us the death-rebirth theme, let us now discuss the other images which, repeated like incantations, suggest a magical pattern by the additional levels of meaning they give to this theme[44], in relation to Bellow's carnival attitude to the world.

The canivalistic paired image[45] of the *eyes,* presented metaphorically and metonymically, are also a seminal aspect of death-rebirth,

emphasizing to the utmost, by their sensory associations, the ambivalence of the "pathos of death and renewal": both from the single-levelled, monolithical, non-carnival world, as from the bilevelled, relative world of carnival, where all symbols include within themselves the perspective of negation or its opposite, as mentioned.

Bellow uses the image of eyes [46], in the same way that he has used the blows of truth or the Biblical quotations, to convey possibilities of regeneration as well as the death curse, to Henderson. The recurrence of the eye symbolism points to its importance, for this key word, pregnant with meaning, evidences Wetherill's words that the true meaning of a text begins with words, for by grouping them according to their "recurrent areas of meaning"[47], we see the main themes of the novel put into evidence. Eyes are both an ill-omened (damnation) and a blissful (benediction) image, functioning inside the larger structure of carnival images, as suggesters of death and renewal, for they have the double function of expressing Henderson's unexpressed feelings and thoughts about death, as they further on also become an image of rebirth. The eyes are there "to carry something to him [the character] and by his reaction to enlighten us about him"[48].

We are made aware of eyes as an outward sign to present an inward state - Henderson's death feelings - for the first time in octopus experience[49], where the octopus's "soft matter " not only repulses Henderson with its pale and granular flesh, and its soft head with its speckles, but, even more, with its eyes. For the creature seems to look at him, "the eyes spoke to me coldly", conveying a message of death to him. This image seems to be further expanded and completed by the bubbles that speed upward, for they have the same rounded form as eyes. These bubbles are then found in another death context, when Henderson sees Miss Lenox on the floor, and "the soul, like a bubble, sucked out of the window". As Henderson confirms later, that experience "had spoken to me of death".

But it is during Henderson's stay with the Arnewi that the eye imagery acquires new significance, through the frogs' eyes Henderson sees in the water cistern. Blinking "with their peculiarly marbled eyes, red, and green and white", they remind him unconsciously of the octopus's eyes as a parallel image - the octopus[50] as a curse to him in the same way that the frog are a curse the octopus to the Arnewi. The frogs' marbled eyes remind us not only of the octopus's speckles but also of its bubbles, and of Miss Lenox's bubble, with "their white legs and the emotional throats, their eyes like bubbles", therefore linking the frogs with two other disagreeable images related to death. The only difference is that now Henderson is reacting to it by exterminating the frogs, as if he were unconsciously taking vengeance on the death imagery conveyed through the octopus's eyes and bubbles, and Miss Lenox's bubbles.

In a movement then, from negation to affirmation, the next time

Henderson is affect by eyes is when he meets Queen Willatale of the Arnewi, who has "a defective eye, with a cataract, bluish white" and the sight of this eye is the beginning of a change for Henderson, because like a prohet, she has taught him that "man-want-to-live". Completing the experience of receiving power which emanated from the queen's belly, Henderson also receives from the woman of "Bittahness" - a person of real substance, not only a woman but a man at the same time, and "happy - bittah. Most bittah" - other emanations of "benevolence", not only from her head and smile but also from her "live eye" which "opened brightly toward me". The fact that Willatale has a "mother-of-pearl eye" and a good eye relates her not only to the blind eyes of a prophet but also to the symbolism of the eye as a kind of sun: to see means to understand[51]. On the other hand, one eye has an ambivalent meaning, for it alludes to infra-humanity but also to extra-human powers[52], and this is what Willatale, as a woman of Bittahness, possesses. Her defective eye makes Henderson feel "singularly ashamed of not being a doctor"- the future climax of the death-ribirth theme - and her very sight affects him so much that he wants to have a real talk with her, "about the wisdom of life. Because I know she's got it and I wouldn't leave without a sample of it", While prohetizing the beginning of his change, her furrowed brow lets

> the hemisphere of the eye be seen, purely, glistening with human intention; while the other, the white one, though blind, comunicated humor as if she were giving me a wink to last me a lifetime. This closed white shutter also signified her inwardness to me.

In this way, in the same manner that Willatale's belly and breasts have transmitted life and power when Henderson touched them, her "one-eyed dreamy look" besides reminding us of her prophetic qualities also conveys to us through her very message that "man-want-to-live", the rebirth theme, new life. At the end of the novel, we will be reminded again of the power of her eye, reflected in the "ancient power" which emanates from the Persian boy's eyes, which makes Henderson say "you could never convince me that this was for the first time"[53].

Moving on inside the discussion of carnival images, let us now examine *laughter*, again deeply related to the death-rebirth theme. Laughter is always in the back and foreground of the novel, mocking life and death, creating bathos, imbuing the attitudes of all the characters, except Romilayu, with carnivalistic ambivalence.

For Bakhtin[54], carnival laughter is related to the most ancient forms of ritual laughter, which was directed toward a higher order: the sun, the other gods and the highest earthly authority were disparaged and ridiculed, in order to "*renew themselves*". All forms of ritual laughter were connected with the act of reproduction and its symbols. It reacted

to crises in the life of the sun, the deity, the world, and man. Carnivalistic laughter is also directed toward a higher order - toward the change of the authorities and truths, toward the change of world order. As Bakhtin further explains, laughter is a especific ethical attitude toward reality, but untranslatable into logical language; it is a specific means of constructing and artistic image, plot or genre. Because of its enormous creative, genre-forming power, laughter can seize and capture a phenomenom in the process of change, fixing both poles of revolution within a phenomenom in their creative, renewing changeability: death is foreseen in birth and birth in death, defeat in victory and victory in defeat, discrowing in coronation, and so on. Carnival laughter does not allow any one of these elements of change to be absolutized (*sic*) or grow stiff and cold in one-sided seriousness. In living carnival images, death itself is pregnant and gives birth, and life-giving mother's loins become a grave. The creative, ambivalent laughter of carnival, in which derision and triumph, praise and abuse are inseparably fused, gives rise to precisely such images. Bakhtin goes on to say that when the images and laughter of carnival are transposed into literature, they are transformed in accordance with specific literary-artistic tasks. However, laughter can also be "reduced", muted down to a minimum - to the level of irony, humor and other forms. It continues to determine the structure of the image, but we do not hear laughter itself[55].

Keeping in mind these ideas, we find in *Henderson the Rain King* both instances of carnival laughter, related to death and rebirth, negation and affirmation, for Bellow's carnival attitude, which so profoundly permeates the novel, becomes evident in the laughter which accompanies and echoes out of almost every scene. It is found in the structure of images, in plot situations and in verbal style, while "reduced" laughter, which comes to the surface when the narrator's story is constructed parodically, is also given expression "in the author's ultimate position, which excludes any possible one-sided, dogmatic seriousness and does not permit any one point of view or pole of life or thought to become absolutized". For the "carnival attitude knows no final period", "it is hostile to any final ending: for it every ending is merely a new begining - carnival images are reborn again and again". The catharsis which completes Dostoevsky's novels - and which fits so well to *Henderson the Rain King* - is thus expressed by Bakhtin: "*nothing definitive has yet taken place in the world (...) the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future*"[56]. This is, for Bakhlin, also the *purifying meaning* of ambivalent laughter.

Although instances of carnival laughter can be heard before Henderson goes to Africa[57], it is actually when he arrives at the Arnewi that laughter increases, as part of the mock-epic structure of the novel, together with mockery and other carnivalistic blasphemies. When Henderson and Romilayu, for instance, reach the Anewi village, "under the mistaken impression that we were being stoned, I laughed and swore.

It amused me that they might be shying rocks at me". This is laughter as a reaction to crisis, together with self-mockery.

Carnival laughter accompanied with grimaces becomes evident when Henderson is taken by Itelo to see the queen: "I was grinning but pretended it was a grimace because of the sun" (51), thus hiding laughter with another carnival gesture. Itelo is also "smilling" at Henderson, "but his posture had become very tense at the same time (...) Yet he continued to smile and I realized we were on the verge of something". It is the wrestle to which stanger guests have to submit, so Itelo's smile is ambiguous - it is cordial, but he is waiting to fight with Henderson, to be crowned or discrowned as champion of the Arnewi. Seeing Henderson slip off the T-shirt, Itelo "livened up and began to laugh", in an anticipation of discrowning Henderson. Itelo even smiles after he is discrowned by Henderson, and later, when both are walking among the Arnewi, "the prince himself participated in the ovation, pointing at me and smiling".

Good - natured mockery is felt when Henderson bows in front of Queen Willatale and "she began to laugh and her lion-bound belly shook and she wagged her head with its dry white her at the picture I made bowing in those short pants". And smile as rebirth is seen when Henderson meets the queen:

> With not many teeth, she smiled warmly and held out her hand (...) Good nature emanated from her; its seemed to puff on her breath as she sat smiling with many small tremors of benevolence and congratulation and welcome.

She has a "happy light in her face" and when Henderson speaks of troubles, she "smiled right along". When he gives her the raincoat[58], she "smiled with marvelous constitucional gaiety" - this universal laughter, joyful laughter. She smiles again at Henderson "but without parting her mouth", when she welcomes him, and says she is glad he came. She can also grin, when necessary.

When Henderson tells Itelo he has come all this way for his health, it is Itelo's turn to give a "startled laugh" of unbelief, or mockery. For Henderson, having beaten him in the wrestle, could not possibly be in ill health. The court also smiles back at Henderson, when he shouts "grun-tu-molani": it is a rebirth smile, for "man-want-to-live" goes together with mockery at his pronouncing it.

Later on, we hear Henderson's mocking laughter at Itelo, when he asks Henderson "not to be carried away" by his urge to kill the frogs: "Ha, ha, Prince-pardon me, but this is where you happen to be wrong. If I don't get carried away I never accomplish anything" thus mingling laughter with free contact among people, for, in a true carnival manner, distances of rank are forgotten in this scene.

But Henderson's laughter can also be "reduced", as when he

examines the Arnewi water cistern with a flashlight and Romilayu asks him:

"What for you laugh, sah ? "
"Am I laughing ? I didn't realize, " I said.

In anticipation of the frogs death, Henderson gloads, his heart fattens, thus showing laughter in connection with death. He also grinse at the surprise the frogs will have when the bomb explodes - "I lay grinning at the surprises these frogs had coming, and also somewhat at myself". Laughter is hear ambivalent, for it is directed towards the frogs death combined with his own rejoicing at his supposed future victory, which them turns out to be a disaster: it is thus linked again, with crowning and discrowning. Laughter follows Henderson's words - as it also does relation to Itelo and Willatale - either serious or comic, given a double meaning to his utterances and again throwing in several degrees of parody, with which it is so deeply connected.

Having thus examined the Menippean comic element, as a complement to Henderson's extraordinary adventures with the Arnewi, we realize not only how supple the quest structure is, allowing us to enlist these different categories together, but also how the comic element destroys the monological seriousness of the quest. Simultaneously, these adventures prepare us for Henderson's second "extraordinary situation", among the Wariri, leading to the climax of the action and of all carnival performances, categories and images, inside Bellow's carnivalistic vision of the world.

NOTES:

1. See "*Henderson the Rain King* I: the Land". *Letras 39* (163-183), Curitiba Editora da UFPR, 1990. "*Henderson the Rain King*: the hero and Anti-Hero", Estudos Anglo-Americanos 14-15: 104-132. São José do Rio Preto, ABRAPUI, 1990-91.The present article corresponds to chapter III - The Quest - Part 2, of "Bellow's Carnivalistic Vision of the World in *Henderson the Rain King*" (P.hD Dissertation, USP, 1978). An abstract of the dissertation is presented in the above mentioned issue of *Estudos Anglo-Americanos*. Quotations from *Henderson the Rain King* are taken from the New York, Fawcett, 1959 ed.

2. See Mikahail Beakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ann Arbor, Ards, 1973.

3. Ibid., p. 94.

4. T. TODOROV, commenting on "La quete du Graal", mentions that "le fait meme que ces *doutes* existent sur la nature du Graal est significative. Ce récit racont la *quête* de quelque chose; or ceux qui *cherchent* ignorent sa nature. Ils sont obligés de *chercher* non ce que le mot désigne, mais ce qu'il *signifie*; c'est une *quête de sens*" (*Poétique de la Prose*. Paris, Seuil, 1971. p. 146).

5. As C. G. GUAL stresses, in relation to *early prose romances*, "La *desocupación* radical del caballero andante, que vagabundea en pos de la aventura y del amor, es característica de esta línea. Es mui curiosa esa *falta de ocupación* social, sin el recurso a la *cruzada* contra el infiel, que permite al caballero disponer de su tiempo para tales empresas individuales" (*Primeras Novelas Europeas*. Madrid, Ed. Istmo, 1974. p. 64). We can again see the *relationship* between this knight and *Henderson*, who also has no "*social occupation*"- except his breeding pigs - and thus has *time* enough to go to Africa.

6. BAKHTIN also mentions the setting on fire of "*hades*" at the end of carnival (*Problems*... p. 104). See n. 68. This episode could also be discussed inside, carnival's *mystification*, for the whole experience is a *hoax* (for children and Henderson)

7. Which could symbolize his *aggressiveness*, his preponderance as a *white* man, and his *clownish side*.

8. A reference to Daniel's prophecy, as will happen later on.

9. See "*HRK* I: The Land". *Letras 39*, p. 169.

10. Words such as "*challenge*", "*ordeal*", "*trial*", "*help*" are recurrent in this first adventure.

11. It is again an *anger* not only of the hand, but of the *whole man*, as already mentioned in relation to Bachelard's "hard matter", that is released through Henderson's making the bomb. See also p. 167 in "*Bellow's Carnivalistic Vision of the World*...".

12. According to Elise LEACH, this is due to Henderson mistakenly relying on *Western technology*, while later on, with the Wariri, "he fulfills the necessary conditions to propitiate the nature gods" (From Ritual to Romance again: *Henderson the Rain King*.*Western Humanities Review, 14* (2):223, Spring 1960).

13. G. BACHELARD brings in a *similar point* when he comments, in relation to "la pâte", that "on peut (...) saisir une sorte de coopération de deux éléments ima naires, (...) pleine (...) de contrariétés selon que l'eau adoucit la terre ou que la *terre* apporte à l'eau sa consistance (...) l'un est toujours le sujet actif, l'autre subit l 'action."
(***La Terre et les Rêveries de la Volonté***. Paris, J. Corti, 1971. p. 74-5). As Henderson is a character related to *fire* and earth characteristics, his contact with water - the enemy of earth - in the front of *mud* brings in negative implications, such as his previous experiences with soft matter, as commented above.
Still in relation to mud, Bachelard comments that "sans fin, on pourrait accumuler des textes où les *valeurs* viennent se contradire pour dire le bien et le mal de la fange, de la *boue*, d' une terre molle et noire. (...) avec la terre molle on touche un point *sensible* de l'imagination de la matière. L' expérience qu'on en prend renvoie à des expérience intimes, à des rêveries refoulées. Elle met en jeu des *valeurs anciennes*, des valeurs qui sont aussi bien anciennes pour l' individu humain que pour l' espèce humaine" (p. 133).

14. The symbolic significance of frogs, according to CIRLOT, is that they represent the transition between the elements water and earth [just like the mud in which

they lie dead]. They are also associated with the idea of creation and resurrection, because they are amphibious and because of their alternate periods of appearance and disappearance. By its anatomy, the frog represents an anticipation of man (p. 393). These ideas bear again an intimate relationship to the whole experience Henderson is going through, in connection with the death-rebirth theme. *Diccionario de Símbolos*. Barcelona, Labor, 1969.
The relationship of animals to the four elements is also established by Cirlot: "los animales (...) expressan la ierarquía de los instintos [Henderson with pigs]. La classificación simbólica de los animales corresponde con frecuencia a la de los cuatro elementos (...) : los seres acuáticos y anfibios corresponden al agua [the frogs' experience]; los repetiles, a la tierra; las aves, al aire, y los mamíferos, por su sangre caliente, al fuego [the lion] (...) Algunos animales, por sus cualidades sobresalientes, en especial por su nata agresividad y su beleza, como el águila y el león, han desempenado una función preponderante en el alegorismo mundial (p. 78-9). Según Jung, "el animal representa la psique no humana, lo infrahumano instintivo, así como el lado psíquico inconsciente". La primitividad del animal indica la profundidad del estrato. La identificación con animales significa una integración del inconsciente y, a veces, (...) un ba o de renovación en las fuentes de la vida [the lion experience] (p. 80). The deep connection of Cirlot's commentary with the animal symbolism in the novel is thus again put forward.

15. D. GALLOWAY gives ua a very perceptive explanation of Henderson's role in this incident, when he stressed that "the clown is essentially a recipient rather than an instigator of action; when he does attempt to instigate action, his schemes persistently backfire: thus, he may occasionally have the illusion of power, but rarely the authority or control which traditionally accompanies such a position ". (Clown and Saint: The Hero in Current American Fiction. *Critique*, 7 (3): 48, Spring-Summer 1965.

16. BAKHTIN, M. *Problems* ...,p. 96.

17. Ibid. , p. 102.

18. Ibid. , p. 103.

19. As Dahfu is going to tell him later.

20. BACHELARD is again helpful in explaining Henderson's relationship to Itelo in the wrestling match, for his need to react and fight Itelo back is a consequence of the psychology of "heaviness": "la psychologie de la pesanteur comporte une évidente dialectique suivant que l'être se soumet aux lois de la pesanteur ou qu' il y résiste. (...) Le psychisme humain se spécifie comme volonté de redressement. (...) Les rêveries de la volonté de redressement sont parmi les plus dynamisantes; elles animent le corps entier, des talons à la nuque" (*La Terre ... Volonté*, p. 356-7). Thus, in contrast to the "images d' écrasement", projected through the montain ("pour bien comprende la *masse* de la montagne, il faut rêver de ala soulever. La montagne anime son héros. Atlas est un home dynamisé par la montagne" (p. 361), Henderson, like an Atlas, is at the same time provoke to fight Itelo back - because of his dream of "redressement" - as also to "crush" Itelo with the force of Atlas, by lifting him up and throwing him on the ground. Both provocations, in which his strength and spirit are tested, are a part of this bloodless carnival war. As Henderson mentions, he won because of "spirit", his need of "redressement" is a dynamic need.

21. BAKHTIN, M. *Problems*..., p. 102.

22. CIRLOT, J. E., p. 283.

23. See p. 87 in *Bellow's Carnivalistic Vision*....

24. For CIRLOT, "toda danza es una pantomima de metamorfosis, por ello requiere la máscara para facilitar y ocultar la transformación que tiende a convertir al bailarín en diós, demonio o una forma existencial anhelada. Tiene, en consecuencia, función cosmogónica" (p. 172).

25. Another similarity could be established between this carnivalistic performance and the annual rites of marriage of Dionysus to the Queen at Athens to ensure the fertility of the vines and other fruit trees, of which Dionysus was the god (J. G. FRAZER, *The Golden Bough*. London, Macmillan, 1974, p. 187-8). The song Mtalba recites is, for some critics, a parody of the Song of Solomon.

26. BAKHTIN, M. *Problems* ... , p. 102 ff.

27. Ibid. , p. 102.

28. Ibid. , p. 102-4

29. According to CIRLOT, the heart is related to all images of center, and every center is a symbol of eternity. All images of "center" are related to the heart as substitutes or correspondences, such as the chalice, the trunk and the cave; in emblems the heart means love as center of illumination and happiness and for this reason it is surrounded by flames, a cross, the lity, or a crown (p. 153)

30. See p. 117, *HRK*: The Hero and Anti-Hero. *EAA* 14-15, (1990-91).

31. BAKHTIN, M. *Rabelais and His World*. Cambridge, MIT Press, 1968. p. 27.

32. CIRLOT, J. E. p. 432 (subterráneos) and 476 (vintre). R. R. DUTTON further extends the symbology of Queen Willatale as Earth, by standing that Henderson has an "Adamic role", for "the endless breath that he draws marks the begining of mankind (*Saul Bellow*. Boston, Twayne, 1971. p. 104).

33. See p. 133 in *Bellow's Carnivalistic Vision* ....

34. As Augie March also comments, "You do all you can to humanize and familiarise the world, and suddenly it becomes more strange than ever. The living are not what they were, the dead die again, and at last for good" (p. 285). *The Adventures of Augie March*. New York, Viking, 1969. p. 285.

35. See "inserted genres", M. Bakhtin, *Problems* ... , p. 97.

36. BACHELARD, G. *La Terre ... Volonté*, p. 286.

37. Ibid. , p. 287.

38. See p. 133 in *Bellow's Carnivalistic Vision ...*

39. Ibid. p. 32 ff.

40. According to BACHELARD's "complex of Novalis", we could say that it becomes apparent in Henderson's recalling the rosy pink light in his child impressions in bed, still in his "calidum inatum". This intimate heat that characterizes this complex, this need to enter the heart of things, is the same heat and need Henderson feels in trying to absort the pink light on the wall - "I might find things here which were of old - my spirit was not sleeping" (88) . (*La Psychanalyse du Feu*. Paris , Gallimard, 1976. p. 70).

41. See p. 202 n. 13, in *Bellow's Carnivalistic Vision ...* .

42. In *Humboldt's Gift*, this idea for main character realizing he has been asleep is further developed, as when Charlie Citrine, attending a Christmas pageant with his daughters, whatches *Rip van Winke* being performed. Rip's twenty years of sleep went "straight" to his heart and he muses what he would have done if he hadn't "been asleep in spirit for so long ? " (p.283). Citrine also realizes that "our unwillingness to come out of state of sleep was the result of a desire to evade an impending revelation" and decides that before he can do the children any good, he has "to wake up" (p. 284), like Henderson. *Humboldt's Gift*. New York, Avon Books, 1975.

43. Willie SYPHER comments that "The comic and the tragic heroes alike learn through suffering, albeit suffering in comedy takes the form of humilliation, disappointment, or chagrin, instead of death" (The Meanings of Comedy. In: *COMEDY*. New York, Doubleday, 1956. p. 254) .

44. I. HASSAN refers to the "intimations of death" (the octopus, the dead Wariri) in contrast to "images of life "(the child, the African sunrise, pink light) (p. 318), although he does not connect them to a death-rebirth theme related to a carnivalistic attitude to the world. *Radical Innocence*. Princeton, the University Press, 1973.

45. BAKHTIN, M. *Problems ...* p. 103-4.

46. According to H. HARTMAN, "Bellow uses the metaphor of eyes as the windows of the soul, continuous from Petrarch" (*Character, Theme and Tradition in the novels of Saul Bellow*. Ann Arbor, Xerox University Microfilms, 1968. p. 14.).

47. WETHERILL, P. M. *The Literary Text*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1974.

48. TINDALL, W. Y. *The Literary Symbol*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1974. p. 15.

49. See p. 133 in *Bellow's Carnivalistic Vision ...*

50. For CIRLOT, the octopus (pulpo) has the same meaning as the mythic dragonwhale: the adversary, or primordial enemy (the devil) (p. 388). The dragon is also related to sickness, chaos and dissolution of bodies. Psychologically, the dragon is definec

as "something terrible to conquer" for only he who submits the dragon can become a hero (p. 185-7). We see how both interpretations are plausible, in our case, for the octopus is an enemy - symbolizing death - to be conquered, and Henderson in a way "kills " the octopus by exterminating the frogs, which unconsciously remind him of the octopus by their eyes, marbled and speckled.

51. CIRLOT, J. E. p. 351.

52. In Christian symbology, the eyes has come to symbolize the all-knowing and ever present God (G. FERGUSON, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*. London, Oxford University Press, 1972. p. 46-7) .

53. Of course the eyes imagery also appears outside the death-rebirth theme, such as when Henderson mentions Mtalba's "loving eyes", but we will continue to concentrate on eye imagery inside the carnival vision of the world, when the symbolism of eyes joins two realms - the physical and the metaphysical, acting as signs (eyes) but also as symbols (death and rebirth) , thus having their meaning "at once enriched and limited by context" (TINDALL, W. Y. p. 9)

54. BAKHTIN, M. *Problems ...* , p. 104.

55. Ibid . , p. 137.

56. Ibid . , p. 138.

57. The first instance of laughter in *Henderson the Rain King* is rather sinister: Frances laughs at Herderson's wish to become a doctor and he comments, "as she laughed I saw nothing but her dark open mouth, and not even teeth, which is certainly strange, for she has teeth, white ones. What had happened to them ? In a way he associates his "hopeless" case with her, with the disagreeable sensations related to darkness, chaos, connected with death. Her laughter is also related to negation (ridicule) for she makes fun of his wish to become a doctor.
Then we have an example of joyful laughter, related to Henderson's mother, for he remembers wistfully a joke she used to tell everyone: "and for many years would sometimes laugh and say in a whisper 'Passassassez.' Gone, those times. Closed, sealed, and gone".
Universal laughter, combining ridicule and joy is heard again when Henderson remembers the episode near the waterfront at Salerno, already commented in relation to Henderson's clownish appearance, and in which laughter is also part of a carnivalistic scene, for Henderson is descrowned in public, with "the whole coast" laughing at him. It also takes place at the "crossroads, in the open" which, as Bakhtin mentions, take on the additional significance of the carnival square. (*Problems ...* , p. 106).
Laughter as ridicule is heard again when Henderson receives an old carpet that belonged to Lily: "it was so ugly I had to laugh. This crummy rug ! It tickled me". When Henderson's daughter Ricey brings home a foudling, at Christmas time, and henderson hears the infant's cry, Lily was at the same time "laughing toward me significantly with her upper lip drawn over her front teeth, and her white color very warm". It is laughter connected with rebirth, for a new life is in the house.

58. As R. R. DUTTON also comments in relation to the raincoat, Henderson's "gift

(...) is specially significant as it puts to use one of Bellow's favorite symbols - rai. as 'an emblem of the shared condition of all'. Here, Henderson is establishing himself as a power that will protect Queen Willatale from the rain, or from that shared human condition mortality". *Saul Bellow.* Boston, Twayne, 1971. p. 109.

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O UNIVERSO FEMININO EM THE ASSISTANT DE BERNARD MALAMUD

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Em *The Assistant*, Bernard Malamud focaliza, na Nova York do pós - guerra, uma família de imigrantes judeus - os Bobers - que tira seu sustento de uma mercearia pequena e decadente. Morris Bober é o dono da mercearia, doente e quase falido, que não nega crédito e cujas maiores virtudes são a compaixão e a solidariedade. Ida é a esposa cujos anos de privações transformaram em uma criatura amarga e rancorosa e Helen é a filha frustada com o emprego que a impede de cursar a universidade em tempo integral.

A vida dos Bober é modificada com a chegada de Frank Alpine, um forasteiro prestes a optar pela vida do crime como último recurso para tentar mudar uma existência de sofrimentos e pobreza. Para expiar uma culpa, o jovem passa a ajudar o velho doente na mercearia. Através do árduo processo de assimilação dos valores do velho judeu e do amor que sente por Helen, Frank consegue encontrar sentido para sua vida assumindo, após a morte de Morris, seu papel na comunidade e na família.

Ida e Helen constituem o núcleo feminino de *The Assistant.* O comportamento típico de Ida traduz-se num constante estado de descontentamento e frustação em relação à situação financeira da família e à incapacidade de reagir do marido. As privações e fracassos ao longo dos anos, bem como a total falta de perspectiva de um futuro melhor, contribuiram para fazer de Ida uma criatura crítica e ríspida que, muitas vezes, beira a desumanidade.

No primeiro contato do leitor com Ida, a situação é cuidadosamente escolhida para que, logo de início, definam-se um bloco de características da personagem. Ida desce à mercearia e encontra o marido chorando. O narrador onisciente informa - nos que Morris chora por Ephraim, o filho morto ainda criança. A expressão de Ida " So stop sometime, please." (p.6) , denota sua visível irritação, o que não a impede de chorar também. Imediatamente uma conversa sobre os assuntos do dia, carregada de ironia e ressentimentos, e que parece esconder algo maior e proibido.

> "The Italyener" he said (...) "bought this morning
> across the street."
> She was irritated, "Give him for twenty - nine
> dollars five rooms so he should spit in your face."
> "A cold water flat," he reminded her.
> "You put in gas radiators."
> "Who says he spits ? This I didn't say."
> "You said something to him not nice?"
> "Me ?"

"Then why he went across the street?"
"Why? Go ask him," he said angrily.
"How much you took in till now?"
"Dirt."
She turned away. (p. 6)

Na verdade, Ida e Morris evitam sistematicamente conversar sobre o filho morto, tranferindo todo o rancor e o sentimento de culpa pela morte da criança para seu relacionamento cotidiano. Esta atitude é altamente reveladora do medo das personagens de abordar um assunto ainda não resolvido e capaz de despertar sentimentos que elas imaginam manter sob controle.

Para Ida esta atitude parece ter conseqüências mais sérias. Morris tem alguns velhos amigos que aparecem na mercearia, como Breitbart, o vendedor ambulante de lâmpadas, que tem um filho doente e com quem Morris pode, pelo menos indiretamente, abordar o assunto de seu próprio filho. Mas Ida parece ter-se fechado integralmente para o mundo. Mesmo quando na mercearia, Ida parece não interagir praticamente com ninguém e, quando o faz, é sempre de maneira desconfiada e ríspida, o que a torna ainda mais infeliz e incapaz de aliviar sua desgraça através de um bom relacionamento humano com seu semelhante.

Como todo imigrante, Ida sonhou com as possibilidades que seu país de adoção lhe prometia: melhoria do padrão de vida, ascensão social e, sobretudo, a oportunidade de dar aos filhos um futuro mellhor. Mas para os Bober o "Sonho Americano" tornou - se um pesadelo: não conseguem nem dinheiro, nem poder, porque não têm o ingrediente principal para vencer na sociedade americana: a habilidade para criar seu próprio destino . Pelo contrário, o destino parece controlá-los. Contudo, apesar do fracasso econômico, Morris apresenta-se como uma fonte de bondade, de sabedoria e de moral não partilhada pelo resto da sociedade que, na sua grande maioria, não estaria disposta a pagar o preço do fracasso econômico em favor desses valores.

Ida Bober, porém, tem muita dificuldade em aceitar tal situação e, sem dúvida, é o elemento da família que representa os valores do mundo americano. "A business is a business", é seu comentário quando Morris critica Julius Karp por ganhar dinheiro às custas do vício, vendendo bebidas alcoólicas (p. 8). Quando Morris, indiretamente, afirma sua superioridade moral em relação aos vizinhos que enriqueceram, Ida comenta ironicamente: "Everybory is a stupe but not Morris Bober.", depreciando os valores do marido (p. 9). Para tentar vender a mercearia ao judeu refugiado Podolsky que, como Morris, com grande sacrifício, juntara algum dinheiro para comprar um negócio, Ida não se sente constrangida em usar as técnicas enganosas do "bom " comerciante, tentando ocultar o estado de quase falência do negócio e a falta de fregueses. Livrar - se da loja é o que lhe interessa.

Como consequência dessa aderência de Ida a valores materialistas,

as aspirações que tem com relação à filha são dirigidas apenas à estabilidade financeira, que, segundo ela, viria com um bom casamento. Ida desespera-se ao constatar o interesse de Helen por Frank, moço pobre, de passado obscuro e presente suspeito, ajudante de Morris na mercearia. O seu desejo é uma união da filha com Nat Pearl ou Louis Karp, jovens vizinhos, também judeus e filhos de comerciantes mais prósperos:

> "Helen", she said, holding back her tears, "the only thing I want for you is the best. Don't make my mistake. Don't make worse and spoil your whole life, with a poor man that he is only a grocery clerk wich we don't know about him nothing. Marry somebody who can give you a better life, a nice professional boy a stranger. Helen, I know what I'm talking. Believe me, I know." (p.177)

Ida, contudo, não é caracterizada apenas como uma velha áspera, resmungona e amedrontada, vivendo num mundo hostil e que, em troca de segurança, está disposta a comprometer sua própria alma e a felicidade da filha. Algumas vezes, o texto nos permite compartilhar de suas frustações e até entender suas razões:

> She had waked that morning resenting the grocer for having dragged her, so many years ago, out of a Jewish neighborhood into this. She missed to this day their old friends and landsleit - lostfor parnusseh[1] unrealized. That was bad enough,but on top of their isolation, the endless worryabout money embittered her. She shared unwillinglythe grocer's fate though she did not show it and her dissatisfaction went no further than nagging - her guilt that she had talked him into a grocery store when he was in the first year of eveninghigh school, preparing, he had said, for pharmacy. He was, though the years, a hard man to move.(p. 7)

Dessa passagem emerge um importante elemento que ilumina nosso entendimento da personalidade de Ida: seu sentimento de culpa por ter frustado a carreira do marido, o que, sem dúvida, também contribui para a amargura que domina seu próprio caráter.

Iska Alter[2] oferece elementos importantes para a visão integral de Ida. Segundo a autora, é preciso que Ida seja entendida dentro do contexto da cultura judaica, que, mesmo sem envolver toda a obra, constitui a base dos valores de Ida. Dentro daquela cultura, à mulher é dada jurisdição ilimitada sobre o lar e nenhum papel significativo fora dele. Assim, recai sobre ela a total responsabilidade pela criação dos filhos, inclusive referente à sua sobrevivência futura. Portanto, não é de se estranhar que Ida reaja de forma tão contundente quando se vê impedida de realizar sua tarefa, pela fraqueza do marido, pelas dissimulações de

Frank ou pelas falácias do Sonho Americano - "What is being attacked, in reality, is selfhood, her significance as an individual."[3]

Em síntese, observa-se que a existência de Ida é fundamentalmente marcada por aspirações malogradas. Na vinda para a América, em busca de um futuro melhor, encontrou os excessos do materialismo americano, cuja medida de valor do ser humano está proporcionalmente ligada à sua capacidade de ser bem sucedido economicamente ou de conseguir alguma forma de projeção pessoal. A inaptidão de Morris para os negócios a faz ver, dia após dia, diminuirem tanto sua capacidade de sucesso como mãe, quanto sua possibilidade de aceitação como indivíduo respeitável pelo país que adotou. Esta situação gera o sentido de absoluta falta de identidade. Um bom casamento para Helen significaria uma vitória de Ida, talvez a única, numa vida sem triunfos. Ida sacrifica sua consciência moral e sua humanidade na esperança de poder sobreviver com pelo menos uma porção de sua identidade intacta: a realização parcial de seus deveres de mãe que, de certa forma, também lhe daria a condição de indivíduo socialmente aceito, mesmo que indiretamente através da filha.

Ao término do romance, porém, nem isso lhe é concedido porque, com a morte de Morris, Frank assume a mercearia e, com um emprego noturno, passa a custear os estudos de Helen. Tudo parece favorecer a aproximação dos dois.

Helen Bober tem um diploma de curso colegial e um emprego como secretária. Embora deteste seu trabalho, não pode deixá - lo porque seu dinheiro é indispensável para a sobrevivência da família. Conseguiu cursar algumas disciplinas na universidade, no período noturno, mas já não consegue guardar dinheiro para continuar. Como quase todo filho de imigrantes, Helen deposita na educação a esperança de um futuro melhor e de acesso a um mundo novo que a cultura e o conhecimento propiciam, e ao qual a geração anterior jamais tivera acesso. Assim, sonha com a possibilidade de dedicar - se aos estudos e com um marido que também tenha as mesmas aspirações.

Porém, com o passar dos anos, tal como ocorreu com sua mãe, Helen vê seus ideais cada vez mais distantes. Com os amigos do tempo de colégio, que, se não estão casados, cursam a universidade, já nada tem em comum. Os colegas de trabalho não apresentam interesses confluentes e, assim Helen isola-se totalmente, limitando-se ao trabalho e as idas à biblioteca, seu único divertimento. Nat Pearl e Louis Karp, os dois jovens vizinhos também judeus, com quem crescera, são seus pretendentes virtuais. Com Nat, brilhante estudante de direito de Columbia, saíra algumas vezes. Menos apaixonada que impressionada pelas qualidades intelectuais de Nat, Helen entrega-se sexualmente a ele, numa atitude bastante liberada para a época—a década de cinqüenta. Contudo, ao perceber o desdém do rapaz por sua pobreza e inferioridade cultural, Helen fecha-se ainda mais em si mesma para viver seu complexo de inferioridade.

> Why should he ? - magna cum laude, Columbia, now in hissecond year at law school, she only a high school graduate with a year's evening college credit mostlyin lit; he with first-rate prospects, also rich friends he had never bothered to introduce her to; she as poor as her name sounded, with little promise of a better future. (p. 14 - 15)

Louis Karp, o outro vizinho, boçal e sem atrativos, mas com um exlente futuro econômico, herdeiro que é do próspero negócio de bebidas do pai, deseja casar - se com ela. Helen, contudo, não está disposta a abrir mão de seus ideais.

> "I want a larger and better life. I want thereturn of my possibilities. "
> "Such as which ones ?"
> [...] "Education,"she said, "prospects. Things I've wanted but never had."
> "Louis", she said watching a far - off light on the water, "what do you want out of your life ?"
> [...] "The same thing I got - plus."
> "Plus what"
> "Plus more, so my wife and family can have also ."
> "But what if she wanted to make herself a better person, have bigger ideas, live a more worthwhile life ?
> We die so quickly, so helplessly. Life has to have some meaning."
> "I ain't gonna stop anybody from being better.
> That's up to them. "
> [...] "If you can't have everything you want, at least take something. Don't be so goddam pround."
> Touché. "What shall I take Louis ?"
> He paused ."Take less."
> "Less I will never take."
> "People got to compromise."
> "I won't with my ideals." (p. 49 - 50 - 51)

Assim esta semi-intelectual de primeira geração projeta um ideal onde a educação tem prioridade absoluta, como seu passaporte para a felicidade. Outras noções, como seu desenvolvimento completo como ser humano melhor ou mesmo o sucesso econômico, ainda não têm contornos bem definidos nos planos de Helen. A entrada de Frank em sua vida propiciará a experiência que a levará a encarnar seus valores distorcidos e talvez rever seus julgamentos não apenas em relação aos outros, mas principalmente em relação a si mesma.

Frank é um jovem desorientado, oscilante entre o bem e o mal, desesperado pela obtenção de valores que dêem sentido a sua vida, que oferece-se para trabalhar na mercearia, por quase nada, para expiar a culpa pelo assalto que alí perpetrara. O convívio faz com que veja nos

Bobers a família que nunca tivera, em Morris, a tão almejada figura paterna e em Helen, o modelo da mulher amada. No entanto, a ambigüidade do caráter do rapaz se manifesta em suas ações, Frank parece ter o dom de desfazer com uma mão o que fizera com a outra —querendo redimir-se com Morris, acaba roubando - o novamente; ansioso por conquistar Helen, ao tentar salvá-lo do assédio de Ward Minogue, acaba por estuprá-la ele mesmo.

Helen e Frank desenvolverão um relacionamento baseado em atitudes marcadas pelo irrealismo. Frank, consciente do enorme valor depositado por Helen na cultura, passa a demonstrar um interesse não genuíno por leituras, chegando até a comunicar-lhe seus planos de iniciar um curso superior. Mas fica evidente que suas tendências não são voltadas para o intelectualismo.

Helen, por outro lado, ao tomar conhecimento dos supostos interesses culturais de Frank, dá início a um processo de idealização da figura do rapaz:

> She imagined all the interesting courses he could take. [...] She pictured him in nice clothes, his hair cut shorter, maybe his nose straightened, speaking a more careful English, interested in music and literature, learning about politics, psychology; wanting to know more the more he knew,in this way growing in value to himself and others. (p. 126)

Esta tendência de Helen para romantizar terá como contraponto o lado objetivo e cerebral da personagem, relacionado com sua firmeza no que diz respeito a seus ideais e à sua determinação em encontrar alguém que corresponda à suas expectativas. Seu lado romântico enternece-se com Frank, mas seu sentido prático alerta-a para o lado obscuro do rapaz e para o absurdo que seria apaixonar-se por ele. Contudo, mesmo recebendo alertas freqüentes de seu lado racional em relação a algo de escuso no caráter de Frank, Helen, secretamente, idealiza uma vida a dois, projetando sobre ele seus próprios ideais:

> And if she married Frank, her first job would be to help him realize his wish to become somebody.
> [...] She wanted him to become what he might, and conceived a plan to support him through college.
> Maybe she could even see him through master's degree.
> (p. 161)

Dissimulador e romântico seguem desempenhando seus papéis enganosos até que a irônica ocorrência do estupro de Helen faz caírem as máscaras. Frank, desesperado com a possibilidade de perdê-la, em conseqüencia do flagrante de Morris no momento em que tirava dinheiro

da caixa registradora, perde o controle da situação e toma a moça a força.

Falsas imagens foram criadas e o estupro apenas proporciona as condições para a sua destruição. A imagem idealizada que Helen criara de Frank, fazendo dele a versão melhorada de Nat, era a projeção de seus próprios sonhos e ideais e interferia diretamente com a imagem que ela tinha de si mesma. Esta atitude de Helen de transferir seus ideais, realizando-se na figura do homem que escolheu, reproduz, de certa forma, a atitude das mulheres ao longo dos séculos. A consagrada expressão popular: "Por trás de um grande homem há sempre uma grande mulher", sintetiza esta noção. Através da história da humanidade, impossibilitada de obter auto realização, a mulher ajudou a compor a imagem de maridos, irmãos e pais, dedicando-lhes seu tempo, emprestando-lhes sua verve e seu talento. Libertar-se desta falsa realização através de outrem é fundamental para a integridade pessoal de Helen.

Na seqüência do enredo, Helen rompe relações com Frank, que contrai com ela uma dívida moral cujo pagamento deverá incluir não apenas a confissão do assalto e a devolução do dinheiro roubado, mas uma vida completamente mudada. Com a doença e a morte de Morris, Frank aceita o peso da responsabilidade paterna para com a família Bober e tem, assim, a oportunidade da transformação e do resgate.

No caso de Helen a transformação será gradual e virá em função das inúmeras provas de mudança oferecidas por Frank e do próprio distanciamento temporal da ocorrência do estupro, que sempre oferece outras perspectivas de interpretação dos fatos.

A primeira fase da mudança de Helen é marcada por seu reconhecimento de que parte do ódio que dedicava a Frank, pela violação, era ódio de si mesma, por se dar conta de que, naquela noite, não fosse pelo aparecimento de Ward Minogue, haveria facilmente consentido na intimidade física com Frank:

> Although she detested the memory of her experience in the park, lately it had come back to her how she had desired that night to give herself to Frank, and might have if Ward hadn't touched her.
> (p. 288)

Esta tomada de consciência não apenas diminui a culpa de Frank mas também começa a recompor a integridade sexual de Helen, destruída pelo estupro.

A trajetória de Helen agora será marcada por um novo processo, o de reconciliação consigo mesma e com os outros, característico da maturidade. Dando um importante passo para uma existência mais feliz, Helen consegue quebrar o padrão de repetição dos sentimentos e frustações maternos, para superá-los e construir seu próprio destino.

Gradualmente, reconhecerá a mudança de Frank e, perdoando-o, será capaz de perdoar-se pela visão limitada, que a impedira de reconhecer o lado escuro do rapaz, e pela falta de auto—estima, que a levara a transferir seus sonhos a ele.

O término da obra proporciona um diálogo que, se não revela uma reconciliação das duas personagens, aponta um importante passo de Helen para sua reabilitação:

> "I came in to thank you for the help you're giving us, "she explained.
> "Don't thank me, " he said.
> "You owe us nothing. "
> "It's just my way. "
> They were silent, then he mentioned his idea of her going to day college. It would be more satisfying to her than at night.
> [...]
> She hesitated, then answered she would. (p. 294)

Agradecendo a Frank, Helen demonstra que não apenas o perdoou, mas que reconhece seu esforço e sofrimento para tornar-se digno. Aceitando a oferta de Frank para custear seus estudos, Helen torna concreto seu perdão, além de resgatar seu amor próprio, reassumindo seu sonho e julgando-se digna de vivê-lo concretamente.

Em relação ao tratamento dispensado por Malamud às personagens femininas, vale lembrar as palavras de Iska Alter:

> [...] the images of women offered in his fiction reach toward complexity [...] Out of a conservative perception of the importance of women in the social order and the principles they define and embody, Malamud attempts to avoid stereotypes, devising personalities that are multi-layered, human beings that are intricate and independent.

Esta "percepção conservadora"a que Alter se refere diz respeito aos papéis atribuídos às mulheres na sociedade de Malamud: mães, esposas ou projeções míticas através da quais o homem define seu valor. Contudo, estas mulheres têm que lidar com suas próprias neuroses e ter capacidade de mudar seu comportamento e rever seus julgamentos.

The Assistant foi escrito anteriormente ao movimento internacional de mulheres, que consolidou-se nos anos setenta, e ao advento da crítica feminista com seu clamor revisionista, estabelecendo o gênero como categoria da análise de avaliação literária. Contudo, este romance de Malamud propõe personagens femininas como seres complexos que buscam a independência e a realização no próprio universo de suas contradições pessoais e humanas. Não podemos afirmar que Ida e Helen sejam modelos de emancipação feminina mas, assim como os homens da ficção da Malamud, elas estão no processo de criar sua própria identidade, em face das adversidades e dos mistérios da vida.

NOTAS

1- parnusseh - meio de vida, ganha pão.
2- p.96 - 97.
3- ALTER, p.97.
4- ALTER, p.83.

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THE MYTH OF SUCCESS IN DAVID MAMET'S *GLENGARRY GLENN ROSS*

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One of the most striking features of *Glengarry Glenn Ross* is the display of savage competition in the American business world. Competition in American Society is due to the belief in a myth of success which institutes that if one socially successful, he is nothing, he does not deserve to take part in society. This article aims at tracing the development of this myth in American Society since its beginnings, the reflection and the presentation of the myth in *Glengarry*, and exposing its destructive power on men's lives and relationships.

Competition in American society determines people's lives. What do they compete for ? Success. Not personal success, but social success. If one's success is not socially accepted, one is not successful at all. A man does not have to compete with himself, to do *his* best (what seems to be proper and healthy), he has to compete with the others. He has to be number ONE. Since in *Glengarry* the characters chosen to embody this quest for success are salesmen, this problem is turned into a matter of life or "death". As in their society, a man *is* just what he shows socially, just his performance, his "position in the board" (in the terminology used in *Glengarry)*, if he is not #1, he is nothing, he is dead.

The American attitude towards this myth has a long history. It is deeply rooted in the Puritan heritage. The pilgrims brought this seed with them and it found fertile soil in America to grow and flourish. For the Pilgrims in the 17th century and to all immigrants (that came later, in the 18th and, mainly, in the 19th centuries), America was the "Land of Opportunity": all men were considered equal in the pursuit of success and happiness. By the midle of the century, the new rationalism and the anthropocentric ideas of the Enlightenment had already reached America. These ideas were willingly accepted and spread by people with the help of talented men like John Locke, George Mason, and mainly, Benjamin Franklin, among others. It was the beginning of the American Dream. Free from the Puritan theocracy, but still feeling themselves as the Elected Ones, the Americans joined together a pragmatic idea of Equality and the worldly Puritan philosophy in a formula that became tremendously popular then and even nowadays: **hard work + profit = financial success**, i. e. happiness.

It is important to stress the role of Benjamin Franklin in the creation of the myth of success. He is the model of the self-made man, a culture-hero that exemplifies the American dream of the poor boy who succeeds. From a start in poverty, he became a journalist, a scientist, an essayist, congressman, and a diplomat. He was the only American to sign the four documents that created the republic: the Declaration of

Independence, the treaty of alliance with France, the treaty of peace with England, and the Constitution. At the time of his death, his countrymen considered him, more than George Washington, to the father of his country. Franklin was a landmark figure in the rise of American pragmatism. He helped to create the cult of self-reliance that developed into the wonders of Emersonian transcendentalism and into the tawdry excesses of American industrial and comercial society. He came to be invoked as the patron of business and bankers, of boosters and rugged individualists who wanted to believe that "God helps those who help themselves."

The proverb above was extracted from Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1758) —the best-selling almanac of colonial America. Franklin produced an almanac every year from 1733 to 1758. For the preface of the 1758 edition, he compiled most of the prudential maxims from the previous almanacs and produced what has come to be entitled *The Way to Wealth*. "The great German sociologist Max Weber thought this document epitomized the *spirit of capitalism*." [1] The sayings and proverbs found in *The Way to Wealth* helped to create an ethics concerning business that, since then, have remained stuck to the minds of Americans. Proverbs like: "The sleeping fox catches no poultry"; "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise"; "He that hath a Trade hath an Estate"; "He that hath a Calling hath an Office of Profit and Honour"; "Cats in gloves catch no mice," were / are often quoted and used to justify certain attitudes concerning the ethics of business. The commercial ethics of America state that the right man, working hard, wearing no "gloves", would doubtless reach the top, if not, the failure was certainly his. After all, the ends justify the means; if a man does not reach the right end, i. e. success, it is because he did not employ the right means. Anyway, it is his fault.

It is important to say that the problem with this "ethics" does not lie in the proverbs or popular sayings - most of them were very sensible and "harmless". The problem lies in the blind belief American people had of a myth - partially based on sayings - which promised and demanded "success or bust".

This "ethics" helped to create a class of businessmen that thought the businessman who had the right personal qualities would have little difficulty in developing his skills to achieve his goals. The problem was to define these "right personal qualities".

From the turn of the 20th century up to 1929, an interesting literary phenomena ocurred in America concerning this matter. It was the best-selling of Horatio Alger's books. Alger was a clergyman, and embraced the myth in his novels, all in the style of the rags-to-riches romance. Thomas Porter, in his article "Acres of Diamonds: *Death of a Salesman*", makes a summary of Alger's heroes:

> His heroes, often with a boost from Fortune in their background ... , rise to the top by seizing opportunity

> by the forelock, by being industrious, thrifty, devout (but not pious), common-sensical.
> They are likeable chaps with a ready quip and a vigorous sense of humour. They have little trouble getting employment and, once in the shop, there isno stopping them. [2]

These characters had the "right personal qualities", they had "personality". They were very important in building up the myth of success as well as its reflection in American Literature and Drama.

In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, for instance, this cult of personality is clearly exposed in Willy Loman who is always saying that "... personality always wins the day." [3]

Alger's novels presented a naive conception of "ethics" in business, where the possession of business skill could never compensate for the lack of character or for heartlessness.

What seems to have happened with the passage of time and is observable nowadays is an aggravation, together with deterioration, of this commercial ethics: a loss of innocence that followed the loss of innocence of a whole society. The changing attitude towards business in America is clearly stated by the paragon of salesmen in American theatre, as exemplified by Willy Loman, in his lament to his young employer about the passage of a bygone era:

> In those days there was personality in it, Howard. There was respect, and comradeship, and gratitude in it. Today, it's all cut and dried, and there's no chance for bringing friendship to bear - or personality. [4]

The "ethics" became the "law of the jungle": now, "only the strong survives". It was the disintegration of a myth that was not "healthy" from the start.

In many interviews David Mamet has often repeated what he thinks about American business. Talking about *American Buffalo* (1975), he has stated,"... The ethics of the business community is that you can be as predatory as you want within a structured environment."[5]

In their desperate quest for success, men treat each other like animals. In the worst sense of the word. An old wolf, when it loses its teeth and claws, when it is not able to hunt anymore, to chase its prey, either dies from starvation or, in winter, in rough times, is killed and devoured by the other wolves. It is the law of the jungle. It is exactly what happens with Shelley Levene in *Glengarry Glenn Ross*. The younger and more potent salesmen do not hesitate to destroy him for their own sake. That is how the system works.

Talking, in different interviews, about *Glengarry Glenn Ross*, Mamet noted, "To me the play is about a society with only one bottom line: How much money you make." [6] And he adds that

> The play concerns how business corrupts, how the hierarchical business system tends to corrupt. It becomes legitimate for those in power in the business world to act unethically. The effect on the little guy is that he turns up to crime. And petty crime goes punished; major crimes go unpunished. [7]

Mamet added to another interviewer: "American capitalism comes down to one thing ... The operation axiom is 'Hurrah for me and *fuck* you.' Anything else is a lie." [8]

Glengarry is Mamet's outcry revealing the failure of a system made by men who fight hopelessly to be winners, that is, not to be losers. The play can be viewed as a microcosm, depicting the social struggle in American society for "a place in the sun". *Glengarry* is fully centered round the competition among real estate salesmen who believe in and absurdist competitive process that will lead the winner to "unquestionable" success, represented, in the play, by a Cadillac (not by chance, one of the symbols of prosperity in American culture). What the characters do not seem to notice is that the mere acceptance and belief in such a deceitful myth make them ***all***, with no exceptions, losers from the start.

The play is a short one. As Henry Schvey States in his article "Power Plays", "in its roughly 75 minutes of running time, Mamet has created a small masterpiece which reveals with extraordinary perspicacity the treachery of the materialistic world we live in." [9]

Glengarry is structured in two acts. As Schvey explains, these scenes are "a necessary element to our understanding of a world that is based on power, greed, manipulation, as well as acquainting us with the rules of the salesman's games ... " [10] The last act is generally considered more "theatrical" than the previous one since it abandons the "two-character confrontation" scenes to make all characters interact in resolution of the story in only one long scene.

The first scene, which takes place at a Chinese restaurant (the 'office' away from the office), introduces us to Shelley Levene and John Williamson. Shelley Levene immediately reminds us of Willy Loman. He is a man in his fifties, a "has been" winner, desesperately trying to overcome the latest failures by reaching to the "hot leads" (good constacts with likely costumers). Williamson, a man in his early forties, who is not a salesman, is the manager of the real estate office, he is the one who decides who takes the good leads. The scene has a fantastic effect on the audience (or readers) because it is, at the same time, cryptic and astonishingly clear.

The language of the play provides the cryptic element. It is as disintegrated, as fragmented as its characters. The lack of articulation in speech stands for the lack of articulation in the characters's lives, for

the lack of meaningful purposes. Furthermore, the vulgarisms, obscenities, *clichés*, and mainly, the business jargon, hinder the understanding at first hearing (or reading). The reader[1] gets lost in the middle of the unknown world depicted by the language of the play. It takes time for the reader to get used to its special and very particular rhythm and meaning.

However, the language of the play does not prevent us from understanding what is happening between the two characters. Levene is pathetically looking for humanity and understanding in Williamson, who is in the position of deciding who is going to take the leads. Williamson explains to Levene (and us) that "*anybody* falls bellow a certain mark I'm not *permitted*[2] to give them the premium leads." (19) Levene asks Williamson to talk to the bosses, Mitch and Murray, hoping that they would stand by him. What he hears is that Williamson is just following the orders of the bosses.

Mitch and Murray are the two "invisible" bosses who, in the play, represent the system itself. They establish a contest in their real estate office that determines that only the salesmen who close contracts are given the good leads - but how can a salesman close a contract if he does not have the right leads ? It is an absurdist situation, a trap for those who accept and believe in this crazy game of mad competition that leads nowhere.

It is very painful to watch Levene's reaction to this trap he has helped to create. As a fly caught in a spider's web, he tries everything to get himsef free. However, we know that it is not possible because it is part of his nature, it is part of the world he built for himself. When he talks about his failures he acknowledges them as "bad luck" [11] ; when he talks about his past accomplishments he says that luck has nothing to go with the business, "It wasn't luck. It was skill" (18). He looks for humanity in a system which he **knows** is not humane at all. Poignantly, he says to Williamson:

> ... Don't look at the board, look at me. Shelley Levene. ... Do I want charity ? Do I want *pity* ? I want *sits*. Iwant leads don't come right out of a *phone book*. Give me a lead hotter than that, I'll go and close it. Give me a chance. That's all I want. I'm going to *get* up on that fucking board and all I want is a chance. It's a *streak* and I'm going toturn it around. (Pause) I need your help. (Pause) (22)

As expected, Williamson is dumb to Levene's anguished plea.

In the second scene, we meet Aaronow and Moss, two disgruntled salesmen in their fifties who complain about their work. Aaronow is completely, pathetically inarticulate. Most of the time he is not able to produce a whole sentence. He does not speak, he numbles. He seems

completely beaten, defeated. Moss, on the other way round, seems conscious of their situation and of the ways of business world. He advocates free initiative, "going to business for yourself" (35), the utopian dream of a salesman: to be his own boss. Naively, he thinks that working by himself makes a man free from a system. He thinks that all that is necessary is:

> To say "I'm on my own." Cause what you do, George, let me tell you what you do: you find youself in *thrall* to someone else. And we *enslave* ourselves. To *please*. To win some fucking *toaster* ...to...to...and the guy who got there first made *up* those ... ...He made up those rules, and we're working for *him*. (35)

He stands for the reader as a sort of "impotent" consciousness of that world. Impotent, because even though he realizes the failures of the system, the way people are enslaved, exploited, he does not do anything to change it. Rather, he tries to take advantage of this knowledge for his own sake. He thinks he can take a revenge on Mitch and Murray (the ones who made the rules), to "hurt them" (37), by stealing and premium leads to Jerry Graff, a rival in business. He does not notice that Jerry Graff, as another representative of the system, will not give him money and a job out of nothing. With Jerry Graff, Moss would be exploited and enslaved just the same.

The third scene introduces us to Richad "Rick" Roma, the #1 on the board. He is now what Levene has been in the past, a winner, the most successful salesman in the office. He is at the Chinese restaurant and starts a conversation with a complete stranger, James Lingk. Just like Moss, he is conscious of the blunders of the system but instead of trying to change it, he is only trying to take his profit out of it.

This scene is perfect in portraying the character of a successful salesman. It begins as a seemimgly inoffensively, friendly conversation of two ' lonely souls at a bar , full of banal 'insights about life, until "suddenly at the end of the scene the entire conversation is revealed to be a carefully orchestrated sales pitch to the unsuspecting prey." [12] The salesmen's power to induce and seduce a possible customer, the power of their words, of their fiction, is brilliantly depicted though Roma. He talks about insecurity, greed, opportunities. In the last lines of the scene, he takes out a small map and spreads it on the table and says:

> ...What is that ? Florida. Glengarry Highlands.
> Florida. "Florida. *Bullshit*. "And maybe that's true; and that's what I *said*: but look *here*: what is this ?
> This is a piece of land. Listen to what I'm going to tell you now: (50 - 1)

In the next act we learn that his charm has prevailed.

The long one-scened last act of the play begins in the following morning in the ransasked real estate office where everybody seems to react a bit hysterically to the stealing of the precious leads. Their relationship and the way the system operates in their lives comes to full circle. The most striking passages in this act concern Levene, Roma and Williamson.

The circumstancial partnership formed between Levene and Roma to delude a customer was at its height when Williamson inadvertently spoils the whole deal by exposing their lies. At this moment, Levene and Roma invest together against Williamson, an outsider, a stranger to the world of men, "men who are going *out* there to try to earn a *living*." (96)

Very cleverly, Mamet makes the fall of Levene to be due to his very belief in the fiction he created. Levene gets so involved in his role of the perfect salesman, that he lets slip a piece of information that he could not know unless he was the one who had stolen the leads. Williamson straightaway seizes the opportunity to destroy Levene, what he does with a declared pleasure. The final stroke is charged by Roma, who had been absent during the revelation about the theft. Roma's attitude makes it clear that the partnership was merely a pretense when he tells Williamson that he, Roma, is entitled to half of whatever Levene gets, but he is not willing to share his own profits.

It is the mortal stroke to any illusion of comradeship, partnership in American business world. Human feelings and moral ethics have been made completely estranged to this world. In their wretched attempt to be winners, all those who believe in the American myth of success are losers. In a mad "rat race" towards success, relationships are destroyed and men trade their own humanity for an ephemerous and spurious kind of success.

NOTES

(1) Lemay, J. A. Leo. *An Early American Reader*. Washington , US Information Agency 1989 , p. 29.

(2) Porter , Thomas E. Acres of Diamonds: *Death of a Salesman*. In: *Myth and Modern American Drama*. Detroit , Wayne State UP, 1969 , p. 130

(3) Miller , Arthur . *Death of a Salesman* . Middlesex , Penguin . 1976 , p. 51 .

(4) Ibid . , p . 63 - 4

(5) Zeifman, Hersh . *Phallus in Wonderland: Machismo and Business in David Mamet's American Buffalo and Glengarry Glenn Ross* . Ed . Leslie Kane . New York . Gardland, 1992, p. 123

6) Ibid .

(7) Ibid.

(8) Ibid .

(9) Schvey, Henry I . Power Plays: David Mamet's Theatre of Manipulation. in: *David Mamet: A Casebook* . Ed . Leslie Kane, New York , Garland , 1992 , p . 103

(10) Ibid .

(11) Mamet , David . *Glengarry Glenn Ross* . New York , Grove Press , 1984 , p . 16 . Subsequent quotations from this play refer to this edition and are identified by page number in the text .

(12) Schvey (1992) , p . 105 .

OBS:

1 From now on we will refer to the reaction of possible readers, rather than spectators.

2 In italics in the play.

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REPRESENTATION AND IDENTITY : SHAKESPEARE IN THE FORTIES

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Contempory criticism sees texts as cultural products, absorptions or replicas of other texts. Furthermore it considers what has been previously understood as a relation of dependence or debt on the antecedent as a natural and continuous process of re-writing. With these ideas in mind, I intend in this paper not only to identify relations between Shakespeare's *Henry V* and one of its cinematic versions, the one by Laurence Olivier, but also to analyse the motives which generated it. On taking possession of the play, either in a passive or in a corrosive way, Olivier could have destroyed or extended the text. However, it is not my purpose to discuss these matters. My paper aims rather at pointing out some procedures which could explain why the film maker re-read that Shakespearean text in the XXth century, especially in 1944, and what new senses have been atributted to it. On doing that, I will show that the representation, the idea, the image, results in a kind of knowledge, defined as an emotional experience which allows each being to be perceived as a unique entity, despite its continuous transformations. That is, in a contradiction : to be and not to be itself simultaneously (Greimas & Courtés) .

Identity and representation are thus linked to each other, mainly in the process of translating a play into a film. The play is allowed to be "the other"— the film, which is a translation into another time and into another medium— while still being "the same"— the play written by Shakespeare in the XVIth Century. Hence cinema is defended as an idependent art form, and a kind of faithfulness to Shakespeare is praised. The fact is that adaptations have always ocurred. Shakespeare's plays are still adapted today because of our need to understand them, even if we know that Shakespeare has been linked neither to his time, nor to his place nor to theatrical conventions. New approaches replace old ones, each age presenting new angles, disregarding previous adaptations. A desire of seeing a Shakespeare production simultaneously renewed and faithful is always present.

Most cinema historians present transformations in filmic technique and production as inevitable developments of the spectacle art. They do not mention that the artistic and cultural characteristics of English and American cinema result from the economical development of film industry. Their belief reflects ideology hiding real and economic relations within society. Most cinema histories begin with the arriving of moving pictures in the end of the XXth century, discuss the birth of cinematographic industry during the post-war period and accept that the cinema has emerged as a totally independent medium because of

the invention of sound in the twenties. This concept is linked to the idea of a filmic language, the code of edition and representation, peculiar to the cinematographic medium. However, a new wave of scholars now work in order to the deconstruct this idea of a filmic language. They do not accept, for example, that Shakespeare films are only translations from stage to screen, despite the economical and aesthetical relation which has existed between cinema and theatre. Shakespeare is seen by them not only as a specific body of texts, but also as a range of cultural practice which encompasses cinema, theatre, literature, education and history. For this reason, no Shakespeare film is a closed work. It is, on the contrary, a sum of a number of discourses chosen among various areas of production. The new wave of scholars thus work also in order to deconstruct the idea of an original and sacred text, towards which playwrights, script writers and film makers must be faithful.

Those critics believe that Shakespeare's films form an important part of the economical expansion during World War I and afterwards. In this way, formalist and prescriptive analyses now give away to a kind of analysis which regards films in their historical and social moments. In spite of asserting that a film is the product of a unique mind, criticism now recognizes that its form, its content and its cultural position are determined by economical and political forces that condition its production. It also recognizes the truth of the opposite: social and economical contradictions of a capitalist society may show up in a text or in a film through various discourses and images. In Shakespeare films, this process is made evident in the mythological status that surrounds this writer and his work in contemporary society. Shakespeare has been reproduced historically as any other myth : a set of beliefs, images, structures and motives, even if they are contradictory. To know the specific place of a Shakespeare film within political and economical structures is to be aware of the ideology mechanism and its political sources. The kind of criticism which believes in a sort of universal work by Shakespeare and disregards material conditions of film production is now being challenged: each film is reincorporated in its historical moment. Questions such as the defense of cinema as an art form and the efficacy of the adaptation of Shakespeare's plays have disappeared, leaving room for political questions. Scholars now turn their attention not to the existence of such adaptations but to the implications of their existence.

During many years criticism has read Shakespeare's historical plays either as overt political texts or as dramatic entertainment or as part of Shakespeare's personal development. In many aspects, *Henry V* can be seen as a political play: the king discovers domestic conspiration and punishes it, he unifies Great Britain by incorporating Scotland to it and links England to France by the law of sucession. History here is only the story of forms of disorder upon which the king triumphs: contradictions are put together and the political discontinuous process is apparently turned into a coherent moment. In spite of the radical

changes that happened in European stages at the beginning of the XXth century, Shakespeare has been always associated with an idealized representation of history. However, in the thirties, British cinema tried to establish itself as a means for national identity. Despite some attempts to revitalize this identity, Shakespeare films until them had been similar to silent films. Renaissance England was used as material source for them and nevertheless they showed no revival. It is only with Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* in 1944 that English cinema became different, even with the presence of many patriotic codes used previously during the war. Certainly the context of a besieged England, in the beginning of the forties has been an ideal previous films. Olivier's film pandered to the cultural pretensions of its audience and served as a basis for the mythical idea that there was a wholly integrated British literary culture. In the film, Olivier omitted a number of scenes or part of them, probably with the intention of simplifying or hyding anything that could throw doubts either on the king's character or on his motives: part of the Hartfleur threat, Bardolph's death, the murder of French prisioners and English traitors an some ambiguous passages. It is not strange that, after cleaning the king's character, this film has been dedicated to the Armed forces.

The film starts in Elizabethan times, with the camera moving through a Shakespearean London map, focusing on the Globe theatre. It shows the audience filling the theatre and captures the cast's excitment, getting ready for the performance. We are shown the devices used by the playwright in order to creat an acceptable theatrical illusion and the ones used by the film director's camera in order to create a plausible illusion of reality. From there, Olivier's film goes to a semi-fantastic world framed by Medieval pictures. *Henry V* scenery was based on paintings by Pol de Limbourg, a medieval artist. The non-naturalistic scale and the absence of post-Renaissance fixed-point perspective were created faithfully. This causes the impression of an idealized and symbolic beauty, especially during the scenes set in the Agincourt village and at the palace of Rouen. The chorus reinforces this image by suggesting that the world of Henry is an imaginary world that, to be understood, demands that the audience sees the play "with imaginary wings". Some words by the chorus may have served as a hint to Olivier who used in this adaptation innovative technique resources. From this lyrical world, the film moves into the central part of the play, the night before the battle and the actual fighting at Agincourt. It is only at this episode that we face reality momentarily as it is perceived normally. From here, the structural development is reserved: the camera moves back through Limbourg beauties and ends at the theatre again, where the actors are bringing their performance to a close.

The different styles that the film consists of correspond to the character's different worlds. The realistic battlefield semi-naturalistic style can be seen as Henry's world, a place of confrontation with the

French. The illusionistic style of the French fields and of tha palace is a paralell with Catherine's world. In it the king must be unreal to himself, playing the gallant, in order to conquer Catherine. The artificiality of the French Court scenery reinvigorates the impression of intangibility of the French people (MacLean) .

Those different styles of which the film is composed can also be seen as a re-assertion of the British spectacular tradition. In his work *Shakespeare, film & society*, John Collick asserts that *Henry V* contains "all those qualities that characterized British Shakespearean productions in the Victorian and Edwardian plays and films" (Collick : 50). Because it has been produced at a time when England was physically isolated from the rest of the world, the film reinforces the notion that Shakespeare's work represents the continuous re-assertion of a national middle-class identity: "In an enclosed *piece of merry England*, signified by the re-construction of the interior of the Globe theatre, a group of commom men acted out the trials and triumphs of a *band of brothers* faced with the belligerant enemy" (Collick : 50-51) .

After World War II, the codes of representation lost their powerful and patriotic ideological associations of the forties. At the end of that decade, the war-time homogeneous culture disappeared and, as a consequence, the style of the film lost, at that moment, the emotional and ideological authority previously conferred to it. By using a generalized stage space, Olivier marks the transition from the patriotic films like *Henry V* to the more stylized productions which appeared later. Olivier's film represents then the decline of the tradition of spectacle-theatre in England and the beginning of a new age.

In conclusion, we may reiterate that Shakespeare's plays have been re-written by many film makers since the arrival of moving pictures and have been judged untill recently according to how well they conformed to idealized perceptions of the plays. As a consequence, many of them have been marginalised because they fail to "do justice" to the plays. The genre is now being re-assessed with the use of historical evidence and that kind of criticism is being challenged. This is the moment when films are seen in accordance with the time they are made. In 1990, for exmple, *Henry V* is re-written by Kenneth Branagh, in a naturalistic version. Some scenes omitted by Olivier are ransomed by Branagh. On appropriating the text, the film maker transforms it, redeeming predominantly the strong emotion of the characters. As a consequence, he leads the audience to dive into the human side of the medieval world, perhaps disregarded by previous versions. Because it has been produced in a different time, when the British nationalism is far from any notion of cooperation and linked to the notion of individualism, Branagh's film focuses espacially the emotional level. This new version or re-writing of Shakespeare's play *Henry V* has conveyed another sense, and we, its "readers", are now rescuing another identity.

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UM SONETO ITALIANO DE MILTON

Pedro Garcez Ghirardi

Ao escrever poesias em italiano, John Milton estava ainda longe de se consagrar como o criador de *Paradise Lost*. Se essas poesias datam de cerca de 1628, como se supõe, sua composição precede, em quase quatro décadas, o aparecimento da obra-prima da maturidade do poeta. Seria difícil adivinhar-lhe as promessas nos versos italianos do jovem inglês de vinte anos de idade. Ao escrevê-los, porém, o poeta se mostrava menos inovador do que à primeira vista se poderia crer. Como se sabe, era tradicional entre os intelectuais europeus, desde os primeiros humanistas, não somente conhecer a língua italiana, mas saber utilizá-la na criação poética. Para ter idéia do alcance dessa tradição basta dizer que chegou ao Brasil colonial: mais de meio século depois do jovem Milton, Manuel Botelho de Oliveira, em sua *Música do Parnaso* (1700), publicava, entre suas poesias, exemplos de "rimas italianas".

Têm sido pouco lembrados os versos escritos em italiano por autores de outras línguas. Ainda mesmo nomes da grandeza de Milton ou de Cláudio Manuel da Costa são praticamente descpnhecidos como escritores de língua italiana. As histórias literárias mencionam ligeiramente - quando o fazem - tal aspecto "marginal"de sua obra poética, sem, contudo, dedicar-lhe análise específica. E, no entanto, para além do notável valor artístico que muitas vezes apresenta, a poesia italiana desses escritores pode oferecer subsídios importantes à interpretação da obra por eles escrita em seus idiomas próprios. Mais ainda: a poesia italiana de tais escritores representa, no campo da Teoria da Literatura, um desafio permanente às fáceis e repetidas conceituações de "nacionalidade literária".

Não se trata aqui, porém, sequer de formular, as questões teóricas levantadas por esses exemplos inesperados de poesia italiana. O que se pretende agora é bem mais modesto. Não vai além de propor algumas observações despertadas pela tentativa de tradução de uma das poesias italianas de Milton. Trata-se de um soneto cujos versos se referem, precisamente, à condição insólita do autor, levado a expressar-se em idioma diferente do seu. Este soneto é aqui reproduzido segundo a edição de H. C. Beeching (*The Poetical Works of John Milton*, Oxford University Press, s. d. [1941], p. 29). Eis o texto de Milton:

Qual in colle aspro, al imbrunir di sera
L'avvezza giovenetta pastorella
Va bagnando l'herbetta strana e bella
Che mal si spande a disusata spera
Fuor de sua natia alma primavera
Cosi Amor meco insù la lingua snella
Desta il fior novo di strania favella
Mentre io di te, vezzosamente altera,
Canto, dal mio buon popol non inteso;
E'l bel Tamigi cangio col bel Arno
Amor lo volse, ed io a l'altrui peso
Seppi ch"Amor cosa mai volse indarno.
Deh! foss'il mio cuor lento e'l duro seno
A chi planta dal ciel si buon terreno.

Há, em inglês, algumas traduções desta e das demais poesias italianas de Milton. A mais famosa dessas traduções, a de William Cowper, não me foi possível ter acesso. Outras, como as apresentadas por F. T. Prince em seu estudo sobre a cultura italiana de Milton *(The Italian Element in Milton's Verse*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954), são bem cuidadas, mas parciais, destinadas a elucidar citações feitas ao longo do estudo. Há que percorrer, portanto, à tradução devida a Arthur Livingston e reproduzida à p. 557 da citada edição de Beeching. Vale desde logo conhecê-la:

At ventide, on the rugged mountain slope, the
practised shepherd girl carefully watereth the tender,
beauteous flower exotical, so loath to grow in that
high altitude far from the warm vale where it first sprouted.
So, Love, in my case, on my nimble tongue nurseth the first bud of
a strange speech that I, deserting Thames for
Arno, may sing of thee, winsomely haughty one, in words
uncomprehended of my own good people.
Such the behest of Love - and from the fate of others
I have learned that Love never yet hath bidden in vain;
Oh, would that my heart were less fertile, my
heart more stony, toward one who findeth such
fecund soil for the seed she soweth from Heaven!

Uma das dificuldades com que se depara o tradutor deste soneto é a interpretação dosversos que lhe servem de fecho. De fato, o terceto final, cuja tradução se acaba de reproduzir, é assim vertido no estudo já citado [Prince : 98] : "Ah! would that my tardy heart and my hard bosom were as good a soil to him who plants from Heaven!". Estamos, pois, diante de iterpretações divergentes. Teríamos, nesses versos finais, a alusão uma celestial semeadora ("she soewth from Heaven", como

interpreta Livingston) ou a um semeador celeste ("him who plants from Heaven", como interptreta Prince)? O original italiano, ("A chi pianta dal ciel"), tomado isoladamente, permitiria qualquer dessas leituras. A resposta à dúvida, por outro lado, é mais importante do que pode parecer: dela depende sabermos se o fecho do soneto exprime somente um galanteio do poeta para com a amada ou se nele revela aspirações religiosas.

Para chegar à desejada resposta, é preciso notar, antes de mais nada, que não vale, neste caso, atribuir a perplexidade à menor perícia do autor no uso do idioma em que escrevia. Os sonetos de Milton revelam, em geral, seguro domínio da língua italiana e raramente denunciam a origem do autor ou, nas palavras de Mario Praz, poucas vezes "tradiscono la mano straniera"*(Storia della Letteratura Inglese*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1979, p. 270). Não há que procurar insuficiência lingüística na formação do fecho, idiomaticamente perfeito, deste soneto. Pelo contrário, é preciso acrescentar que o poeta estava familiarizado não somente com a língua, mas também com a cultura da Itália. É ainda Mario Praz quem atribui a Milton "profonda conoscenza della maniera bembista"(Praz : 270), ou seja, quem nele reconhece um atento discípulo de Pietro Bembo, o grande porta-voz do petrarquismo no século XVI. O léxico deste soneto, por exemplo, o gosto por diminutivos ("giovinetta", "pastorella", "herbetta"), bem como o emprego de adjetivos que servem para acentuar a expressão de conflito entre o espiritual e o carnal, conflito característico da poesia de Petrarca e de seus imitadores renascentistas ("lento","duro", é como o poeta se refere a seu espírito).

Discípulo de Bembo, Milton se mostrava também receptivo aos desdobramentos do petrarquismo quinhentista. A crítica tem apontado na poesia de Tasso e Della Casa algumas das lições cuidadosamente meditadas pelo poeta inglês. A Della Casa foi Milton pedir o segredo da continuidade entre as articulações do soneto, o modo de fazer transbordar a expressão lírica, de levá-la a romper as barreiras de cada estrofe. É constante esse transbordamento na poesia aqui tratada, mas dele não faltam casos na obra de Milton. Quanto à origem desse recurso, ouçamos o que diz um crítico: "It was Dell Casa who taught Milton to pattern his sonnets this way, rather than to fit the thought neatly into the quatrains and tercets (David Daiches, *Milton*, London, Hutchinson University Library, 1957, p. 131)

Era, portanto, dentro da grande tradição petrarquista que se situava a lírica italiana de Milton. A quem queria obsrvar outros casos da adesão do poeta inglês aos modelos petrarquizantes, basta recordar seu constante emprego de certos paralelismos fraseológicos, típicos da maneira de Petrarca. Sobre essa questão se estende o já citado estudioso da cultura italiana de Milton [Prince : 94], ilustrando-a com numerosos exemplos, dos quais são aqui citados somente os que dizem respeito ora em exame:

In Milton's sonnets [...] adjectives and substantives occurmore often than not in pairs; and there is a marked

tendency for these pairs to be placed at the end of lines, so that the second element is emphasized by the rhyme:

> [...]
> Va bagnando l'erbetta strana e bella
> Is wont to wet the strange and lovely plant
> [...]
> Deh! fossi'l mio cuor lento e 'l duro seno
> Ah! would my tardy heart and my hard heart.

Seria ocioso lembrar que o mesmo paralelismo se encontra a cada passo na poesia de Petrarca ("In sul mio primo giovenile errore", "tra le vane speranze e l van dolore", "spero trovar pietà nonché perdono", para citar somente exemplos do primeiro soneto do *Canzoniere*).

Para além desse e de outros aspectos formais, entretanto, o petrarquismo da poesia italiana de Milton se manifesta em um ponto já lembrado, onde mais que a adesão ao cânone literário parece manifestar-se algo que se tem reconhecido como radicado na personilidade do poeta: a valorização do amor espiritual. Característica originária do *Canzoniere* (que após os louvores de Laura se encerra com uma canção dedicada à Virgem Maria) e presente em todos os cultores do petrarquismo. É ainda Prince quem o observa

> Petrarchan poetry rests ultimately on a Christian idea, the analogy and the conflict between human love and the love of God. Petrarchan poets therefore use the sonnet partly as a vehicle for the expression of the psychology of love, partly for the expression of something more abstract, a system of religious values [Prince : 25].

Voltamos, portanto, à dirvergência acima observada quanto à tradução do fecho do soneto, questão cujos termos agora ficam talvez mais definidos. Entre duas interpretações isoladamente possíveis - a galante e a religiosa - há que reconhecer que a primeira se afigura, por diversas razões, mais frágil. A leitura galante, desde logo, contradiz um exame atento do conjunto deste soneto. De fato, as estrofes que antecedem o fecho nos mostram a vulnerabilidade do poeta aos encantos do amor terreno. A formosa e altiva moradora das ribeiras do Arno o fizera deixar seu nativo Tâmisa e falar em língua desconhecida de seu povo, tudo por força de um amor inelutável. Se assim é, não se entende por que suspiraria afinal o poeta por alcançar um coração mais receptivo e alguém cujo amor já o dominava. Nem se entende por que haveria de considerar "duro"e "lento"o peito enamorado que o levara a desterrar-se e a adotar novo idioma.

Pouco persuasiva, pelo que se acaba de expor, a interpretação galante o é ainda menos se levarmos em conta os cânones do

petrarquismo, a que o soneto, como se viu, está filiado. Estes indicam, antes, que seu fecho poderia muito bem abrigar o anelo de transformação do amor carnal em amor espiritual. Seria fácil apontar-lhe precedentes ilustres, como o célebre soneto de Petrarca, "Padre del ciel, dopo i perduti giorni", ou como "Io, che l'età solea viver nel fango", de Della Casa. Tal aspiração, aliás, se manifesta igualmente no segundo soneto italiano de Milton ("Donna leggiadra, il cui bel nome honora"). Aqui, após louvar a beleza da amada, exclama o poeta: "*chi de te si truova indegno / Gratia sola di sù gli vaglia*"("For if a man be unworthy of thy favour, may the grace of Heaven alone avail him", traduz Livingston).

Pode-se, pois, concluir que diversas considerações, sobretudo ligadas ao petrarquismo do poeta, aconselham a preferir, para o fecho desta poesia de Milton, a interpretação religiosa — a que vislumbra nos últimos versos uma alusão à parábola evangélica do semeador. Nestes versos finais haveria a expressão do desejo de que um coração mundano, onde vicejavam paixões efêmeras, viesse a converter-se em terra fértil para a semente da graça divina. Esta é a interpretação que procurei, portanto, adotar me minha tradução do soneto, tradução que ofereço ao leitor como conclusão deste pequeno estudo.

SONETO

John Milton

Qual sobre a tarde, em pedregoso outeiro,
A pastorinha rega, com cuidado,
As raras flores de mimoso prado,
Saudoso do ar primaveril fagueiro
E, na inclemente altura, forasteiro,
Assim o Amor em mim tem cultivado
Rara flor, língua alheia, em que hei cantado
Teu semblante formoso e sobranceiro.
Já nem sequer meu povo bom me entende:
Do Tâmisa ao gentil Arno passei:
Amor o quis, e tudo o que pretende
Amor alcança: a meu pesar o sei.
Quem dera fosse este árido meu peito
Da semente do Céus terreno eleito !

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UM GÊNERO DE MÁ REPUTAÇÃO : AS RELAÇÕES ENTRE O ROMANCE INGLÊS E A CRÍTICA NO SÉCULO XVIII *

Sandra Guardini T. Vasconcelos

Em 1803, uma paródia aos romances góticos, em grande voga então, foi aceita por um editor que, no entanto, apesar de ter anunciado sua publicação, desistiu e arquivou o manuscrito. Seriam necessários mais quatorze anos para que *Susan*, inicialmente escrito em 1797, viesse a público, com o nome de *Northanger Abbey*. Esta não era, entretanto, a primeira incursão de Jane Austen no terreno da crítica às medíocres obras de ficção que inundavam as prateleiras das bibliotecas - circulantes da Inglaterra. *Elinor and Marianne*, escrito em 1795 e publicado em 1811 com o título de *Sense and Sensibility*, também expunha o absurdo da ficção sentimental corrente na época.

O alvo da crítica, nos dois casos, não era o romance enquanto gênero, mas a mediocrização e banalização a que ele tinha sido submetido, principalmente a partir de 1770. Escritos ainda na última década do século XVIII, são ambos prova inequívoca das possibilidades do gênero e sinal inegável de sua revitalização.

A ironia com que trata sua heroína, cuja imaginação parece ter sido irremediavelmente marcada por suas leitoras deste tipo de ficção, não impede que, a certa altura, o narrador de *Northanger Abbey* interrompa seu relato e teça um comentário que, embora longo, merece citação integral pela defesa que faz do gênero:

> Yes, novels; - for I will not adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom so common with novel writers, of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, to the number of which they are themselves adding - joining with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine, who if she accidentally take up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust. Alas! if the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard? I cannot approve of it. Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so such decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers. And while the abilities of the nine-hundreth abridger of the History of England, or of the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, pope, and Prior, with a paper from the Spectator, and a chapter from Sterne, are eulogized by a thousand pens, there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit and taste to recommend them. "I am no novel reader —I seldom look into novels/Do not imagine that / often read novels —It is really very well for a novel." Such is the common cant. - "And what are you reading, Miss — ?" "Oh it is only a novel ! "replies the young lady, while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame. - "It is only Cecilia, or Camila, or Belinda; "or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language. Now, had the young lady been engaged with a volume of the Spectator, instead of such a work, how proudly would she have produced the book, and told its name, though the chances must be against her being occupied by any part of that voluminous publication, of which either the matter or manner would not disgust a young person of taste: the substance of its papers so often consisting in the statement of improbable circumstances, unnatural characters, and topics of conversation, which no longer concern any one living; and their language, too, frequently so coarse as to give no very favourable idea of the age that could endure it. (cap.V).

Poucos textos da época resumem tão bem a situação a que tinha chegado o romance. Também poucos são os que conseguem, como o anônimo leitor do *The Lady's Magazine* e contemporâneo de Jane Austen, perceber a diferença entre a banalidade de certas produções individuais e as possibilidades do gênero:

> Romances and novels are by no means to be considered of so trifling and insignificant a character as they are apt to be by severe people. I own, the most ridiculous and incompetent people are often found scribbling works of this description, as they often are on every subject of literature; and their productions turn out, what we cannot but expect from all triflers, flimsy, dull, and even immoral performances. But, to write a good romance of novel, requires the art of invention, observation on human life, discernment of the different shades

of character, a talent for description, and a power to interest the passions. (vol. 35, abril de 1804)

Embora ainda defenda o propósito edificante, este leitor é capaz de reconhecer que os romances são "(...) works rather of fancy than of truth; whose immediate object is rather to please than to instruct; (...)".

Esta atitude mais liberal, no entanto, convive com outra extremamente conservadora, cujo exemplo se pode ver no artigo de um contemporâneo, publicado no *The Miniature,* no mesmo mês de abril de 1804. Aí se repetem todos os lugares - comuns dos detratores do gênero."Lixo", "bobagem", "tolice" são alguns dos termos usados para descrever os romances. O alvo é fundamentalmente a produção destinada às bibliotecas - circulantes e o articulista fala com desprezo da "Lane's manufactory " para referir - se à Minerva Press, uma das maiores e mais atuantes editoras, de propriedade de William Lane[1].

Tampouco o autor deste artigo consegue ou quer distinguir entre o gênero e realizações individuais, incorrendo no frequente erro de, ao criticar alguma produção medíocre, atacar o gênero de forma geral, como se a mediocridade lhe fosse intrínseca e não resultado de fatores externos a ele.

O fato é que a discussão sobre o romance, com os costumeiros ataques e defesas, avança pelo século XIX e sobrevive pelo menos até a época de Walter Scott, quando começa a dar sinais de exaustão - talvez porque os argumentos contra e a favor já tivessem se tornado demasiado repetitivos, talvez porque defensores e críticos tivessem se dado conta de que o romance tinha vindo para ficar. Talvez por todos esses motivos juntos.

Os defensores e detratores do romance atravessaram todo o século XVIII repetindo aproximadamente os mesmos argumentos. Favoráveis ou desfavoráveis, seus panfletos, artigos e cartas são quase sempre baseados mais em questões éticas do que estéticas.

A preocupação generalizada com os defeitos nocivos da leitura de romances sobre o comportamento dos jovens, mas mais especificamente *das jovens,* leva a uma confusão também generalizada de critérios críticos. À medida que o romance se consolida, começa a crescer a desconfiança quanto a seus propósitos instrutivos. A voga do romance sentimental e do romance gótico só contibui para com o recrudescimento desta desconfiança. Para os moralistas da época, este tipo de romance fala de perto à imaginação e incita a fantasia, vistas como duas fontes de risco para as mocinhas de então. A reputação do romance em baixa e a censura dos conservadores em alta produzem artigos como o publicado no *Monthly Mirror*, de novembro de 1797, cujo autor clama, indignado, contra os efeitos perniciosos da leitura de romances, atribuindo a estes a responsabilidade pela depravação feminina. Para ele,

... those who first made *novel-reading* an indispensible branch

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

Surpreendemente, alguns romancistas também se juntam ao coro de vozes iradas. James Yeo, o hoje desconhecido autor de *Omar and Zemira:* An Eastern Tale (1782), é ainda mais violento nas suas críticas:

It has, therefore, long been lamented, that the publication of novels in general has occasioned many of those misfortunes which attend the fairer sex in the tenderest years of their lives.The youthful mind, as it is capable of the most sensible impressions, is frequently corrupted by the distorted writings of romance; and seeking amusement from the promised banquet, has mistaken pleasure in disguise, for the simplicity of all her satisfaction. To these deceitful productions is owing, in a great measure the loss of duty in a daughter to her affectionate parents, and all her subsequent wretchedness, for deviating from that road of conduct which, if faithfully and sincerely pursued, would have insured to her every comfort as a child, and ever conscious pleasure as a woman. To what, but the generality of novels, are you to ascribe the debauchery of so many beautiful women ? - who, tho' they shine the first and fairest in external show of pleasure, carry in their hearts the sad testimony, that it is not in the power of affluence or dissipation to make reparation for their innocence and virtue lost ! To what else ascribe the many living monuments of what women ONCE were, to be met with in various parts of the community, earning a miserable subsistence by promiscuous prostitution ! Such publications give a zest to the sluggish appetite for intrigue, fornication, and adultery, and pave the way to the completion of all. " (prefácio a *Omar and Zemira*)

Nem todos, entretanto, atribuem ao romance tal poder corruptor. Em geral, o receio tem origem na suposição dos efeitos que a leitura de romances possa ter sobre a imaginação, principalmente das mulheres. A escrita e a leitura são pressentidas como ocupações perigosas porque, sendo atividades solitárias, convidam ao devaneio e estimulam toda sorte

de fantasias. O medo está, segundo Patricia Spacks, no fato de que "the written word can both record and stimulate sexual fantasy: and fantasy (...) may ultimately produce action."[2] Vistas como presas fáceis de suas fantasias e como seres irresponsáveis, as jovens devem ser mantidas sob controle paterno e criadas a partir de severos princípios que valorizam sobretudo a inocência e a virtude, sinônimos de castidade. Sujeitos às paixões e ao descontrole, o coração, os sentimentos e a imaginação necessitam ser colocados sob eterna vigilância. Sob o olhar e cuidados dos pais e depois dos maridos, às mulheres fica reservado o espaço da casa e do mundo doméstico. O desejo de restringi-las exclusivamente ao seu papel privado é, no fundo, o desejo de domesticá -las. O aparentemente inócuo adjetivo "doméstico" - com seu significado de "da, referente à casa, à vida de família" - pode se revestir de uma tonalidade menos inocente, já que domesticar tem também o sentido de "amansar, domar, civilizar, colonizar", com implicações evidentes de uma relação de poder. Não por acaso a apologia da mulher doméstica, absolutamente recorrente na época, acoberta a ideologia da domesticação. A presença da mulher no espaço privado da casa é garantia, para o homem, de fidelidade e de controle. Isso explica com certeza os apelos à moderação no falar e no vestir, a exigência do decoro, os incontáveis artigos sobre conduta feminina nos periódicos, a defesa da razão e do bom senso. Portanto, se houver qualquer suspeita de que o romance possa incitar o "belo sexo" a excessos da imaginação, ou conduta inadequada, é preciso atacá -lo. Bons são os romances que educam através do exemplo, promovem a virtude e punem os vícios - tudo embalado pela doce cobertura do entretenimento.

Estas novas idéias, que começam a ser ventiladas já no começo do século, principalmente no *Spectator*, são, sem dúvida uma reação aos costumes mais liberais (vistos como libertinismo e licenciosidade) do período da Restauração. No século XVIII, uma nova sociedade em estado emergente exigia novos costumes, pedia a reforma de certas instituições, como o casamento, e dava à mulher um novo papel dentro dele. Era preciso devolvê-la à casa, fazê-la responsável pela educação dos filhos e prepará-la para seus novos papéis. Entretanto a crença generalizada no poder da educação, fruto das idéias iluministas em circulação na Europa, não chega a ser radical o suficiente para permitir à mulher o acesso à educação formal. São os periódicos e romances que vão exercer uma função extremamente importante neste sentido, atribuindo-se e assumindo, de certa forma, a tarefa reformadora. Não fica difícil, portanto, entender as motivações que levaram à ascensão e consolidação do gênero, percebido, por alguns, como uma arma fundamental no processo de veiculação de novas atitudes. É evidente que não apenas as mulheres são destinatárias destas novas idéias. Os periódicos e romances são também escritos para os homens, que precisam reformar sua conduta e adquirir novos hábitos. Mas é principalmente sobre as mulheres que recai este discurso persuasivo,

produto de nova ideologia. As heroínas dos romances, dessa forma, passam a se constituir em modelos desta nova concepção de feminilidade. A virtude, a moderação, o equilíbrio, o bom senso, a conduta pautada pelo decoro estas são as qualidades fundamentais que moldam a nova imagem da mulher. Estas devem ser qualidades essenciais das Cecilias, Belindas, Camillas, Pamelas, etc..., cuja educação deve ser pautar pela defesa intransigente da virtude, entendida menos como uma questão de princípio do que como um conjunto de regras que visam exclusivamente à preservação da castidade. Elas devem ser modestas, pacientes, humildes e delicadas; não devem almejar aó conhecimento, amar antes de serem amadas e, uma vez casadas, devem obediência e submissão ao marido.

O romance sentimental, em grande voga a partir de 1750, vai levar este modelo a uma espécie de paroxismo. Não há heroína nestes romances que não seja bela, delicada ao extremo, dona de uma sensibilidade aguda, sujeita a desmaios frequentes e lágrimas abundantes. Modelo de virtudes, ela tem sua inocência sempre colocada em risco por vilões terríveis e incansáveis ou paixões descontroladas. Se desafortunada a ponto de não resistir, resta -lhe uma vida de arrependimentos em um convento ou a morte. Com poucas exceções este modelo de feminilidade, forjado a partir de um ponto de vista essencialmente masculino, vai ser assumido por romancistas de ambos os sexos. Poucas são as romancistas do período que conseguem construir uma imagem alternativa de mulher, mais próxima do real[3].

O século XVIII se caracteriza por estes paradoxos: o ideal da razão convive com a sensibilidade exagerada; o desejo de equilíbrio, proporção e decoro luta contra o descontrole; a paixão enfrenta o controle moral; a imaginação se opõe ao bom senso e discernimento ("judgment"). O romance, é claro, reflete estas tensões, que vão aparecer no terreno da caracterização. A exigência ideológica de construção de um novo modelo de conduta (aqui vale dizer, tanto para homens como para mulheres) vai esbarrar numa outra, de caráter formal. Desde o início do século, é possível testemunhar uma exigência cada vez maior de verossimilhança na ficção, uma tendência crescente de aproximação com o mundo real e o mundo presente. Há uma rejeição progressiva à idealização de personagens e situações, característica dos "romances" heróicos, e uma busca de representação do mundo cotidiano e de personagens comuns. Isso coloca um problema para os romancistas: como conciliar a pintura da natureza humana com essa necessidade de oferecer modelos de comportamentos que, no fundo, também são extremamente idealizados?

A gama de soluções encontradas é bastante variada. Premidos entre a exigência de exemplaridade, de um lado, e a lei da verossimilhança, de outro, os romancistas fazem verdadeiras piruetas argumentativas, em seus prefácios, para justificar a opção por uma ou por outra, ou para conciliar as duas. Qualquer que seja ela, os prefácios se constituem num forum de debate contra ou a favor daquilo que se chama, no período, de personagens puros e personagens mistos. Essa discussão o século

XVIII e não é possível concluir pela predominância de um ou de outro tipo. Importa mais compreender qual é a cocepção de personagem que embasa toda essa problemática.

Utilizada pela primeira vez por Henry Fielding, em 1749, para designar "uma personalidade investida pelo romancista de atributos e qualidades distintas" (a definição é do *Oxford English Dictionary*), a palavra ***character*** convive, durante todo o século XVIII, com ***personage*** para se referir ao personagem do romance. Entre ***marca*** e ***máscara***, acaba prevalecendo a primeira e *character* se fixa como o termo técnico para designar o personagem ficcional[4]. Entretanto, um exame dos significados desta palavra e de seus cognatos indica claramente sua natureza polissêmica. Aqui, interessam dois dos seus sentidos figurativos: aquele que diz respeito ao conjunto de qualidades ou traços distintivos que individualizam seu portador, e o outro que se refere à reputação, ou face pública de um indivíduo. Há uma conotação de regularidade, permanência e estabilidade na noção de caráter, que implica continuidade. É certamente esta idéia que determina a intenção de Richardson de apresentar para "... public view de character and action of a man of true honour", oferecendo a seus leitores "... the example of a man acting uniformly well through a variety of trying scenes ... " (prefácio *a Sir Charles Grandison*). A uniformidade de comportamento e de ação, por parte do personagem, exige muito cuidado na sua representação, deixando pouco espaço para inconsistências ou inadequações entre suas qualidades interiores e sua imagem exterior. A necessidade de manter a adequação entre estas duas faces do personagem se origina principalmente na intenção, por parte dos romancistas, de fazer de seus personagens exemplos. A soma de individualidade e representatividade é produto da tentativa de juntar experiência individual e conduta exemplar. É ainda Richardson que se propõe, no prefácio a *Clarissa*, a fazer tanto de Clarissa Harlowe como de Anna Howe "exemplar to her sex", ao mesmo tempo em que procura desenhar suas criaturas como personagens, distintos, vivos e variados. A busca da exemplaridade vai colocar uma série de problemas para o romancista, sendo o maior deles o da verossimilhança. Personagens cuja conduta se quer exemplar deveriam, em princípio, não ser propensos a erros. Modelos de perfeição, contudo, estão longe de ser caracteristicamente humanos. Richardson não deseja criar "faultless monsters " porque eles não são verossímeis. Resta -lhe a saída de explicar para o leitor por que atribui à sua heroína algumas falhas de conduta:

> It was not only natural, but it was necessary, that she should have some faults, were it only to show the reader, how laudably she could mistrust and blame herself, and carry to her own heart, divested of self-partiality, the censure which arose from her own convictions, and that even to the acquittal of those, because revered characters, whom no one else would acquit, and to whose much greater faults her errors were owing, and

> not to a weak or reproachable heart. As far as is consistent with human frailty, and as she could be perfect, comsidering the people she had the deal with and those with whom she was inseparably connected, she is perfect."(prefácio a *Clarissa*).

Johnson aprova integralmente esta opção, que defende em seu famoso ensaio sobre o romance no *The Rambler* (n.4, 31 de março de 1750). Ali, ele insta os romancistas a deixarem de lado os personagens mistos, não porque eles falseiam o real mas justamente porque são verossímeis. Personagens moralmente ambíguos podem ser acompanhados com prazer e interesse e por isso são potencialmente perigosos.

Outros romancistas, defensores do personagem misto, apresentam motivos igualmente fortes para justificar sua escolha. Fielding, por exemplo, argumenta que nem a excelência consumada nem a mostruosidade absoluta pode ser objeto de imitação:

> In the next place, we must admonish thee, my worthy friend (for, perhaps, thy heart may be better than thy head), no to condemn a character as a bad one, because it is not perfectly a good one. If thou dost delight in these models of perfection, there are books enow written to gratify thy taste; but, as we have not, in the course of our conversation, ever happened to meet with any such person, we have not chosen to introduce any such here. To say the truth, I a little question whether mere men ever arrived at this consummate degree of excellence, as well as whether there hath ever existed a monster bad enough to verify that — *nulla virtute redemptum a vitiis* — in Juvenal; nor do I, indeed, conceive the good purposes served by inserting characters of such angelic perfection, or such diabolical depravity, in any work of invention; since, from contemplating either, the mind of man is more likely to be overwhelmed with sorrow and shame than to draw any good uses from such patterns; for in the former instance he may be both concerned and ashamed to see a pattern of excellence in his nature, which he may reasonably despair of ever arriving at; and in contemplating the latter he may be no less affected with those uneasy sensations, at seeing the nature of which he is a partaker degraded into so odious and detestable a creature.
> In fact, is there be enough of goodness in a character to engage the admiation and affection of a well-disposed mind, though there sould appear some of those little blemishes *quas humana parum cavit natura*, they will raise our compassion rather than our abhorrence. Indeed, nothing can be of more moral use than the imperfections which are seen in examples

ofthis kind; since such form a kind of surprize, more apt to affectand dwell upon our minds than the faults of very vicious and wicked persons. The foibles and vices of a men, in whom there is great mixture of good, become more glaring objects from the virtues which contrast them and show their deformity, and when we find such vices attended with their evil consequence to our favourite characters, we are not only taught to shun them for our sake, but to hate them for the mischiefs they have already brought on those we love. (*Tom Jones*, Book X, ch. i)

Defensor do personagem puro ou do misto, o romancista do século XVIII tem sempre como perspectativa o caráter exemplar e didádico do seu romance, e na esteira ou de Richardson ou de Fielding, muitos outros vão repetir os mesmos argumentos. O reconhecimento torna-se uma questão central no processo de leitura, isto é, exige-se do leitor que reconheça o personagem como verossímil ou provável. Daí, certamente, a ênfase na "cópia da natureza ", as referências ao "livro da natureza", e a intenção de "explorar os recessos da natureza humana".

As duas noções - de personagem e de natureza - estão intimamente associadas na reflexão crítica do período. É natural o personagem que é reconhecido pelos leitores[5]. Para tanto, é preciso que ele tenha na sua composição uma mistura de traços gerais e singulares. Mais uma vez, é Fielding que vai chamar a atenção para este problema. No capítulo introdutório ao livro X, de *Tom Jones*, ele recomenda aos leitores cuidado ao buscar semelhanças entre alguns personagens apresentados no romance:

> Thou art to know, friend, that there are certain characteristics in which most individuals of every profession and occupation agree. To be able to preserve these characteristics, and at the same time to diversify their operations, is one talent of a good writer. Again, to mark the nice distinction between two persons actuated by the same vice or folly is another...

Alguns anos mais tarde, o anônimo autor de *Memoirs of a young lady of family* declara em seu prefácio que o leutor nada achará de extraordinário em seu romance, pois tudo que pretende com ele é ser natural. E acrescenta:

> Perhaps thou wilt meet with a sketch of an intimate acquaintance, or if thou art ingenuous enough to own it, wilt discover some foible exposed, which thou mayest meet with in thyself. So unaccoutable and capricious a being is MAN, that there are a few characters, if really drawn, but will suit many in the sphere of every one's acquaintance. (...)

> Let this one rule, however, be observed indeviably; namely, in laying the foundation of all your characters in nature. (...) a novel may expose a notorious fop, or an affected prude, and yet the author not have in his view lord D—, or the dutchess of. H—. Persons who, in all probability, have never happened to come within the sphere of his acquaintance; and yet the matter of fact remains just as it did before, namely, that if lord D— is a fop, and the dutchess a prude, the novellist has taken strokes that are to be met with in their characters: for did they bear no resemblance to any one, the author would lose his design, and the personages (to speak in the technical language of criticism) would not be marked. Doubtless amongst the variety of pictures that are drawn in this representation of human life, there are several which are lively images of the originals, though not drawn from prticular individuals; but which is a considerable proof of the judgment of the painter, they are drawn from the ideas he has conceived in the general, and are left to the fancy of each one apart to be applied.

As observações acima colocam de forma bastante clara os elementos em jogo na caracterização do personagem durante este período. Para ser uma representação fundada na natureza humana, o ator do romance deve ter traços gerais e singulares na sua composição. É necessário que ele seja reconhecido como verossímil e, ao mesmo tempo, assuma uma função exemplar para que sua ação seja passível de imitação ou de repúdio por parte dos leitores. De certa forma, sobrevive, no personagem assim concebido, a velha tradição estabelecida pelos caracteres teofrásticos, ainda em voga durante o século XVIII. A existência de várias edições da obra de Teofrasto (a primeira tradução em inglês data de 1616), dos *Caractères* de La Beruyère (1688) e de imitações, como *The English Theophrastus* (1702), atesta o interesse pelo retrato de caracteres. Os "character-sketches", forma bastante popular no século XVII, perduram no século seguinte, podendo ser encontrados não só no *Spectator* mas em vários outros periódicos. Os objetivos expostos por Teofrasto em seu prefácio - apresentar a diversidade de costumes e observações sobre a natureza humana e pintar os gregos em geral, sem deixar de lado a singularidades que diferenciam um homem do outro - coincidem, em linhas gerais, com as intenções expressas pelos romancistas. Neste sentido, durante o século XVIII, o característico retém seu significado de típico.

Do conflito criativo entre estes dois movimentos, nasce a concepção de personagem corrente durante todo o período, que só vai sofrer modificações no século XIX, quando a busca de exemplaridade e tipicidade deixa de ser objetivo declarado do romancista.

A motivação exemplar parece, em princípio, minar a própria idéia de experiência individual, fundamento do romance. Na verdade, estas duas forças parecem estar em permanente tensão. Da parte dos

romancistas, há o desejo explícito de oferecer modelos de conduta e a confiança no poder da leitura de conformar a experiência do leitor e ajudá-lo a formular padrões de expectativas em relação à vida. No entanto, os romances melhor realizados parecem estar sempre a provar o contrário. Neles, o herói ou heroína acaba por aprender que não pode moldar sua vida a partir de suas leituras, como é o caso de Arabella, em *The Female Quixote* (Charlotte Lennox, 1752). Ou ainda como é o caso de *The History of Clarissa*, em que o desfecho não apresenta uma solução clara para o problema moral ali tematizado.

Todas essas questões se colocam para os romancistas porque, no fundo, elas decorrem do objetivo recorrentemente explicitado de representação da natureza humana. Esta é, de fato, a questão central do romance no século XVIII. Mesmo uma leitura ligeira dos prefácios deixa muito claro que a maioria dos romancistas pretende desenhar personagens e situações fundados na natureza humana, produzir "retratos fiéis da natureza humana", "ater-se à natureza humana", copiá-la, exibi-la, explorá-la, etc. Esta intenção tem duas conseqüências imediatamente identificáveis. Em primeiro lugar, ela leva o romancista a buscar o caráter ou disposição geral e inerente ao ser humano. Nesse sentido, natural é o que é reconhecido, comum normal. Em segundo lugar, ela obriga o romancista a procurar aquilo que se aproxima do, ou se assemelha ao, real. É por essa via que se pode falar em realismo, para se referir ao romance deste período. Não se trata, evidentemente, do realismo programático do século XIX, mas do resultado de um movimento geral em direção à representação do homem privado e da vida comum. Aexigência de "mostrar o espelho da verdade" e de "apresentar um retrato fiel da vida" leva a uma maior aproximação com o mundo real e o tempo presente[6].

Embora o romanesco nunca saia de cena por completo - ele vai se mascarar e se deslocar para reaparecer com força total no romance gótico do final do século - a aderência ao real e o distanciamento do maravilhoso vão sendo progressivamente conquistados, trazendo em definitivo para o mundo do romance as situações cotidianas e a vida do homem comum.

É fundamental examinar a ficção do século XVIII em relação ao período antecedente e ao subsequente para perceber que o realismo só pode ser compreendido como um conceito historicamente construído. Isto é, aquilo que é "real " e "natural " muda em função de cada período histórico ou literário. Assim, é preciso ver este conceito como um processo em permanente constituição e não como uma forma fixa de apreênsão e representação do mundo.[7] O período de ascensão e consolidação que o romance coloca em evidência toda gama de problemas formais que se apresentam para os escritores que estão experimentando um novo gênero. Muitas vezes, exigências contraditórias criam uma série de dificuldades e conflitos. O objetivo de representação fiel do real, por exemplo, não se adequa exatamente ao princípio do decoro, ainda vigente durante todo

este período. Daí a necessidade de justificar a introdução de personagens considerados baixos ou vulgares, ou a crítica, tanto de romancista quanto de leitores, à sua presença nos romances. Fielding é frequentemente alvo de recriminação pela "vulgaridade"de Tom Jones e de situações descritas no romance; Sterne também não escapa à censura pelos seus asteriscos, "falta de propriedade" e "indecência". Também a expectativa de "justiça poética" - virtude recompensada e vício punido ao final de cada romance - acaba por se constituir num princípio pouco verossímil, porque distante do real. Charlotte Smith é criticada, numa resenha no geral favorável de *The Old Manor House*, por fazer exatamente o contrário:

> Having thus briefly enumerated a few of the exceptionable parts of this drama, we now pause to ask Mrs. Smith, or any novel writer or reader, what possible benefit can accure to society, and to youth in particular, from a perúsal of scenes so repugnant to decorum and virtue? To draw characters where the follies, the passions, and the vices of mankind are finally productive of calamity is proper painting; because, from the ill success and punishment of imprudence and criminality, an excellent moral is deduced. But is this the colouring of Mrs. Smith's pictures? No such thing. On the contrary we find, that while youthful thoughtlessness and intemperance are crowned with success, ingratitude and the most complicated villany remain unpunished. (*Critical Review,* vol. VIII, série 2, maio de1793).

É destes paradoxos e contradições que vão se construindo a história e a forma do romance. Os melhores romances que o século XVIII nos legou parecem ser aqueles que enfrentaram ou resolveram essas incongruências de modo mais satisfatório, enquanto centenas de outros foram relegados a um merecido esquecimento, pela forma grosseira e tosca com que tentaram lidar com esses problemas. O pensamento crítico que vemos se estruturar no período demonstra ter consciência dessas diferenças. Nesse sentido, podemos acompanhar, pela leitura das resenhas, a formação de um cânon. Nem sempre os critérios que orientam a apreciação e o julgamento de uma obra são de natureza estética mas, em geral, os periódicos e seus resenhistas mais acertam do que erram nos seus comentários a respeito das realizações dos seus contemporâneos. Por obrigação de ofício, esses primeiros leitores "especializados" têm que acompanhar toda a produção ficcional que sai das prensas com destino às bibliotecas - circulantes e acabam por conseguir estabelcer alguns critérios que os ajudam a separar o joio do trigo.

A presença do romance nos periódicos ingleses, principalmente nas miscelâneas, se faz notar, de início, de forma muito tímida, através da

prática de anunciá-lo nas listas de publicações do mês, como faz, por exemplo, o *Gentlemen's Magazine* (1731 - 1907) no seu "Register of Books". Seu concorrente mais direto, o *London Magazine* (1732 - 1785), adota o mesmo procedimento. Somente a partir de 1750 começam a aparecer comentários, de extensão variada, muitas vezes acompanhadas de extratos do romance resenhado. E, mesmo assim, tendem a ser caráter mais geral e pouco prescritivo. Datam também deste período as revistas especializadas em resenhas ("specialized book-review periodicals "),como os importantes *The Monthly Review* (1749 - 1844) e *The Critical Review* (1756 - 1817). Em meio aos registros de avanços em diferentes campos do reconhecimento, vamos encontrar nesses periódicos um crescente interesse pelo romance, resultado, sem dúvida, do desejo de atender as expectativas de seu público leitor. No prefácio do primeiro número do *Critical Review* (janeiro de 1756), o grupo de "cavalheiros" responsável por sua condução deixa claro que

> ... their aim has been to exhibit a succint plan of every performance; to point out the most striking beauties and glaring defects; to illustrate their remarks with proper quotations; and to convey these remarks in such a manner, as might best conduce to the entertainment of the public.

Bem sucedidas e com ampla circulação, ambas as revistas dão a devida atenção à prosa de ficção e, começando com o mero registro, nos seus catálogos, dos romances publicados mensalmente, evoluem posteriomente para um comentário mais ou menos extenso, de acordo com o romance resenhado. Em geral, ficavam relegadas para o "Monthly Catalogue" as obras avaliadas pelos resenhistas como abaixo de crítica e por isso muitas vezes despachadas sumariamente com uma observação irônica, espirituosa ou simplesmente engraçada. Na parte central da revista, eram resenhadas as obras mais importantes do mês, aí incluídos os romances.

As resenhas obedeciam a uma estrutura relativamente fixa: abertas com comentários críticos de ordem geral, elas apresentavam em seguida um resumo do romance acompanhado de citações, ou "espécimes da obra do autor". Frequentemente, eram transcritos longos trechos do romance em questão - descrições, diálogos ou episódios memoráveis, escolhidos a dedo para entreter e interessar o leitor. Quanto aos comentários propriamente ditos, os resenhistas procuravam contrabalançar o exame das falhas e qualidades, na tentativa de apresentar um julgamento equilibrado das "striking beauties"e dos "glaring defects", bem dentro do espírito do período. Informados pela teoria clássica dos gêneros, tinham na épica e no drama o referencial teórico a partir do qual avaliavam os romances. Além da elegância, propriedade e decoro, exigiam do romancista, por exemplo, o respeito à unidade de ação e o cuidado na construção da "fábula", demonstrando a permanência

dos princípios aristotélicos, transmitidos, para muitos deles, via Fielding.

Embora produzidos ao longo de vários anos por diferentes e, na maior parte dos casos, anônimos resenhistas, as resenhas não apresentam grandes divergências ou diferenças quanto aos critérios que norteiam suas avaliações nem quanto aos elementos que, segundo eles, entram na composição de um bom romance. Estes elementos são assim descritos na resenha de *The Denial; or, The Happy Retreat* (Rev. James Thomson), publicada pelo *The Monthly Review* em dezembro de 1790:

> The history of a novel should be formed of a variety of interesting incidents; a knowledge of the world, and of mankind, are essential requisites in the writer; the characteres should be always natural; the personages should talk, think, and act, as becomes their respective ages, situations, and characters; the sentiments should be moral, chaste and delicate; the language should be easy, correct, and elegant, free from affectation, and unobscured by pedantry; and the narrative should be as little interrupted as possible by digressions and episodes of every kind: yet if an author chuses to indulge, occasionally, in moral reflections, in the view of blending instruction with amusement, we would not wish, altogether, to frustrate so good a design: - but, that his precepts may obtain the utmost efficiency, we would recommend them to be inserted in those periods of the history where the reader's curiosity can most patiently submit to suspense.

O conjunto das resenhas, com pequenas variações, elogia a "familiaridade com o coração humano", a "bela pintura de costumes reais", os "incidentes concebidos com propriedade e gosto", a "elegância de estilo", a "delicadeza de sentimentos", o "respeito à estrada da natureza", o "bom senso", a "variedade de incidentes e personagens naturais", o "conhecimento da vida e costumes em diferentes níveis sociais", entre outros. Nesses periódicos, também impera o princípio horaciano do *utile et dulce:* o romance é visto como um veículo eficaz e agradável para aplicar o nem sempre doce remédio da instrução moral. Os críticos esperam que o romancista tenha sempre em vista o aprimoramento das virtudes do coração e o prazer que ele pode proporcionar aos sentimentos dos leitores. Assim, é seu dever instruí-los com relação à conduta na vida, retificar seus erros e aumentar o número, e ressaltar o valor, das suas virtudes. Dada a magnitude da tarefa, estão prontos a reconhecer, ao contrário dos inimigos do gênero, que o romance é uma forma literária que exige do romancista destreza, talento, qualidades e abilidades incomuns. Na resenha de *The Old Manor House* (Charlotte Smith), o resenhista do *Critical Review* expõe as dificuldades que envolvem a escrita de um romance e descreve longa e minuciosamente o perfil necessário para sua execução. Também no

Analytical Review, os requisitos são descritos de forma bastante clara:

> From the innumerable performances of this nature, with which the press daily teems, it might presumed, that, for the production of a novel, a very moderate share of talent and industry were requisite: and this notion, applied to the inferior class of modern novels, the ephemera of the day, is probably critically just. But to produce a work of fiction, in which an acquaitance with life and manners, a talent for observation, or a knowledge of the operation of the passions upon human character, and a vigorous, creative fancy, should combine to form a consistent *whole*, harmonising in all it's parts is, we are inclined to suspect, one of the highest efforts of human intellect. *Genius*, an unfortunate word, seductive to vanity, and incapable of a rational definition, resembles not the lightning's flash, gleaming instantaneously in eletric splendour from east to west, but must result from severe appication, labour, and perseverance."*

Essa atitude positiva e favorável ao romance vai possibilitar aos críticos julgar com benevolência as obras que minimamente atendem estes requisitos.

Os elogios podem se restringir a alguns qualificativos como "simples", "uniforme", "interessante", "agradável", "divertido" ; podem ocupar alguns parágrafos, sem esquecer, porém, de anotar pequenos defeitos. Ou podem se estender por várias páginas, se a obra é considerada merecedora de maior atenção. Nesses casos, também se mantém a preocupação de fazer uma avaliação equilibrada, contrabalançando falhas e qualidades.

Para as outras, restam o rigor e a severidade, que variam de mera atribuição das avaliações como "insípida", "absurda", "improvável", "analfabeta"ou "tola" até comentários mais ásperos como este:

> It would be some injustice to even the meanest productions of this kind, that we have lately had the disagreeable task of perusing, to hank the history of *Sophia Shakespeare* in the same class with them. It is really beneath censure, and we want words to express our contempt of it. (*The Monthly Review*, vol. VIII, março de 1753)

Muitas vezes, os críticos não escondem seu cansaço e desânimo diante da dura tarefa de ler um mau romance e da mesmice e vulgaridade reinantes. Aqui estão alguns exemplos:

> The public are, really, more obliged to us *Reviewers* than they imagine. We are necessitated ro read every thing that comes out, and must, consequently, submit to the vile drudgery of going through those loads of trash, which are thrown in upon us under the denomination of *Lives, Adventures, Memoirs, Histories*, etc.(a respeito de *The Adventures of William* B—ds— w, *commonly stiled Devil Dick. The Monthly Review*, vol. XI, dezembro de 1754)

> This so nearly resembles the rest of our late novels, that what we have said of the Mrs. Draytons, the Miss Grevills, the Miss Howards, and the rest of the Misses, may serve for Miss Emilia Beville, and probably, for most of the misses which are to make their appearance, in the course of the ensuing winter. (sobre *The History of Miss Emilia Beville. Monthly Catalogue, The Monthly Review*, vol. XXXVII, novembro de 1767)

> The modern novel affords us nothing like variety. 'Soup for breakfast, soup for dinner, and soup for sipper', as the libertine observes of his wife. We are fairly tired of it. (a respeito de *The Sorrows of the Heart*. Monthly Catalogue, *The Monthly Review*, vol. LXXVI, junho de 1787)

Nos três exemplos acima, que cobrem um período de 30 anos, vemos repetida a mesma reclamção de falta de originalidade. De fato, o recurso a um repertório aparentemente imutável e pouco variado de situações e personagens parecia ter levado o romance à exaustão e foi alvo de críticatanto por parte dos resenhistas como de alguns escritores. No prefácio a *Argal*; or, *the Silver Devil* (1793), o anônimo autor adverte sua "bela leitora" para que não procure na sua obra:

> No cross papa with his Phenix of a daughter, so beautiful, mild, benevolent, dutiful, in spite of persecution, who, when she is distressed, prefers starving in a garret on the miserable pittance she earns, by painting fan-mounts, to affluence with a man, who does not, in her opinion, equal another, that has treated her with contempt. —No heroine who most heroically revenges herself upon herself, for the supposed infidelity of her lover, and foregoing the pleasures suitable to her age, mortifies in the country by a constant round of visits, among the dirty inhabitants of a dirty village, immersed in medicines, beggary, and salves. No sprained ancles, convenient hospitable cottages, neat old women, with their wonderful daughters, harpsichords, books , &c. — No friends at first sight, with the friends of friends, and their extraordinary acts of friendship, from whom you are to endure a triple recital of the same dull, stupid, improbable, uninteresting fact, while your imagination is to be chained to the foot of the postman, who carries the important intelligence from miss to miss.—No counterpart cover for this unparallelled belle, who stops by his single interposition, a coach and runaway horses in its full career, or plungles into the water, to extricate persons whom he never saw before. —No duels

wherein the proper party always recovers; anonymous letters sure of detection, uncles dead in the first volume, forgotten in the second, with their resurrection in the third ; convenient deaths if mismatched couples to accommodate the hero and heroine of the flimsy tale, with the rest of that preposterous mass of incredible trash with which the monthly presses groan.

A enxurrada de produções medíocres saida das prensas para abastecer as prateleiras das bibliotecas-circulantes é brindada com nenhuma complacência. Muitas obras são despachadas com um comentário curto e incisivo, como "execrable stuff"ou "miserable trash". Outras vezes, a saída é o bom humor. a graça:

> *The History of Charlotte Summer.*
> Burnett* Echo. *Burn-it! (Monthly Catalogue, *The Monthly Review,* vol.XXX, março de 1764)
>
> *The History of Lord Clayton and Miss Meredith.*
> Ill imagined, ill written, ill printed and - the author will probably add - VERY ill reviewed. (Monthly Catalogue, *The Monthly Review*, vol. XL, março de 1769)
>
> *It is and It is not, a Novel.* By Charlotte Palmer.
> No, my dear, - It is *not* a novel: but be a good girl; do so no more; and we will say nothing about it this time. (Monthly Catalogue, *The Critical Review,* vol. IV, série 2, abril de 1792)

Embora as avaliações tendam a coincidir, nem sempre a mesma obra encontra igual acolhida em diferentes periódicos. Mais do que à divergência de critérios gerais, parece que, nestes casos, isso se deve ao gosto pessoal do resenhista. Não raramente, surgem atritos com escritores, que reagem à crítica, atacando resenhas e resenhistas. No prefácio a *Mount Henneth* (1782), Robert Bage acusa:

> Books of this class are printed, published, bought, read, and deposited in the lumber-garret, three months before the reviewers say a syllable of the matter.

William Beckford, por sua vez, inclui na sua sátira *Modern-Novel Writing*, de 1796, um "humble address to the doers of that excellent and impartial review, called the *British Critic*", onde critica a conduta e a parcialidade dos críticos, sarcasticamente dirigindo-se a eles como os "great and generous arbitrators of national taste!" e "ye worthy magistrates of the mind ! Também com os livreiros as relações parecem não ter sido muito fáceis. Além da briga pública entre o *London Magazine* e Francis e John Noble*, há outros exemplos de acusações

mútuas entre uns e outros. O *Critical Review* responde, em uma resenha de uma publicação dos Noble, a um ataque, infelizmente sem registro:

> As Mess. Noble have frequently taken the liberty to call in question our abilities and integrity in the task which we have undertaken, and most impudently asserted that we give our judgments of things which we have never read, we have here taken the pains to analyse this flimsy and miserable performance, a trouble which they must not expected we shall take for the future.

E depois de qualificar o romance em questão como "trash", o resenhista continua:

> Novels, if well written, may be of great use; and if Mess Noble will give us a good one, we shall be as ready to praise it, as their sanguine friends and readers. In the mean time, we will not so far prostitute our pens and character as to recommend what we despise, or praise any performance which we do not approve.(resenha de *The History of Miss Sable, The Critical Review*, vol. V, janeiro de 1758)

Desde os anos 50, portanto, são comuns as reclamações a respeito de baixa qualidade e da vulgaridade da produção ficcional. A partir da década de 70, essas reclamações se intensificam sensivelmente, a ponto de a atividade dos escritores contratados pelas casas editoras ser qualificada de "prostituição" e ser responsabilizada pela má reputação do gênero. De fato, com o aumento da demanda, os plágios e a maquiagem de obras encalhadas, ou já publicadas, se tornaram práticas comuns. Tal truque não escapa ao resenhista do *Monthly Review*, que fornece aos leitores "a recipe for dressing up novels":

> Go to Middle Row, Holborn; where, since mankind have discovered that their own hair is sufficiently capable of distortion, the sellers of old cast-off wigs have given place to the dealers in cast-off books; there, on the bulks, from among the classes of a groat or sixpence per volume, buy any old forgotten novel, the older the better; give new names to the personages and places, reform the dates, modernize such circumstances as may happen to be antiquated, and, if necessary, touch up the style a little with a few of those polite cant words and phrases that may be in fashion at the time. All this may be done with a pen, in the margin of the printed book, without the trouble of transcribing the whole, unless it is to be carried to a bookseller for sale; for then you must shew a manuscript. In either case, it may be boldly sent to the printer;

for printers, like surgeons and lawyers, are bound to keep the secrets of their employers.(vol. LXXXVII, julho de 1791)

Há outras facetas interessantes nesta batalha entre críticos e produtores. Com receio de ofender "a lady's delicacy", os críticos geralmente demonstravam parcialidade para com a produção feminina e declaravam, sem rodeios, que "we are usually tender of the production of a female pen" ou proclamavam "all our partiality to the sex". Muitos romances eram poupados de qualquer comentário mais duro pelo resenhista, com base na assinatura por uma "female pen". Os exemplos são vários e demonstram um procedimento comum ao *Monthly* e ao *Critical Review*:

> A faint imitation of Mr. Richardson's writings. We shall say no more, as it is a lady's production." (sobre Jemina and Louisa, Monthly Catalogue, *The Monthly Review*, vol. XXI, julho de 1759)
> To treat this little production with any degree of severity would be unpardonable, as it is the performance of a lady. (sobre *The School for Wives*, Monthly Catalogue, *The Monthly Review*, vol. XXVIII, abril de 1763)

Muitos escritores de aluguel, dando-se conta desta brecha, passam a adotar identidade feminina, se escondendo sob pseudônimo de mulher ou assinando suas produções com "by a lady", prática logo detectada pelos críticos. Sobre o próprio *Jemina and Louisa*, mencionado acima, o *Critical Review* comenta:

> Yet let not the ladies carry off all the glory of the late productions ascribed to them; it is plain by the stile, and a nameless somewhat in the manner, that pretty fellows, coffee critics, and dirty-shirted dunces, have sometimes a share in the achievement. We have detected so many of these impostors already, that for the future it is resolved to look upon every publication that shall be ascribed to a lady, as the work of one of this amphibious fraternity. (Monthly Catalogue, vol. VIII, agosto de 1759)

Também o *Monthly Review* levanta esta hipótese:

> It is not impossible but that the deference usually paid to the fair sex, and the disposition mankind generally shew to be pleased with their performances, may tempt masculine writers of light literature, sometimes to shelter themselves under petticoats. This surmise is omly founded on the frequent profession of novels being written by *Ladies*; but should this ever happen to be the case, whatever protection it may prove

> against censure, such an author would not find it easy to undress himself and, in his own proper person, claim the bays bestowed on the lady. (Monthly Catalogue, *The Monthly Review*, vol. XL, junho de 1769)

O *Analytical Review*, que aparece em cena somente na década de 80, não parece disposto a ser tão condescendente com a "female pen", preocupando-se muito mais em cumprir seu compromisso de zelar pela virtude das mocinhas de então. Lançado com o propósito de "difundir o conhecimento, e promover o interesse da ciência, da virtude e da moralidade", assume o papel de guardião das mentes das jovens, criticando os "mishapen monsters, daily brought forth to poison the minds of our young females, by fostering vanity, and teaching affectation." O *Analytical* apresenta a mesma estrutura dos outros dois periódicos. Mas, mais conservador, em sua campanha a favor da modéstia, da virtude da naturalidade femininas, às vezes investia contra as romancistas, acusando-as de apresentar uma imagem distorcida da feminilidade, sem perceber que estas apenas respeitavam as convenções romanescas no desenho de suas heroínas:

> ...Why do all female writers, even when they display their abilities, always give a sanction to the libertine reveries of men? Why do they poison the minds of their own sex, by strenghtening a male prejudice that makes women systematically weak? We alluded to the absurd fashion that prevails of making the heroine of a novel boast of a delicate constitution; and the still more ridiculous and deleterious custom of spinning the most picturesque scenes out of fevers, swoons and tears. (resenha de *A Simple Story*, de Elizabeth Inchbald, *Analytical Review*, vol. X, maio de 1791)

Cobrindo um largo período, durante o qual acompanham a construção do romance de perto, e contituindo-se em um forum importante de discussão do gênero, tanto o *Monthly* quanto o *Critical Review* se vêm obrigados, diante do aumento da produção de romances, a diminuir o espaço dedicado ao comentário de cada um deles, acabando por deixar de lado o compromisso de resenhar toda e qualquer nova publicação. Sem abandonar a prática de dar a devida atenção às obras mais importantes, eles passam a dividir a tarefa com os outros quatro "book reviews"que tinham aparecido em cena, a partir dos anos 80. Além da *Analytical Review* (1788 - 1799), mencionada acima, surgiram *The English Review* (1783 - 1796), *The British Critic* (1793 - 1843) e *The Literary Review* (1794 - 1795).

Confrontados com a torrente inesgotável de romances medíocres publicados na "Leadenhall Street" (onde ficava a Minerva Press de William Lane) ou pelos "Messrs. Noble's manufactory"[10], os resenhistas

não se negaram ao reconhecimento das potencialidades do gênero. Pelo contrário, esforçaram-se por distiguir o bom do mau romance, oferecendo parâmetros para os leitores e ajudando-os na tarefa de escolher suas leituras. O largo período coberto pela sua atividade nos permite testemunhar sua adaptação às mudanças do gosto. É assim que, na década de 90, com a voga do romance gótico, os vemos adaptar seu instrumental crítico para avaliar os novos caminhos por onde trilhava o gênero.

Segundo Robert Mayo, é possível questionar se as longas resenhas, que transcreviam generosamente trechos das obras em julgamento, eram um incentivo ou um empecilho à venda de romances. Pelas reclamações dos romancistas, a segunda alternativa lhe parece mais provável. Entretanto, os livreiros pensavam de outra forma, freqüentemente encorajando os jornais e revistas a publicarem trechos de suas novas publicações como forma de propaganda[11]. Esta é apenas mais uma polêmica, nas complicadas relações entre todos os envolvidos no processo de construção e consolidação do romance.

Um fato, no entanto, é inegável. Por mais que a atividade crítica exercida nesses periódicos possa ser vista hoje como pouco inspirada ou inovadora, é preciso reconhecer o papel que ela desempenhou na formação do gosto e no estímulo do interesse do público leitor pelo romance. Não bastasse isso, ela ainda foi capaz de avaliar com acerto a qualidade de muitos dos romances produzidos então. O reconhecimento das realizações de Richardson, Fielding, Smollet e Sterne - "the Wedgewoods of their days", segundo o *Monthly Review* de julho de 1791 - forneceu a estes críticos um padrão a partir do qual eles pudram julgar a produção contemporânea e apreciar o trabalho de uma série de romancistas que, até recentemente, foram apagados de muitos manuais de história de romance. Destes, a maioria são mulheres, injustamente ignoradas ou rapidamente deixadas de lado por historiadores e críticos como Walter Allen ou até mesmo Ian Watt. No século XVIII, escritores como Frances Sheridan, Charlotte Smith, Elizabeth Inchbald, Fanny Burney, Ann Radcliffe ou Robert Bage se destacam da mediocridade reinante nas prateleiras das bibliotecas-circulantes. Se eles não atingem o nível dos quatro grandes mestres, formam um "segundo time" bastante respeitável, com contribuições importantes para a história do romance. A crítica da época foi capaz de reconhecer e registrar isso .

Sem fôlego para grandes vôos teóricos, esses militantes da pena estavam mais voltados para as questões de crítica prática e fizeram de Richardson e Fielding o referencial a partir do qual julgavam a ficção. Estes dois romancistas não são apenas os fundadores do romance mas também as balizas que servem de guia à atividade crítica do período. Tomados como modelos, sua influência se faz sentir através das referências diretas, das comparações, ou dos ecos de suas concepções e práticas nas avaliações dos resenhistas.

O pensamento crítico a partir de 1740 fica indiscutivelmente

marcado pelas idéias defendidas por Richardson - secundadas por Samuel Johnson - e pelas de Fielding. Esssas duas concepções da teoria e da prática do romance se enraizam e frutificam na obra de seus seguidores e imitadores e se fazem presentes nos periódicos.

Samuel Richardson e Henry Fielding haviam publicado, no curto período de 14 anos (1740 - 1754), seis romances, dos quais dois contam entre os maiores já escritos. Além de dar forma ao novo gênero, haviam contribuído para estabelecer suas bases teóricas em prefácios, cartas, ou capítulos introdutórios. Estes princípios, técnicas e métodos ecoam ao longo de toda a segunda metade do século, nas palavras dos críticos, na permanência da forma epistolar, na imitação dos capítulos prefatórios, na proliferação dos romances sentimentais, e na diluição e banalização de tudo isso em mãos competentes.

Contemporâneos, os dois grandes mestres tiveram uma carreira literária semelhante, em que pese sua famosa rivalidade. Reconhecidos e aclamados por seus leitores e pela crítica, ambos escreveram três romances, dos quais o segundo é sua obra-prima, e deixaram um legado inestimável para a história do romance. Aqui, entretanto, as coincidências terminam, pois Richardson e Fielding enveredaram por caminhos bastante diferentes no propósito de dar forma literária à experiência do homem comum.

Samuel Richardson vai procurar adptar a teoria do drama ao "new species of writing". Preocupado em representar os conflitos de seus personagens, divididos entre o coração e a consciência, entre suas inclinações pessoais e as convenções sociais, ele vai encontrar na técnica epistolar a solução formal de que necessita para criar uma narrativa essencialmente dramática e psicologicamente realista. Escondendo-se atrás da figura do editor, dá voz a seus personagens para expor esses conflitos de forma direta. A opção pelo método do "writing to the moment" permite ao escritor aprender o personagem em meio às suas contradições e resulta num fino estudo de seus estados de consciência..

A despeito das longas discussões sobre os romances na sua correspondência, a defesa mais consistente e elaborada de Samuel Richardson da teoria do romance epistolar está no prefácio e posfácio a *The History of Clarissa* e nas anotações para estes dois textos. A permanência e penetração desta técnica narrativa podem ser constatadas nos 800 e tantos romances epistolares escritos até 1790, quando este modo de narrar começa a entrar em declínio.[12]

Fielding, por sua vez, parecia mais interessado em compor um panorama da sociedade de seu tempo e foi buscar na épica o quadro de referência sobre o qual estruturou sua obra. De formação aristotélica, via a ficção como um artefato, isto é, como imitação de uma ação humana, cuja ordenação e organicidade estrutural é obra de seu criador. Fielding não esconde o caráter fictivo de sua narrativa e usa, de forma magistral, as intervenções e intrusões do seu narrador para não deixar seu leitor esquecer-se disso. Suas teorias sobre o que denominou de "comic epic in prose" são consistentemente desenvolvidas no famoso prefácio a *Joseph*

Andrews e nos capítulos introdutórios de *Tom Jones*.

São suas teorias e sobretudo sua prática que estes dois grandes escritores legam ao século XVIII. Críticos e romancistas (com exceção de Smollett e Sterne, que escolhem outros caminhos) vão beber nesta fonte e funcionar como elos na cadeia de transmissão que vai disseminar estas idéias e fazê-la ecoar[13].

No final do século, na pequena sala de estar de uma casa de Steventon, sul da Inglaterra, uma jovem começava a dar seus primeiros passos na arte da ficção e criar os enredos e personagens que fariam dela uma grande romancista.

Desde logo, demonstrou não compartilhar com alguns de seus comtemporâneos o menosprezo pelo gênero. Em carta datada de 18 de dezembro de 1798, ela escrevia para sua irmã Cassandra:

> I have received a very civil note from Mrs. Martin requesting my name as a subscriber to her library ... As an inducement to subscribe Mrs. Martin tells us that her collection is not to consist of Novels, but of every kind of literature, etc, etc.
> She might have spared this pretension to *our* family, who are great novel readers and not ashamed of being so.

Grande apreciadora de Fanny Burney, leitora dos romances sentimentais e góticos que iria parodiar mais tarde[14], Jane Austen conseguiu abrir novas perspectivas para o gênero. Apoiada na tradição estabelecida por seus antecessores, ela foi capaz de combinar de forma genial as técnicas utilizadas por Richardson e Fielding. Como o primeiro, fez uma fina análise e investigação psicológica dos seus personagens uma das linhas de força de seu romance. Segundo McKillop, Richardon

> ...hanted on to Jane Austen the tradition of a judgment of society by the intelligent feminine mind, secured by an accepted social and moral system.[15]

A miniaturista, que descreve sua obra como "the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect after much labour"[16], parece herdar do autor de *Pamela* a técnica microscópica de observação e descrição de personagens e situações.

De Fielding, herda o olhar distanciado do narrador que observa seus personagens se moverem no mundo das convenções sociais e os retrata com a ironia de quem os vê pelo lado de fora. O riso e a perspectiva irônicos, o desprezo pela pretensão e hipocrisia revelam semelhanças de atitude entre os dois romancistas.

Ao combinar qualidades de Richardson e de Fielding à sua marca pessoal, Jane Austen iria conduzir o gênero por novos caminhos. Nas suas mãos, o romance pode novamente ser descrito como "some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the

most thorough knowledge of human naturem the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language."

NOTAS

* Todas as citações foram mantidas em inglês porque sua tradução implicaria perda do sabor que elas possuem no original. Também foi conservada a grafia corrente no século XVIII.

1 William Lane iniciou suas atividades como livreiro e editor em 1775, mas o nome Minerva Press só foi adotado em 1790. Até 1820, a Minerva Press foi a principal fornecedora de romances para as bibliotecas-circulantes. Esses romances, símbolo de ficção popular, eram em geral de autoria feminina, mas publicados anonimamente ou sob pseudônimo. Muitos deles foram "best sellers " na sua época.

2 SPACKS, Patricia."Ev'ry Woman is at heart a rake" in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. vol.8, n.1, fall 1974, pp. 27-46.

3 *A Simple Story*, Romance de Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald (1791), é um destes casos.

4 "Character" vem do grego e significa instrumento para marcar; daí marca, ou natureza distintiva. Personagem, por sua vez, tem origem no latim "persona" (máscara usada por um ator). O *Oxford English Dictionary* retribui pelo menos 17 significados para o termo "character", o que dá a medida das dificuldades semânticas envolvidas no seu uso. Em um dos seus sentidos, tem como sinônimo a palavra "nature".

5 "Nature" tem um sentido de caráter ou disposição inerente e geral do ser humano ou ainda disposição ou caráter inato e inerente de uma pessoa. Natural, por sua vez, significa usual, normal, não excepcional, semelhante à vida, aquilo que imita de perto a natureza, mas também, simples, não afetado, fácil (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Uma leitura dos prefácios e resenhas mostra que a palavra pode assumir qualquer um desses sentidos. Sob a centralidade do conceito de "nature"para o pensamento do século XVIII, ver WILLEY, Basil. *The Eighteenth Century Background. Studies in the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period*. Londres, Routledge & Kegan Paul, s.d.

6 Em filosofia, realismo se refere à doutrina escolástica da existência objetiva ou absoluta de universais. Coleridge, em 1817, opõe realismo e idealismo, referindo-se a inclinação ao real, ou tendência de ver as coisas como são realmente. Em arte e literatura, o *Oxford English Dictionary* registra seu uso pela primeira vez por Ruskin, em 1856, para referir-se à proximidade com o real, fidelidade de representação e apresentação dos detalhes precisos de um objeto ou cenas reais.

7 Embora poucos numerosos, alguns prefácios de textos ficcionais do século XVII afirmam a intenção de descrever a vida a seu redor, a partir da observação da natureza humana. Parece-me que se trata de uma questão de grau, além do problema do próprio significado de "natural", que muda de acordo com cada sociedade ou período histórico.

8 Resenha de *Walshingham; or, The Pupil of Nature* in *The Analytical Review*, vol. XXVII, janeiro de 1798.

9 Robert Mayo menciona a briga em seu *The English Novel in the Magazines*, 1740-

1815 (Oxford University Press, 1962) O que de fato aconteceu foi uma polêmica, queteve início por causa da resenha de dois romances publicados pelos Noble. Em novembro de 1772, na seção "Impartial Reviews of New Publications", o resenhista do *London Magazine* comentou: *The Way to Lose Him*; or, *The History of Miss Wyndham*. By the author of *The Way to Please Him*.
"Written solely for the use of the circulating library, and very proper to debauch all young women who are sill undebauched."
The Way to Please Him: or, *The History of Lady Sedley*. By the author of *The Way to Lose Him*.
"See the last article. The same character will do for both."
Em resposta, os Noble publicaram o panfleto "An Appeal to the Public", onde procuravam se defender, e enviaram um "Advertisement to the Public" para o periódico, em que declaravam sua intenção de "publish only such novels as have for their objects, what their writers ought ever to have in view, amusement, instruction, decency and morality." A polêmica se estende até fevereiro de 1773 e toda a argumentação dos Noble pode ser acompanhada no volume 2 de *The Way to Please Him*, na edição de 1773.

10 *The Monthly Review*, vol. XVII, novembro de 1757.

11 Ver Mayo, Robert, *op.cit.*, p. 208.

12 Robert Day lista 203 títulos de ficção epistolar publicada na Inglaterra entre 1660 e 1740, muitos dos quais eram obras traduzidas do francês. Para ele, com a obra de Samuel Richardson, o processo de desenvolvimento do romance epistolar atinge seu ápice (*Told in Letters. Epistolary Fiction Before Richardson*. The University of Michigan Press, 1966, p. 29). Os romances posteriores são moldados a partir dos modelo richardsoniano não apresentando inovações formais.

13 Embora se possa considerar Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve e Charlotte Smith como precursores, coube a Mrs. Radcliffe o lugar de honra de fundadora do romance gótico. Nem ela nem seus incontáveis seguidores no entanto, teorizaram sobre sua prática. Visto como um desenvolvimento do culto à sensibilidade o gótico postulava a assossiação do terror à beleza. Edmund Burke, em *Inquiry into the Sublime an Beauiful*, de 1756, aparece ter oferecido à Radcliffe alguns dos postulados que vieram a ser postos em prática nos seus romances.

14 Em sua correspondência, Jane Austen faz menção a diversos romancistas e personagens de romance. Ver Chapman, R. W. *Collected Letters*. Oxford University Press, 1955.

15 Mckillop, Allan D. *The Early Masters of English Fiction*, University of Kansas Press / Constable and Co., 1962, p. 95.

16 Carta à J. Edward Austen, datada de 16 de dezembro de 1816.

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TRAVELLER'S NOTES: THE LAWRENCE COUNTRY

Olga Creidy

People from all over the world make literary pilgrimage to *Nottinghamshire* to visit the places associated with D. H. Lawrence, novelist, playwright, poet and artist. They enjoy walking around the towns and watching the buildings which influenced his writing. This celebrated county has a proud and historic past. Its hilly countryside and its fields of farming and forestry can be seen on every hand although coal is the real wealth of the land.

D. H. Lawrence was born in the mining village of *Eastwood*, on 11th September, 1885, at number *8a Victoria Street*. A plaque on the door indicates the birthplace of D. H. Lawrence. The place is a *Museum* now. The small red roof, brick terrace house - near the meadows that Lawrence called "The Country of My Heart" - has been restored to reflect the lifestyle of the working class of Victorian times, and furnished with appropriate furniture, including the sideboard that belonged to his family, the brass-knobbed iron bedsteads, rag rugs, lace tablecloths, Victorian pictures and texts, and his mother's writing-table and chiffonière. The Gift Shop at the Museum has a large number of special D. H. Lawrence souvenirs for visitors to take home, including books by and about the writer.

Visitors are also pleased to see the three other houses where his family lived in Eastwood: at *28 Garden Road*, then at *8 Walker Street*, and later moved to *97 Lynncroft*. It is also interesting to visit the surrounding countryside which was the setting for so many of his stories and novels. His books *Sons and Lovers* and *The White Peacock* contain scenes described and based on Eastwood life.

From his birthplace literary pilgrims go south and reach *Nottingham*, the large industrial and one of the most important cities of the country. Here they pass in front of the *Greasley Beauvale Infants School* where Lawrence studied as a child, go on to visit Nottingham High School, and then continue till they reach Nottingham University to visit the *University College* which has many connections with Lawrence. It was in its high-towered Gothic stone building, on Shakespeare Street, that Lawrence studied and took his Teacher's Certificate. In its spacious lakeside campus many times Lawrence crossed its paths going to his classes or simply wandered about. And it was also here that he began his first novel.

An interesting building to visit is the modern *Eastwood Library* which

has a new *Local Studies Room* housing an extensive collection of Lawrence relics, manuscripts, first editions, and books both by and about Lawrence. At the library there is a sort of unofficial *D. H. Lawrence Information Service* managed by members of the D. H. Lawrence Association who are friendly and too pleased to help.

Thousands of people go to the *Albany Hotel* all year round. This first class hotel organises a "Lawrence Weekend" on the last weekend of each month. The programme includes lectures, slide presentation, and a coach trip to the places associated with the writer.

Modern constructions and old buildings remain, side by side, in the city. So we can see old Victorian shops and pubs alongside new shopping centers, among which the *Broadmarsh Centre* and the *Victoria Centre* — built around Victoria Station whose lone remnant is the Clock Tower, —the first purpose built regional shopping centre in Britain (June 1972). It still remains a powerful attraction with its air-conditioned shopping malls, its foliage and its mirrors. The shopping centres are linked by pedestrianised streets to the traditional city centre shops and arcades around the Council House and the old Market Square.

People can find entertainment at the *Theatre Royal* and the *Royal Concert Hall* as well as *Nottingham Playhouse*, one of the finest and most modern theatres in Europe. This city can also boast of its *Festival* when music, drama, art, pageantry, sport and entertainment, all have a prominent place in the festivities. It also present a distinct flavour of "olden times" as jousting, archery, falconry and medieval feasts in the ancestral manor, help to recreate a picture of English life in the Middle Ages.

St. Mary's Church is one of the dominant features of the townscape. This fine example of the 15th Century architecture is cruciform in plan with a great square tower over the crossing. The style is perpendicular, with wide high windows letting in plenty of light.

Visitors to the town will certainly go up the *Castle*, built on a great rock and not far from the city centre. The original castle was demolished and was replaced by a *ducal residence* - now a fine *Art Gallery* and *Museum* with magnificent collections of ceramics, silver and glass, military displays, and collections of watercolours, oils, prints and sculpture. In the underground of the rock there are caves and interlacing tunnels which run through it and beneath the city streets.

As the first item on their programme some present-day visitors often choose to see the bronze life-size statue of *Robin Hood* in his hunting suit, armed with his bow and arrow standing outside the Castle wall, on a little plot of land known as Robin Hood's Green; the four bronze plaques on the wall behind the statue depict well known episodes from his career.

Then tourists make an excursion outside the city, to the place where Robin Hood lived, now the so-called *Sherwood Forest Country Park*, half-an-hour's drive from Nottingham. Part of the forest has retained its identity as an old 13th Century Royal Hunting Forest. Its Visitor Centre has a permanent exhibition about the Forest, its history, etc. Besides its

legends the Forest can also be proud of its red deers and its woodpeckers. But the most important role the Centre plays is giving the Forest back to the people from whom it had been taken away.

There is plenty for the travellers to see in this most beautiful and historically interesting part of the country . They can follow Lawrence custom of rambling about the countryside on his free time, and do much reading and writing outdoors.

Pilgrims can spend an afternoon at *Wollaton Mall* set in over 500 acres of lovely parkland. This well preseved Elizabethan mansion just a few minutes away from the city centre, is one of the most interesting and ornate Tudor buildings in England, and houses the city's *Natural History Museum.*

People are suggested a tour of the Forest area, including three places of outstanding interest to everyone visiting this part of Britain. *Thoresby Mall*, a vast and magnificent Victorian Mansion built in the Tudor style. The Great Mall has a hammerbeam-roof. Other rooms shown to visitors include the Rococo Blue Drawing Room and the Victorian Bedroom, which was occupied by Queen Victoria in 1871 shortly after the house was completed. *Southwell Minster*, built in the 12th - 14th Centuries, has been the setting for several Festival concerts. It is famed for its richly sculptured foliage known as "the leaves of Southwell". And *Newstead Abbey*, open to the public from Easter to the end of September. The mansion, ancestral home of the poet Lord Byron, is a rare example of a medieval priory converted in the 16th Century for the use as a family house.

Back to the city literary pilgrims usually visit the *Council House*, an imposing construction decorated with frescoes commemorating the Men of Sherwood, and that dominates the centre of the city. A place most visitors to the Lawrence Country like to go for a drink is the 12th Century *Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem "Tavern"* where crusaders en route for the Holy Land used to call in for a refreshment. Built against the base of the Castle rock it attracts many thousands of people.

Lawrence travelled abroad and lived for some years in Italy, Australia and the U. S. A., in search of a better climate for his poor heath. In his last months, when very ill, Lawrence spend some time in the *Ad Astra Sanatorium,* in Vence, near Nice, France. Then he went to live at *Villa Robermond,* in Vence (now the Villa Aurella, where he died on 2nd March, 1930).

Although mentioned on the gravestone D. H. Lawrence is not buried in the family grave. Some years after his death his ashes were taken from Vence to Kiowa Ranch, in North America, but the headstone from his grave at Vence can be seen on display in the Eastwood Library.

Well known all over the world for his novel *Lady Chaterley's Lover* which caused a great scandal at that time, *David Herbet Lawrence* was a powerful and sensitive writer who had a considerable influence on his contemporaries, and is much praised by the critics and literary people for his poems, novels and travel books.

CONRAD NO BRASIL

Antonio Eduardo de Oliveira

Joseph Conrad (originalmente Jósef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, nascido na Rússia em 1857, morreu na Inglaterra em 1929) é reconhecido pelos leitores comuns de literatura em inglês como um escritor de estórias sobre o mar. Esta é, no entanto, uma visão que diminui a complexidade de um escritor cujo foco de interesse é a ambivalência da natureza humana. Enfoques críticos atuais da obra de Conrad mostram que o emprego feito por ele da estética do grotesco revela um aspecto importante de suas novelas. Através do grotesco Conrad analisa a natureza humana. Recorrendo ao grotesco Conrad constrói uma visão irônica do mundo utilizando princípios da estética da tradição do carnaval. Isso se expressa pelo emprego da caricaturização de personagens e situações. Conrad, então, elabora uma visão do mundo desordenado. Desta forma, ele prega a sua crença nos valores da solidariedade, da fidelidade e do auto-controle, recorrendo a uma ironia mordaz. A obra de Conrad tem sido traduzida entre nós de forma diversificada. É representada, principalmente, por *Lord Jim* (1900) traduzida por Mario Quintana e até posta à venda em bancas de jornais em coleção da Abril Cultural. Também *A Flexa de Ouro* (1919) tem tradução brasileira. Em 1984, outros de seus grandes romances, *Sob os olhos do Ocidente* (1911) surgiu nas livrarias brasileiras. Nele Conrad analisa as vicissitudes do personagem Razumov que procura por sua identidade mas sem conseguir encontrá-la, nem na Rússia autocrática onde nascera, nem na convivência forçada como espião do Governo em Genebra. *Vitória* (1915) obra onde Conrad enfoca o solepsismo do personagem Axel Heyst e sua necessidade de rendeção pelo compromisso com o outro também apareceu em tradução brasileira no início da década de oitenta. Já *O Coração das Trevas*, que foi transposto para o cinema por Francis Ford Coppola no filme *Apocalypse Now*, teve duas traduções simultâneas no Brasil, na década passada. Agora nos anos noventa, Conrad retorna ao nosso país através de *Nostromo* (1904), sua obra-prima que seria também transposta para o cinema um projeto conjunto do cineasta inglês David Lean, falecido ano passado, e o diretor americano Steven Spielberg.

Num longo e esclarecedor ensaio intitulado "Catástrofe e Sobrevivência" e incluído no livro *Tese e Antítese*, publicado pela Editora Nacional em 1963, Antônio Cândido aponta um paralelo temático importante entre as obras de Conrad e as de Graciliano Ramos. Trata-se do tema da "divisão do ser". O que os distingue é que "Conrad possui uma visão ética firme no seu universo literário, e para ele a divisão do ser, justamente porque é componente próprio ao homem moderno, pode dar lugar a uma formulação da conduto que permite enfrentá-la e

compensá-la. Em Graciliano reina antes um desolado niilismo, que domina a sua obra de ficção e será modificada apenas em parte na obra autobiográfica". (Cândido, X)

Marcando a presença de Conrad no Brasil em termos de estudos críticos, também a ponto o livro de Hamilton Nogueira com o título *Linha da Sombra, um estudo sobre a obra de Joseph Conrad,* publicado pela Gráfica Record Editora no Rio de Janeiro em 1966. É um estudo bem documentado e de estilo fluente de se ler. Nele o autor afirma: "O grande valor artístico da obra de Joseph Conrad está na convivência permanente que mantemos com seus personagens". (Nogueira, 180)

A vinda mais recente de Conrad ao Brasil ocorreu numa pequena obra-prima literária. Refiro-me aqui ao conto de Rubem Fonseca, *Labareda nas Trevas*, título este que explicitamente parodia o nome de uma das maiores obras de Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* publicado pela primeira vez em 1898 na Inglaterra, sendo entre nós traduzida por Marcos Santarrita como *O Coração das Trevas*. Este fato fez Caio Túlio Costa declarar numa resenha feita na jornal *Folha de São Paulo*, edição de domingo, 25 de março de 1984: "Enfim - setenta e oito anos depois de escrito e cinco anos depois que Francis Coppola, em *Apocalypse Now*, deu-lhe uma instigante versão cinematográfica - aparece uma tradução legível do mais profundo e selvagem livro de Joseph Conrad, *O Coração das Trevas*". A mesma resenha também afirma: "O Brasil poderia saber muito mais de Joseph Conrad. Quase todos os seus livros já foram traduzidos para o português. Estranhamente, suas obras não tiveram a mesma repercussão alcançada na Europa e Estados Unidos".

Já a narrativa de Rubem Fonseca está incluída no seu volume de contos mais recente intitulado *Romance Negro* em edição da Editora Compania das Letras, tendo o conto *Labareda nas Trevas* sido publicado inicialmente na *Folha de São Paulo* em 09 de abril de 1989. Valendo-se da liberdade do fazer literário e da licença poética, Fonseca cria e reproduz páginas de um diário fictício escrito por Conrad . As passagens do diário iniciam-se aos 5 de agosto de 1900, sendo este o ano da publicação da novela *Lord Jim*. A novela a qual normalmente o nome de Conrad é associado é também o ano da morte de Steven Crane, exatamente no dia 5 de junho. A última transcrição do diário é datada de julho de 1924, sendo este o ano da morte do próprio Conrad aos 3 de agosto.

O conto de Rubem Fonseca concentra-se no registro da amizade e principalmente na inveja de Conrad pelo estilo do autor de *The Red Badge of Courage*. Para mim esta é uma versão puramente romanceada da realidade. Fundamento minha afirmação me referindo a estudos especializados sobre a obra e vida de Conrad. Por exemplo, o crítico inglês Jocelyn Baines, num estudo clásssico entitulado *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography*, publicado pela primeira vez em 1960 afirma que "Crane havia desenvolvido uma admiração heróica por Conrad" (Baines, 250). Acrescenta também que "os talentos dos dois homens eram tão diferentes que é difícil ver de que forma Crane poderia

ter influenciado Conrad; mas é bem possível que a leitura de Conrad de *The Red Badge* tenha lhe dado o ímpeto para ocupar-se com um assunto semelhante" (Baines, 251). Por sua vez o crítico americano Frederick Karl responsável pela edição de vários volumes de cartas que Conrad escreveu e autor de *Joseph Conrad : The Three Lives, a Biography* publicada em 1979 sustenta a tese defendida por Baines. Frederick Karl relata a semelhança no estilo de Crane em *The Red Badge of Courage* com *O Negro do 'Narcissus' de Conrad.* Assim, enquanto nesta novela Conrad escreve que a água em repouso estava "brilhando como um chão de jóias e tão vazias quanto o céu", Crane, por sua vez falando da guerra civil americana relata que tropas de soldados em movimento faziam "o sol espalhar raios reveladores, e, um a um, os regimentos explodiam à vista como se homens armados acabassem de nascer da terra".

Frederick Karl enfatiza a incoerência de se afrimar que Conrad "aprendeu" com Crane. Ocorre que tanto Conrad quanto Crane tiveram uma fase de influência impressionista. Tanto *O Negro de 'Narcissus'* como *The Red Badge of Courage* são obras que recorrem à técnica impressionista de narração para mostrar "a afirmação do paradoxo do determinismo da natureza e a defesa aguda de valores humanos em face de um universo mecânico " (Karl, 410). Todas "as duas novelas foram muito representativas do desenvolvimento se seus autores". Ocorre no entanto que "Conrad viveu por mais vinte e sete anos" e sua obra posterior comprova que *"O negro*, além do seu valor intrínseco", se revela como um estágio no desenvolvimento de Conrad como escritor. "Ele iria adiante desta técnica ; no entanto Crane, morreu aos 29 anos com sua vida abreviada, simplesmente não teve a oportunidade de amadurecer-se é que chegaria a ter —superficialmente, temos o desenvolvimento paralelo de dois escritores que se tocariam temporariamente mas a grosso modo eram amplamente diferentes". (410)

O crítico Mário Pontes ao resenhar *Romance Negro* para *o Jornal do Brasil* escreve que "na vida real, ele (Crane) e Conrad foram amigos por um breve período. O conto sequer tangencia os motivos pelos quais essa amizade deixou de prosperar. Em compensação, mostra como a memória de Crane vai se tornando odiosa a Conrad, cada vez que um crítico compara a obra dos dois ou sugere a influência do americano sobre o inglês". Escreve ainda que "o leitor, entretanto, gostaria de saber o que há por trás do modo como Fonseca abordou a dissidência entre os dois grandes escritores". Conrad e Crane não foram "na vida real, ... amigos por um breve período" como afirma Mário Pontes. Eles nunca foram dissidentes e Conrad manteve profunda admiração pessoal e literária por Crane ao longo de sua vida. Por exemplo, quatorze anos após a morte de Crane, Conrad terminou de escrever o conto "O Plantador de Malata" publicado no Volume *Within the Tides* em 1915. A fonte de inspiração da estória estava no projeto irrealizado

de Conrad e Crane que juntos escreverem uma peça teatral que se chamaria *O Predecessor*. Conrad saudoso da convivência intelectual do escritor e amigo americano escreve:

> Jamais haverá qualquer colaboração para nós agora. Mas eu imagino, se ele estivesse vivo se ficaria satisfeito com o conto..., talvez, depois de pegar o volume com aquele ar desprendido que eu lembro tão bem, e virando página após página em silêncio, ele iria subitamente ler em voz alta uma linha ou duas e depois olhar direto nos meus olhos como era o hábito dele em tais ocasiões, e diria com toda a dedicação do afeto que havia nele: "Eu gosto-disso, Joseph". (Delbanco, 63)

Discordo ainda dos comentários de Mário Pontes, diante da complexidade dos temas abordados por Conrad ao longo de sua obra. A leitura crítica de novelas como *O Coração das Trevas, Lord Jim, O Agente Secreto, Sob o olhar do Ocidente, Vitória e Nostromo* provam que Conrad vai muito além do impressionismo do autor de *The Red Badge of Courage.* Além de haver reforçado minha objeção referindo-me a pesquisas de grandes acadêmicos voltados para a obra de Conrad, também me fundamento no estudo extensivo feito de seus livros já por mais de uma década.

Como já declarou o escritor e ensaísta Franklin de Oliveira "na visão poética de Conrad, o homem só revela sua grandeza ou sua miséria quando se defronta com as forças que o querem esmagar. Cada novela de Conrad mostra esta temática constante através da "extrema complexidade de sua técnica narrativa".

Em resenha consistente e bem humorada para a revista *Isto é Senhor*, Mário Sabino compara o universo político de *Nostromo* ao nosso país. Diz ele, "Qualquer semelhança com o Brasil não parece ser mera coincidência. Costaguana é aqui. " O ensaísta Paulo Prado, em *Retrato do Brasil,* aponta a cobiça como um dos fatores constitutintes do (ou da falta de) caráter nacional. Não se sabe se ele leu ou não *Nostromo.* O fato é que também na republiqueta em questão" a sede de riqueza é o móvel de todas as ações humanas".

Para mim a atualidade de Conrad para o leitor brasileiro se manifesta pela análise de temas relacionados à força destrutiva do imperialismo e da crítica à corrupção política. Sua defesa dos princípios redentores da solidariedade, do auto-controle e da fidelidade, que a meu ver é feita de forma irônica, por meio da carnavalização, também nos torna próximos. Minha proposta de leitura da obra de Conrad por meio da observação do grotesco e da carnavalização da narrativa pode ser constatada em *Nostromo.* Nesta novela políticos caricaturais promovem sucessivas revoluções que não contribuem para uma melhora social e econômica do país. Antes, expressam sua ganância pelo poder e pelo lucro oferecido por recursos naturais de Costaguana, país fictício da América do Sul.

Conrad demonstra isso ao descrever políticos e situações de Costaguana de forma caricatural. Acrescenta ainda comentários críticos de personagens como Martin Decoud que compara a política de seu país a uma "opera bouffe"e farsa macabra onde "tudo é gritantemente engraçado" e "o sangue flui o tempo todo, e os atores acreditam estar influenciando o destino do universo". Se no aspecto coletivo a narrativa de Nostromo ridiculariza a corrupção política, no aspecto individual Conrad carnavaliza relações humanas por meio de uma ironia mordaz. Isto se observa nos desencontros de idéias e de personagens masculinas como Charles Gould, o inglês idealista que administra a mina de prata, acreditando no valor redentor de interesses materiais como forma de promover justiça social, quando na prática apenas contribui para fortalecer a ambição de políticos corruptos, como também abre as portas do país para o capital estrangeiro.

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DYLAN THOMAS : O BARDO AO MICROFONE

Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira

Introdução

Entre os poetas, há os que conseguem se resignar à agrafia, sobrevivendo à própria criatividade. O exemplo clássico é o de Rimbaud: aos dezenove anos, depois da íntima e violenta ligação com Verlaine, o poeta francês abandonou a poesia pela vida errante através da Europa e da África, até morrer, quase duas décadas depois.

Dylan Thomas inscreve-se no grupo oposto. Como a maioria dos românticos ingleses - e brasileiros - não conseguiu ultrapassar o fim da juventude. Morreu em Nova York em 1953, aos trinta e nove anos, durante sua terceira viagem aos Estados Unidos. Aí as apresentações em público, com récitas de seus poemas, traziam compensações financeiras indispensáveis à sua vida perdulária. E aí também, subistituindo a cerveja pelo *whisky*, encontrou uma solução para o que pareceu a muitos a arquetípica busca inconsciente do suicídio. Essa hipótese não é inverossímil. Depois de *Deaths and Entrances*, de 1946, Thomas escrevera cada vez menos poesia. Tinha crises de pânico, extravasadas em agressividade. Diferentemente de Rimbaud - e de outros, como Wordsworth - não parecia capaz de enfrentar o silêncio de sua arte, e a morte pode ter representado uma saída para a agrafia intolerável.

Nos últimos anos de vida, Dylan Thomas dedicou-se mais à prosa que à poesia. Duas coletâneas de contos, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog,* de 1940, e *A Prospect of the Sea*, publicação póstuma de 1955 (que também inclui pequenos ensaios) reúnem material selecionado por Thomas pouco antes de morrer. Esta, segundo Daniel Jones, seria prosa que gostaria de ver preservada. *A Prospect* apareceu postumamente, como os contos de *Adventures in the Skin Trade* (1955) e os textos compostos para apresentação no rádio reunidos em *Quite Early One Morning* (1955) . Destinados a esse tipo de difusão há ainda os textos dramáticos *A Child's Christmas in Wales* (1954) e *Under Milkwood : A Play for Voices* (1954). Não se pode esquecer *The Doctor and the Devils* (1953), *script* para filme, adaptação do conto de Donald Taylor.

Mas é sobretudo como poeta que Dylan Thomas sobrevive: poeta pelo que escreveu, poeta pela imagem que projetou. No fim da vida, gordo e inchado, desfigurado pela bebidas e as noitadas, tornara-se quase irreconhecível. Entretanto, permanece na memória literária a figura paradoxal, misto de anjo e sátiro, fixada no quadro de Augustus John. Reproduzido ao início de *Collected Poems, 1914 - 1952*, o retrato mostra um jovem de cabelos encaracolados, lábios carnudos e olhos

imensos, voltados para uma visão exterior, invisível para nós outros. Dylan Thomas evoca aí a lenda de si mesmo. Ela inclui o bardo celta, exuberante, apaixonado, grandiloqüente, rebelde e místico. Mas não exclui o boêmio, grande *causeur*, que varava a noite com amigos. Quando envergava essa *persona*, Thomas, gênio da sociabilidade, algumas vezes roçava a imagem do bufão.

Há quem atribua a primeira, a imagem do bardo, a sua origem celta. Ela seria responsável por um conflito interior, típico entre uma exarcebada sensualidade e um misticismo puritano, uma retórica extravagante e um artesanato poético perfeccionista, tudo aliado à religiosidade emocional e a uma intensa preocupação com o sexo.

A dualidade de Thomas lembra sua biografia. Dylan Marlais Thomas nasceu no país de Gales, em Swansea, filho de um professor de inglês - ele próprio poeta *manqué*. Thomas manteve em Gales suas raízes. Da ascendência celta, conservou a paixão e a grandiloqüencia. Ligado a linda Caitlin Macnamara por um casamento tempestuoso (que Caitlin retratará em *Leftover Life to Kill)*, morava com ela e os três filhos em Gales, na casa de Laughorne. Mas passava boa parte do tempo em Londres. Lá deixava vir à tona o boêmio incorrigível. Aproveitava também as múltiplas oportunidades profissionais e financeiras proporcionadas por seus dons de repórter, jornalista cômico, locutor, autor de esboços e contos para rádio e scripts para filmes. Bardo em Gales, *enfant terrible* em Londres, Thomas exibiu uma e outra *persona* em três viagens pelos Estados Unidos. Como Dickens em outros tempos, hipnotizava imensas platéias, com a beleza de sua voz poderosa lendo os próprios textos. Seguia, assim, a tradição da poesia celta, recitada. Criava também uma nova imagem, a do bardo ao microfone. Mas sem descuidar da turbulenta publicidade de sua vida de beberrão. Morreu numa dessas viagens, confirmando a lenda viva que encarnava, do poeta-boêmio, vítima dos próprios excessos.

Obra Poética

A crítica foi inicialmente adversa ao primeiro livro de Thomas, *Eighteen Poems* (1934). Revelados ao mundo das letras londrinas por um prêmio concedido por publicações no *Sunday Referee*, os poemas foram recebidos com violentos ataques e alguns defensores. É difícil não ver na matéria prima desses textos, escritos na adolescência, as experiências, frustações e fantasias eróticas da idade. G. S. Fraser chama a atenção para a "ênfase oratória " e a "nobreza de gesto" com que o jovem poeta tenta dignificar temas raramente tratados pela poesia tradicional.[1] Derek Stanford menciona a "evidente originalidade" dos dezoito poemas, seu "inalduterado interesse pela sexualidade pura, mais que pelo sexo em sua relação com o amor ou a sensualidade. (...) O papel representado pela concepção, a gestação e o futuro ser humano em sua poesia contrastam com o romantismo apaixonado de D. G.

Rossetti, a sensualidade idealizada e imaginativa de Swinburne, a paixão romântica de Keats, a paixão sensual e transcendental de Shelley. Thomas despersonaliza o ato e as circunstâncias do sexo, separa a sexualidade das questões do amor individual (...) projeta a função sexual humana contra um fundo cósmico que duplica o modelo sexual - uma visão do mundo como corpo, misturada a um vago panteísmo ... "Stanford cita Henry Treece, que fala da "unidade fetal"dos dezoito poemas. Observa que "o tema principal é a gênese - uma volta ao princípio das coisas." A imaginação antropomórfica se detém nas origens do homem, o óvulo, o embrião, o homúnculo, o esperma.[2]

Twenty-Five Poems (1936), mais bem recebido pela crítica, pareceu, contudo, "pouco satisfatório" aos dois críticos citados. O poeta experimenta novos temas, novas imagens, novo estilo, de forma muitas vezes discrepante, sem atingir uma síntese satisfatória. Subjaz aos vinte e cinco poemas uma visão ao mesmo tempo religiosa e sexual. Aqui está o famoso texto sobre a morte, *And Death Shall Have No Dominion*, em que alguns críticos têm ouvido uma nota oca, triunfalista: a *persona* do poeta busca, não propriamente confrontar a morte, mas sugestionar a si mesmo (e ao leitor) com um tom declamatório. O pequeno volume inclui *The Hand That Signed the Paper*, um dos textos mais elogiados de Thomas, um de seus raros poemas políticos. (Thomas mostrava-se geralmente apolítico, indiferente, mesmo ao nacionalismo galês e à língua do País de Gales, que nunca falou). A linha final tem sido frequentemente citada como exemplo de uma mistura de metáforas, geralmente não admitida pelos críticos ingleses, mas neste caso aceita como esplêndida: *Hands have no tears to flow - Mãos não derramam lágrimas*. Os poemas mais importantes - e mais obscuros - deste volume são os dez sonetos iniciados por *Altarwise by Owl-light*, alguns deles magníficos. Evocam simultâneamente um desepero pagão e a esperança representada pelo nascimento de Cristo. Segundo Elder Olson os sonetos foram compostos de acordo com um simbolismo preciso e pedante, inspirados pelos movimentos da constelação de Hércules, e sugerindo, ao mesmo tempo, o ser humano e a humanidade de Cristo.[3]

The Map of Love (1939), terceiro volume publicado por Thomas, inclui, além dos poemas, textos em prosa. A crítica viu nestes últimos a influência do tardio interesse dos ingleses pelo Surrealismo e pelo Dadaísmo. Com sua afetada incoerência, táticas sensacionalistas e uma ocasional crueldade e obscenidade, os textos em prosa foram considerados as *pieces noires* do poeta. Embora tenha sido julgado o menos bem recebido de seus livros, *The Map of Love* contém alguns dos poemas mais memoráveis, entre eles *After the Funeral*. Aqui se inclui o curioso *If my Head a Hair's Foot*, diálogo fantástico entre uma mulher em trabalho de parto e a criança prestes a nascer.

Deaths and Entrances (1946) é o seu último volume de poemas inéditos. Só foi seguido por *Colleted Poems - 1934 - 1952*, coletânea publicada pouco antes da morte do poeta, que inclui apenas oito novos poemas. (Em 1971 apareceu uma nova edição, *The Poems of Dylan Thomas*, enriquecida por notas críticas e comentários do compositor Daniel Jones, seu amigo e colaborador.) *Deaths and Entrances* confirma a promessa dos volumes anteriores. Contém vários dos melhores textos, notáveis pela variedade. Aí estão alguns de seus poemas longos, semi-odes, entre os quais os sete famosos textos de sua maturidade artística: *Poem in October, A Winter's Tale, In Country Sleep, Over Sir John's Hill, Poem on his Birthday, In the White Giant's Thigh,* bem como o belíssimo *Fern Hill.*

Deaths and Entrances tem sido saudadoso como uma das duas ou três obras mais notáveis da poesia inglesa depois de T. S. Eliot. Sobressaem nele também *The Conversation of Prayer,* poema curto virtualmente perfeito, e o famoso *A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London* - , ligado às mortes durante durante os bombardeios de Londres pelos alemães na Segunda Guerra Mundial: outra celebração da vida, diante do horror da morte. *Deaths and Entrances* mostra uma variedade de pontos de vista que lembra o cubismo, amalgamando, num todo único, a preocupação sexual de *Eighteen Poems,* o fervor religioso de *Twenty-Five Poems* e a celebração do indivíduo, glorioso como ser único, irrepetível. O volume surpreende com versos de inefável beleza. como este, com sua encantadora seqüência de imagens concatenadas: *The birds of the winged trees flying my name... (Os pássaros das árvores aladas levando em vôo o meu nome...)*

Obra Poética : Fortuna Crítica

A fortuna crítica da poesia de Dylan Thomas tem sido longa e variada. Um artigo de C. B. Cox apresenta um resumo razoável dela.[4] Da perspectiva de nossos dias, Cox registra a "feroz resistência"dos poertas Donald Davie, C. H. Siddon e David Holbroook. Julga absurda essa crítica adversa, dirigida contra o autor de alguns dos versos mais apaixonados e corajosos da língua inglesa : *I advance for as long as forever is, I sang in my chains like the sea , Do not go gentle into that good night.* John Wain detecta na raíz da crítica hostil uma resistência contra o "emocionalismo indissimulado" o "prazer extático"na ourivesaria literária, e, sobretudo, o "tom bárdico", típicos da personalidade celta. O poeta americano Louis Simpson, continua Cox, julga que a fisicalidade, a musicalidade, as imagens altamente visuais, bem como o desprezo de Thomas pelo racional contibuíram para liberar a poesia em língua inglesa dos limites do impessoal. Este processo levou ao enorme sucesso de Ginsberg, em sua leitura de Howl em São Francisco, em 1955. Simpson suspeita que a hostilidade contra Thomas frequentemente deriva de um medo puritano de paixão e do irrracional. Conclui que os mesmos admiradores de Thomas confessam um certo embaraço diante de alguns fatos : o poeta, forçando os limites da linguagem, faz com que boa parte de seus versos se desintegrem em frustantes enigmas; o

desenvolvimento do poema ocorre então, não através do intelecto, mas da verve, do jogo verbal e do incantatório.

David Daiches também tenta resumir a evolução da recepção crítica à poesia de Thomas. Ao contrário do que sugeriram seus primeiros críticos, diz Daiches, Thomas não se tornou fundador de um movimento neo-romântico. Com o tempo, ficou evidente o caráter altamente artesanal de seu texto, descartando-se a imagem inicial do rapsodo. Para Daiches, Thomas, na verdade, não abandonou a tradição simbolista-metafísica inglesa. Suas imagens se ordenam numa seqüência cuidadosamente articulada. O tema central é a unidade e a sacramentalidade de toda vida, de passado e presente, homem e natureza, o contínuo processo de vida, morte e renascimento, que une entre si as gerações. Em seus melhores poemas o tema se organiza em torno de uma teia espessa de imagens derivadas da Bíblia, do folclore e dos pregadores galeses. Uma visão equilibrada revela Thomas como um poeta original, de imenso poder e beleza.[5] Para a maioria dos críticos Thomas, admirado por tantos contemporâneos, não deixou muitos seguidores, exceto entre os membros do movimento *New Apocalypse*.

Será útil mencionar agora a crítica voltada para as relações intertextuais, que vê a tradição como uma constante re-leitura (ou "parricídio", como quer Harold Bloom) do poeta mais antigo pelo mais jovem. Essa crítica associa Thomas a Hopkins, Joyce, Freud e à Bíblia, bem como a Donne, Webster e Beddoes.

A crítica freudiana, aqui representada por Hoffman, julga Thomas o poeta que mais exaustivamente explorou a vida inconsciente latente nos sonhos do homem moderno. Hoffman conclui, entretanto, que os resultados obtidos por Thomas são muito diferentes dos de Joyce em *Finnegans Wake* ou de Waldo Frank em *Chalk Face*. Quanto a proclamada influência de Freud sobre Thomas, ela poderá ter sido o efeito liberador de encorajar a fé do poeta na exploração do inconsciente, através dos vários tipos de sonho: "tudo o que está escondido deveria ser revelado (...) Aproveitando a visão da luz e o conhecimento da nudez escondida, a poesia deve arrastar, até a nudez limpa da luz, as causas secretas, ainda mais do que Freud conseguiu compreender."[6]

O leitor pode consultar também o pronunciamento do poeta sobre a própria obra, que se encontra, por exemplo, em *On Reading One's Own Poems*.[7] Há ainda o *Manifesto Poético*, notas escritas por Thomas em 1951, em resposta a um jovem que formulava uma tese sobre sua poesia.[8] Thomas menciona, entre os que mais o fizeram amar o labor poético, uma longa lista de obras e autores, destacando poemas infantis, folclore, baladas escocesas, alguns hinos religiosos, os textos mais conhecidos da Bíblia, *Songs of Innocence*, de Blake, Shakespeare... Mas nega que tenha sido influenciado por Joyce ou pelo Surrealismo. Declara que nunca estudou conscientemente a Bíblia e que seu conhecimento de Freud é indireto. Confessa-se um artesão consciencioso e incansável, usando todos os artifícios possíveis para fazer o poema mover-se na direção desejada: velhos recursos, como alusões,

paranomásia, assonância, catacrese, paragrama, aliteração, mas também gíria e o ritmo da linguagem cotidiana.

É ainda demasiado cedo para arriscar uma avaliação definitiva da obra poética de Thomas. Fraser coloca bem a questão, quando hesita em dizer se terá sido um gigante entre os poetas menores da língua inglesa, ou, pelo contrário, um poeta menor entre os maiores.[9] Basta-nos saber que trouxe ao mundo alguns poemas perfeitos, e que sua profunda originalidade permanece incontestada. Para o juízo individual, o teste definitivo é a leitura dos poemas, agora facilitada pelo lançamento da obra poética, em tradução de Ivan Junqueira, pela José Olympio. Oferecemos aqui nossa própria tradução de alguns dos textos mais representativos, que poderá ser confrontada com a de Ivan Junqueira, e com os originais de Thomas, transcritos nas notas ao pé de página.

Estilo de Thomas: Alguns Poemas Traduzidos

A obra poética de Thomas tem feito a felicidade dos estudiosos da estilística. Seu uso altamente idiossincrático da linguagem tem inspirado estudos clássicos, como o de G. N. Leech sobre *This Bread I Break*.[10] Em outro texto Leech comenta os "audaciosos artifícios lingüísticos "usados por Thomas em frases como *All the sun long, a grief ago e farmyards away*; em que o desvio estilístico consiste na escolha irrestrita de substantivos onde só membros de uma classe limitada de nomes poderiam aparecer. "O efeito é subverter o sistema normal de contrastes (...) usando uma nova oposição binária entre a ocorrência anormal e o contraste esperado."[11] Independentemente das observações bastantes técnicas de Leech, o leitor nota o efeito altamente sugestivo, condensado, por exemplo, no curto sintagma *a grief ago (há uma dor atrás)*. Usando o substantivo abstrato *grief* em posição onde normalmente se esperaria uma expressão temporal, a voz lírica parece sugerir que a vida humana, tanto quanto em dias e anos, se mede pelo número de suas dores ...

Passando à leitura / tradução de alguns poemas de Thomas, comecemos com este, de *Eighteen Poems:*

A Força que pelo Fuso Verde Guia a Flor

A força que pelo fuso verde guia a flor
Guia meus verdes anos; a que explode as raízes das árvores
Me destrói.
E não consigo falar à rosa torta
Que meus dias regem pela mesma febre hibernal

A força que pelas rochas guia água

Guia meu sangue rubro; a que seca os rios
Transforma os meus em cera.
E não consigo falar às minhas veias
Que na fonte da serra suga a mesma boca.

A mão que revolve a água na lagoa
Mexe a areia movediça; a que laça o vento agitado
Puxa o cordame da minha vela.
E não consigo falar ao enforcado
Que a cai do carrasco é a minha argila.

Lábios do tempo sugam a nascente;
O amor goteja e cresce, mas o sangue corrupto
Aplacará suas dores.
E não consigo falar ao vento uivante
Que o tempo marcou um céu à volta das estrelas

E não consigo falar à tumba do amante
Que no meu leito rasteja o mesmo verme torto.[12]

Este poema ilustra alguns dos temas recorrentes de Thomas: a unidade cósmica, central de toda vida, que inclui a morte. Por isso, a argila de que é feito o homem e a cal sobre o corpo enforcado são parte da mesma terra. O verme - imagem fálica predileta de Thomas - ronda igualmente o túmulo do amante morto e o leito do vivo. Uma visível relação intertextual liga este poema a *The Sick Rose* de Blake, em *Songs of Experience*. A associação entre rosa e verme revela-se, nos dois, imagem da coexistência do amor, da morte e da corrupção: em Thomas, o verme e a rosa são qualificados pelo mesmo adjetivo, *crooked*, sugerindo, no plano literal, a forma torta, encurvada, e, no simbólico, as conotações morais negativas inerentes à idéia da corrupção. Esta, no entanto, é parte do processo de fertilização, que conduz ao renascimento da natureza.

O poema é um exemplo da impressão inicial de obscuridade sugestiva que, no decorrer da leitura, cede às vezes (nem sempre) a uma relativa facilidade de interpretação. Os recursos estilísticos são simples e poderosos: a rima sintática, constituída pela construção sintática idêntica em todos os versos: a poderosa visualidade das imagens, que força uma renovação no processo de percepção; a sugestão de um grande número de objetos em movimento (água, rio, fonte, areia movediça, vento). A imprensão global é de uma movimentação contínua, de um *élan vital* triunfante. O poeta parece querer opor à morte uma atividade intensa e incontrolável, através do qual a vida se recusa a findar. A polissemia enriquecedora de palavras como *torta (crooked)* já foi notada. A colocação inesperada e paradoxal *rosa torta (crooked rose)* lembra a combinação inusitada do poema de Blake, *rosa doente (sick rose)*. Na tradução, foi impossível conservar o trocadilho entre os dois sentidos contidos em *shroud sail (tipo de vela de navegação)* e *shroud (mortalha)*, que alude à idéia da morte, central para o poema. O mesmo se poderá dizer de *sheet*, que pode ser entendido como *lençol*, e, por metonímia, *leito*, ou como *winding sheet (mortalha)*, reiterando a idéia de morte, vida e amor como os vários aspectos de uma mesma realidade.

Do segundo livro de Thomas, *Twenty-Five Poems*, traduzidos agora *This Bread I Break:*[13]

Este Pão que eu Parto

Este pão que eu parto foi outrora aveia.
Este vinho em cepa estranha
Mergulhava seu fruto;
Homem de dia, ou vento à noite
Abateu a colheita, rompeu o júbilo da uva.

Outrora, neste vinho o sangue ardente
Agitava a carne que ornava a videira,
Outrora neste pão
A aveia exultava ao vento;
O homem rompeu o sol, abateu o vento.

Esta carne que partes, este sangue que deixas
Desolar-se nas veias
Foram aveia e uva
Gerados de raiz e seiva sensual;
Bebes meu vinho, arrebatas meu pão.

O poeta volta aqui ao tema da unidade de todos os seres. O homem, o mundo vegetal, o pão e o vinho, recém - saídos deste, partilham da mesma corrente vital. No amor o homem, que consome os frutos da natureza, se deixa consumir pelo ser amado. Para mantê-lo, faz-se pão e vinho. Dessa forma, alimenta e impulsiona um ciclo perpétuo, uma espécie de mito do eterno retorno, forma poética de desafiar a morte. O ritual amoroso, centrado no consumo do pão e do vinho, transforma-se numa espécie de Eucaristia, evocando, por outro lado, o aspecto religioso e sacramental da poesia de Thomas.

O tom quase otimista de *This Bread I Break* não elimina a associação entre o amor e a morte. O vinho sacramental e o pão eucarístico exigem a destruição da uva e do trigo, como o amor implica a entrega, quase a imolação, ao ser amado. A morte nunca anda longe da paixão, para Thomas. Ela é ainda sua grande inspiradora quando, dois anos antes de morrer, dedicou ao pai, doente e cego, o famoso *Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night*. Aqui a ambivalência diante da morte encontra

uma realização quase perfeita. A voz lírica incita o pai a resistir a morte, lutar contra ela: assim fazem santos, sábios e artistas, vendo que a vida lhes proporcionaria mais oportunidades de santidade, sabedoria e beleza. No entanto, a mesma noite, símbolo da morte, é vissta como boa. À razão disso pode ser encontrada na aceitação da morte como parte da própria vida, ou na esperança de que a morte orgânica represente o linear de uma nova forma de existência. (A esse respeito, a poesia de Thomas conservou sempre sua ambivalência.) A tradução tenta recriar, em português, esse belo vilacente. Construído a partir de duas rimas únicas, tem um ritmo dolente, que lembra Yeats:[14]

Não Sigas Dócil para a Noite Boa

Não sigas dócil para a noite boa.
Deve o vento lutar ao pôr do dia:
Luta, luta contra o fim da luz que escoa.

O sábio acolhe a treva embora doa:
Mas como seu falar não irradia.
Não segue dócil para a noite boa.

O santo, em alto mar, vendo quão boa
Pudera ser a virtude na baía,
Luta, luta contra o fim da luz que escoa.

Desvairado, o cantor do sol que voa,
Vê, tarde demais que o entristecia:
Não segue dócil para a noite boa.

À morte, o homem grave vê que à toa
Privou-se, na cegueira, de alegria:
Luta, luta contra o fim da luz que escoa.

E tu, meu pai, lá na altura baldia,
Pragueja, chora, feroz, me abençoa.
Não sigas dócil para a noite boa.
Luta, luta contra o fim da luz que escoa.

De *Deaths and Entraces* tentamos recriar em Português um dos mais belos poemas curtos de Thomas :[15]

A Conversação da Prece

A conversação de preces que vai ser rezada
Pela criança no leito e o homem na escada
Subindo para o quarto da agonizante amada,
- Uma ignorando onde em sonho será levada

Outro cheio de pranto por sua idolatrada -

Envolve no escuro o som que vai sendo alçado
Da terra verdejante ao céu propiciado
Pelo homem na escada e o menino deitado.
O som que emanará de uma e outra prece
Por um sono tranquilo e um amor que falece
Será a mesma dor atada. A quem valerá ?
Vai dormir a criança, ou o homem chorará ?
A conversação de preces que alguém rezará
É pelos vivos e mortos. Já está o homem lá :
Não morta, mas viva e quente, hoje à noite achará

No ardor de seu zelo a amada no sótão
E a criança, sem ver a quem reza a oração,
Alogará em dor funda qual tumba no chão.
E nos olhos do sono verá onda de breu
Levá-la escada acima a alguém que já morreu.

Este poema profundamente religioso centra-se no tema cristão da comunhão dos santos, a idéia de que todas as orações beneficiam a todos os seres : encontram-se a prece do homem pela mulher moribunda e a da criança inocente, que reza antes de dormir. Tal é a comunicação das duas preces que a da criança serve para socorrer o homem, devolvendo-lhe a amada, viva e saudável. A oração do homem, cheio de sofrimento, também atinge a criança, mas para afligi-la com a dor poupada ao adulto. A aparente crueldade desse desfecho parece sugerir o insondável mistério da justiça divina, e da comunicação entre os seres, na ordem espiritual. Thomas usa aqui expressões arcaicas, do tipo *conversation*, que, como *conversação* em português, já teve o sentido de *convivência íntima, comunhão*. Outra expressão arcaica é *the quick and the dead, (os vivos e os mortos)*, frequente na famosa tradução inglesa da Bíblia de 1611. Arcaísmos como esses ocorrem algumas vezes na poesia de Thomas, sublinhando-lhe o tom religioso. *The Conversation of Prayer* tem sido apontado pela crítica como um dos seus poemas curtos mais perfeitos, de notável virtuosismo. G. S. Fraser nota a sutil variedade ritmica e a extraordinária complexidade do arranjo das rimas, colocadas em posição central dentro dos versos. (No original inglês, ao pé da página, essas rimas são indicadas em itálico.)[16]

A Prosa de Dylan Thomas: Contos, Textos para o Rádio, Prosa Dramática

John Ackerman divide a produção em prosa nas seguintes partes: os primeiros contos, alguns deles publicados juntamente com os poemas de *The Map of Love*; os contos de *O Retrato do Artista como um*

Jovem Cão; o texto dramático *Under Milk Wood : A Play for Voices*; os textos destinados a divulgação pelo rádio, publicados com o título de *Quite Early One Morning* ; alguns contos posteriores, incluídos em *A Prospect of the Sea* ; um romance inacabado, *Adventures in the Skin Trade* ; vários roteiros para filmes, um dos quais publicados em forma livro, *The Doctor and the Devils* ; finalmente, grande número de cartas, integrando o volume *Letters to Vernon Watkins*. Ackerman comenta a íntima conexão, tanto temática quanto formal, entre os primeiros contos, escritos entre 1934 e 1939, e a poesia de Thomas:

> Sua prosa é essencialmente a prosa de um poeta-eloqüente, sensual, fortemente rítmica, rica em metáforas. Prosa e poesia têm em comum as costumeiras atitudes anglo-galegas : o tom nostálgico, pessoal, e apocalíptico. Faz grande uso de imagens e pensamentos bíblicos, e a infância é um tema dominante. O estilo deve muito ao da oratória sacra de Gales e, para atingir todo o seu efeito sutil, o texto deve ser lido em voz alta. Tem-se de admitir que algumas vezes, a mágica da palavra e as emoções do autor levam a melhor em relação ao sentido. (...) Nos primeiros contos Thomas tende a passar do realismo à fantasia de uma manipulação disciplinada da expriência a um registro mais livre das emoções. *A Prospect of the Sea* também mostra isso.[17]

Em *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*[18] (1940) fundem-se comédia e nostalgia. O livro reúne dez contos, todos inspirados na vida da cidade natal, Swansea, e seus arredores. Os contos, que Ackerman considera profundamente fiéis a Swansea - "mais Swansea que a própria Swansea " - têm um caráter autobiográfico, comum nos escritores no início do século. Registram a consciência crescente que o poeta vai adquirindo de si mesmo. Como o texto de Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, publicado em 1916, o título contém uma evidente alusão à pintura, aos numerosos auto-retratos denominados *Retrato do Artista quando jovem*. A alusão denuncia a decisão do narrador implícito de, como o pintor, tentar ver-se à distância, objetivando uma visão de si mesmo. Uma das diferenças com o texto de Joyce fica, porém, evidenciada pelo fato de que Thomas prefere *jovem cão,* expressão coloquial, à palavra *jovem*, que Joyce conversa. O uso do coloquialismo marca o tom cômico, virtualmente ausente dessa obra de Joyce, bem como um evidente distanciamento irônico. (A possível ironia do *Portrait* de Joyce dificilmente será detectada sem o conhecimento de *Stephen Hero*, só publicado em 1940.)

Nos três contos iniciais (*The Peaches, A Visit to Grandpa's e Patrícia, Edith and Arnold*) o narrador, menino, praticamente não participa da ação, limitando-se a observar os adultos : a visita da impertigada Mrs. Williams à casa da tia Annie ; a ida do menino à casa do avô, que sai numa estranha excursão, para escolher o lugar do futuro

túmulo ; a aventura amorosa de duas empregadinhas, que descobrem estar namorando o mesmo rapaz. Incidentes e personagens são aqui apresentados do ponto de vista de uma consciência infantil, que observa sem compreender. Outro foco narrativo e a consciência adulta do narrador implícito, adulto, cuja escolha dos fatos narrados denota a sua compreensão deles. Da incongruência entre os dois focos narrativos nasce o efeito irônico, que não exclui um toque de nostalgia. Outros contos, *The Fight Extraordinary Little Cough* e *Who Do You Wish Was with Us* mostram o narrador adolescente, participando de diferentes aventuras : uma briga em que os contendores acabam por admirar os estragos causados pelos socos no rosto um do outro : um falso passeio à pé, quando, às escondidas, os participantes tomam um ônibus : uma excursão à praia, onde os jovens começam a disputar as primeiras namoradas. Em *Just Like Little Dogs*, o narrador adolescente, escondido sob uma ponte, ouve uma conversa sobre estranhos acontecimentos da vida amorosa dos adultos. Nos três outros contos o narrador, já rapaz, inicia-se no trabalho, e envolve-se em diferentes situações, quase sempre cômicas : uma visita, onde, mesmo diante do mau-humor da dona de casa, ajuda a consumir a bebida reservada para o Natal (*Where Tawe Flows*); uma ida, como repórter iniciante a um bar, onde presencia incidentes cômicos (*Old Garbo*); finalmente, a frustada aventura amorosa de *One Warm Saturday*, quando, após uma crise de náusea, o neófito amoroso não consegue re-encontrar o quarto da pretendida amante.

O contista quase sempre trai o poeta, que se denuncia em frases e expressões diversas. O narrador de *Patricia, Emily and Arnold* intitula-se *King of the Coal Castle*, lembrando o *Prince of the Apple Towns*, de *Fern Hill*. Outros detalhes da narrativa não deixam o leitor esquecer o poeta latente no contista. O pequeno lutador de *The Fight* fala de seus cadernos cheios de poemas, e do quarto decorado com retratos de Shakespeare, Walter de la Mare, Robert Browning e Rupert Brooke. Revela, ademais, que seu contendor também é o poeta. Em *On Warm Saturday*, o frustado amoroso lê um poema para a jovem com que sonha passar a noite.

Um aspecto da técnica narrativa mereceria um estudo à parte. Boa parte dos contos tem uma estrutura do conto - dentro - de - conto : as personagens cujas aventuras são relatadas envolvem-se, elas mesmas, em contar ou compor histórias. O protagonista infantil de *The Peaches* confessa-se um contador de histórias, em que se projeta como herói. As mentiras do lutador de *Fight* são na verdade, contos embrionários. Um dos jovens de *Just Like Little Dogs* é outro contador de histórias. E mais: o objetivo da visita em *Where Tawe Flows* é reunir três amigos, que se propõe a escrever juntos uma coletânea de contos. A composição da narrativa constitui, assim, um dos temas centrais, seguindo a tendência da moderna ficção metalingüística, da narrativa que se debruça sobre sua própria elaboração.

Muitos dos textos destinados à difusão pelo rádio foram colecionados

em *Quite Early One Morning*, onde Thomas retoma a imagem do bardo ao microfone.[19] A primeira parte concentra-se em lembranças da infância, em Gales. A segunda consiste de breves introduções a poetas ingleses ou de reflexões sobre o fazer poético. Na última, Thomas define o melhor poema como aquele "cujos trechos, nada mágicos, uma vez trabalhados, aproximam-se dos que denomina 'mágicos', e que são sempre acidentais". Conclui que um bom poema contribui para alterar a forma e o siginificado do universo, ajuda a ampliar o conhecimento do homem sobre si mesmo e sobre o mundo à sua volta".[20]

No início da vida artística, Thomas iniciou o romance *Adventures in the Skin Trade,* inspirado em sua partida para Londres. Interrompeu-o durante a guerra, e o romance permaneceu inacabado. Sobre ele, já se observou que, de qualquer forma, pouco se perdeu. Nesse fragmento, o texto parece ressentir-se da ausência do *background* celta, de tão vital importância para a criação do autor de *Deaths and Entrances.*

Resta falar de sua produção dramática, de onde lhe veio boa parte do sucesso financeiro. Thomas foi um mestre na arte de escrever textos e pequenas peças para rádio ou *scripts* de filmes (a era da televisão mal se iniciava quando morreu). Sua obra mais conhecida, neste gênero, é *Under Milk Wood,* que evoca, não tanto personagens, mas o espírito de uma pequena cidade de Gales, Llareggub. A peça combina, com toque poético, fantasia humorística e observação realista. Transforma em literatura texto que pareceria destinado a consumo rápido, típico de meio de comunicação empregado. Aqui se encontram, num notável contraponto de vozes, o Reverendo Eli Jenkins, Myfanwy Price, a costureira, seu namorado Mog Edwards, a romântica e prolífica Polly Garter, o nostálgico Capitão Cat, com seus sonhos de amores perdidos, e muitos outros. A prosa, poética e aliterativa, é intercalada com canções e badaladas. A mistura de misticismo, sensualidade e lirismo, relembra a continuidade da obra de Thomas.

Menos conhecida, talvez, é *The Doctor and the Devils*, transformada em roteiro cinematográfico a partir do conto de Donald Taylor, por sua vez inspirado na peça de James Bridie, *The Anatomist.* As três obras se inspiram numa história real, a do Dr. Knox, personagem fascinante do início do século XIX. Notável professor e médico escossês, grande especialista em anatomia, de cultura enciclopédica. Knox teve seu nome associado aos criminosos Burke e Hare. Os dois foram julgados por assassinatos cometidos com o objetivo de vender cadáveres para dissecação. (Na época, só os corpos dos enforcados podiam legalmente ser usados para esse fim. Irônicamente, o julgamento contribuiu para que o Parlamento alterasse a lei, facilitando o uso de cadáveres disponíveis para estudo.)

O dom de Thomas para o emprego de imagens concretas e vividas e a extraordinária mobilidade de seu talento imaginativo fazem dele um mestre na arte de combinar as duas linguagens, a poética e a cinematográfica. Seu domínio de ambas aparece com destaque, nesta obra que podemos cosiderar uma tradução intersemiótica - do texto

literário para o cinema. Valeria a pena examinar, em outro estudo, a teia que a mão do poeta tece entre a imagem literária do texto escrito e a imagem visual que, nas instruções para o cinema, indica para a filmagem. Um exemplo é o trecho em que o *script* sugere, para uso na tela, uma grade semelhante a uma teia de aranha, através da qual o espectador veja o rosto do médico. Logo a seguir, este menciona numa fala a "membrana *aracnoide* dos ventrículos do cérebro".[21] A expressão científica adquire sabor poético, ao se intrelaçar com a imagem recentemente projetada na tela. Em geral, as falas do protagonista têm um brilho um humor e uma verve dignos do grande *causer* que as escreveu. A personagem cita linhas de poema (O famosíssimo verso de Marvell, *Time's winged chariot hurrying near*), desconstrói expressões idiomáticas, criando trocadilhos com o sentido literal (*I should hate skeletons in all my cupboards,* diz o professor de anatomia) ... Tão harmoniosa é a integração das duas linguagens, a poética e a cinematográficas, que o leitor hesita : é a poesia que usa técnicas cinematográficas, ou o cinema que absorve a poesia ?

Quando morreu, Thomas estava intensamente envolvido com essa peça e *Under Milk Wood*, que apareceu postumamente na BBC, em 1954, e foi, depois, adaptada para o palco. Cada vez mais Thomas se revelava o bardo ao microfone, o poeta de voz mágica que integrava o imemorial recitativo celta, a poesia em língua inglesa e as novas formas possibilitadas pelo rádio e o cinema. Tudo isso faz pensar em potencialidades ainda irrealizadas. Em que sentido teria caminhado a arte de Thomas, se não tivesse silenciado tão cedo?

A pergunta é instigante para qualquer crítico. Teria Thomas retomado o fio de *Collected Poems*, e publicados outros volumes de poemas inéditos - o que não fazia desde *Deaths and Entrances*, de 1946? Ou teria caminhado cada vez mais para a criação intersimiótica, integrando poesia com outras formas de comunicação, rádio, cinema, e provavelmente televisão ? Teria, assim, conquistado para o poeta um lugar que a sociedade contemporânea ainda não lhe concedeu ? Traria, talvez, o rapsodo de volta ao mundo moderno ?

Essas indagações não se mostram menos instigantes por estar condenadas a permanecer sem resposta. Pertencem à mesma ordem de pergunta que nos fazemos quando tentamos imaginar em que sentido teria evoluído a música de Mozart, se, diferentemente do que ocorreu com ele e com Dylan Thomas, tivesse ultrapassado sua quarta década.

NOTAS:

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3 Olson, Elder. *The Poetry of Dylan Thomas*, Chicago University Press, 1954.

4 Cox, C. B., "Welsh Bards in Hard Times : Dylan Thomas and R. S. Thomas" In *The New Pelican Guide To English Literature*, vol. 8, Boris Ford (org), 1986, p. 209 - 223.

5 Ver a propósito Daiches, David, A Critical History of English Literature, Vol. II, Londres. Secker & Warburg, 1960, p. 127-8. Também de Daiches, "Dylan Thomas." In: *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Vol II. Nova York & Londres, W. W. Norton & Company, 1979, p. 2909-10.
6 *New Verse*, XI, 9.
7 "On Reading One's Own Poems". In: *Quite Early One Morning*. Londres : J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 1954, p. 130.
8 "Poetic Manifesto. A Manuscript". In: *Texas Quarterly* IV (4), 1961
9 a minor major poet [or] a major poet...G. S. Fraser, *Dylan Thomas*, p. 32.
10 Leech, Geoffrey N. "This Bread I Break - Language and Interpretation". In: *A Review of English Literature*, VI (April 1965), 70.
11 Leech, G. N. "Lingustics and the Figures of Rhetoric". In: *Essays on Style and Language*, Roger Fowler (org). Londres : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 42.

12 *The force that through the green fuse drives the flower*

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age: that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax.
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.

The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs in the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail.
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.

The lipes of time leech to founting head;
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores.
And I dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
How at my sheet goes the same croocked warm.

13 *This Bread I Break*

This bread I break was once the oat,
This wine upon a foreign tree
Plunged in its fruit;
Man in the day or wind by night
Laid the crops low, broke the grape's joy.

Once in this wind the summer blood
Knocked in the flesh that decked the vine,
Once in this bread
The oak was merry in the wind;
Man broke the sun, pulled the wind down.

This flesh you break this blood you let
Make desolation in the vein,
Were oat and grape
Born of the sensual root and sap;
My wine you drink, my bread you snap.

14 *Do not go gentle into that good night*

Do not go gentle into that good night
Old age should burn and rage at close of day;
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lighthing, they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieve it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage, against the dying of the night.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage aginst the dying of the light.

15 *The conversation of prayer*

The Conversation of *prayiers* about to be *said*
By the child going to *bed* and the man on the *stairs*
Who climbs to his *dying love* in her high *room*,
The one not caring to *whom* in his sleeps he will *move*
And the other full of *tears* that she will be *dead*.

Turns in the dark on *sound* they know will *arise*
Into the answering *skies* from the green *ground*,
From the man on the *stairs* and the child by his *bed*.
The sound about to be *said* in the two *prayers*

For the sleep in a safe *land* and the love who *dies*
Will be the same grief *flying*. Whom shall they *calm*?
Shall the child sleep *unharmed* or the man be *crying*?
The conversation of *prayers* about to be *said*
Turns on the quick and the *dead*, and the man on the *stairs*
To-night shall I find no *dying* but alive and *warm*

In the fire of his *care* his love in the high *room*.
And the child not caring to *whom* he climbs his *prayer*
Shall drown in a grief as *deep* his true *grave*,
And mark the dark eyed *wave*, through the eyes of *sleep*,
Dragging him up the *stairs* to one who lies *dead*.

17 Ackerman, J. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Works*, p.1

18 *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*. Londres: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1948.

19 *Quite Early One Morning*. Londres: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1954.

20 "On Poetry". In: *Quite Early One Morning*, p.169.

21 *The Doctor and the Devils*. Londres: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1955, p.40-41.

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J. M. SYNGE: FROM THE REAL AND THE SELF TO THE REALM OF ART

Geraldo Ferreira deLima

In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or an apple, ...
Synge[1]

1. Introduction

Based upon Synge's writings[2] the present work intents to examine the relation Real-Self, and how in Synge this duality works out towards the construction of a realm - the Realm of play - here also understood as Art, where he is put above himself as self and real

Considered as one of the most active members of the Abbey Theater, Synge did not write so much. In life he saw published only five of the seven plays he produced and his book of memories on the Aran Islands. Had he not been seized by the Hodkin's disease at the age[3] of 38 probably it would have been different. Aside the problem of quantitity, Synge left us quality - the best a playwright can make in respect to Play and Art.

The corpus of this work will be Synges's published plays[4], the one unpublished[5], his report on Western Ireland[6] and his letters[7].

Synge's life is submitted to two impulses: one pushes him outwards (to the real) and another pulls him inwards (to the self). In 1893, beying to the impulse towards the real, he leaves Ireland and goes to Germany to study music and "partly for a holiday"[8]. Later in Paris "he wasted precious hours in the midst of a decadent Bohemianism, and, had he it not luckily happened that Yeats, in the year 1897, stumbled upon him there it is possible that his name now would be unknow"[9]. In the nineties he often went abroad and returned home. This movement of going out and coming back to Ireland has its highest pitch in the period 1893-1898, the year of his first visit to West Ireland. During the period between 1898-1902, he would spend less time during his yearly visits to Paris and more in his homeland. "After a few moments of doubt and perplexity Synge found his true medium. He listened to the peculiar intonation of the Irish peasantry, and suddenly descovered that strange English dialect, all transfused with the poetic imagination of the Gaelic mind, formed all novel and beautiful medium for the expression of his thoughts and passions. He saw these peasants lonely in the presence of the mountains and moors, and realized, as Wordsworth did before him,

the natural magesty of their simple characters.

He wandered over the barren stretches of heather, and listened to the ceaseless roar of the Atlantic on the storm-swept coast, so that there came to him some conception of the mystery of nature, and depth and beauty which has always characterized the literary works of the Celt"[10].

As in a ebb-tide movement, the same binary relation outwards-inwards revealed in life, is present in Synge's works. In this context, his Comedies are an extension of that outward impulse which shows him an extovert, looking for values out of the confining of his conditioning evangelical upbringing in a morally rigid society in which he had to live during his monage. On the other hand, they express a *sui generis* way of building up a subtle *modus faciendi* so that he could not only present a world whose order is established from a point of view different from that one of a vitiated and over-civilized society, but creates a new way of telling stories "too full of the beautiful and the strong to give free expression to lighter laughter and merriment".[11]

In this Tragedies, he shows himself under the inward impulse by means of the inexorability of existential events. A sample of it is Maurya's resignation in *Riders to the Sea.* After having lost all the eight men of her family, she merely says: "No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied"[12]. In *Deirdre of the Sorrows,* the title itself is the vehicle which carries on the human being to his/her inevitable destiny: Sorrows. Deirdre's speech, in Act One, as Conchuber's betrothed young woman, is the antecipation of greater sorrows which will come: "... I'll put on my robes that are the richest for I will not be brought down to Emain as Cuchulain brings his horse to its yoke, or Conall Cearneach puts his shield upon his arm. And maybe from this day I will turn the men of Ireland like a wind blowing on the heath"[13]. In the Preface to *Deirdre of the Sorrows,* yets, corroborating with the idea of an element of the self implicit in Singe's tagedy, states: "... had he lived [...] *Deirdre of the Sorrows* would have been his masterpiece, so much beauty is there in its course, and such wild nobleness in its end, and so poignant is an emotion and wisdom that were his own preparation for death"[14].

These two outward and inward impulses in Synge's life and works establish a conflict between the reality around him and his self. The aftermath, on a superficial level, is the gradual rejection of the "decadent Bohemianism" in favor of a life in contact with a reality full of joy, fancy and naïvité: "This was my last evening on my stool in the chimney corner, and I had a long talk with some neighbours who came in to bid me prosperity, and lay about on the floor with their heads on low stools and their feet stretched out to embers of the turf. The old woman was at the other side of the fire, and the girl I have spoken of was standing at her spining wheel, talking and joking with everyone. She says when I go away I am to marry a rich wife with plenty of money, and if she dies on me I am to come back here and marry herself for my second wife"[15].On a deeper level the conflict between the real and the self forces him into

a completely different relation with his early subjects of study: music and languages. Concerning the first there is rejection: "I saw that the Germans were so much more innately gifted with the musical faculties than I was that I decided to give up music and take to literature instead"[16]. In connection with the second one, languages, there is a process which begins with assimilation: "I went back to Germany for a few months to work at the language only, and then on the first day of 1895 I went to Paris for six months. The next year I went to Italy and learned Italian, ..."[17] and finishes with synthesis when he learns Gaelic. Refering to the very beginning of this process of synthesis, he writes: "Then he [Old Mouteen] sat down in the middle of the floor and began to recite old Irish poetry, with an exquiste purity of intonation that brought tears to my eyes, though I understood but little of the meaning"[18] Later, with synthesis definitively installed he says: "... in countries where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is reach and living, it is possible for a writer to be richer and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality which is the root of all poetry in a comprehensive and natural form"[19].

Synge uses the linguistic devices of the oral language to re-create by means of assimilation and synthesis the reality around him. In doing this, our sensorial perceptions go on farther the semantics implicit in the linguistic sign of this language; through it his characters are universalized, and so do we. About Synge's language says A. E. Morgan: "There is no question that Sunge's language is artificial. It was never spoken by mortal man: it is no less a literary diction than the much abused poetic diction of the eighteenth century. The difference between these two kinds of diction was not merely unrealistic, it was unreal: it was based not on speech so much as on a literary tradition. Synge's diction, on the other hand, was unrealistic, but it was founded on reality"[20].

The *real* and the *self,* in Synge, function in a idealized world where he solves his personal and artistical conflict between these two entities, and builds up the *realm* of art. In this permanent dwelling-place he is protected from any sort of injunction. In the following passage of *The Aran Islands,* an example of how the *real* and the *self* are changed so that this *realm of art* may be reached: "A man who lives in the other end of the village got his gun one day and went out to look for rabitts in the thicket near the small Dun. He saw a rabbit sitting up under a tree, and he lift his gun to take aim at it, but just as he had in it covered he heard a kind of music over his head, and he looked up into the sky. When he looked back for the rabbit, not a bit it was to be seen. He went on after that, and he heard the music again. Then he looked over a wall, and saw a rabbit sitting up by the wall with a sort of flute in its mouth, and it playing on it with its two fingers!"[21]

2. Definition of terms

The term *real* as it is used in this work refers to existence in its physical aspect. It is directly connected to biology in its potentiality to provide the individual with means to survive in nature with all its hostility, and to sociology insofar as it provides the means that make the individual interecat with each within their social group and out of it. It is also connected to philosophy in the sense that "it asserts the existence of real things as opposed to the products of the mind, which in so far as they are francies and imaginations, are considered not to be real things"[22]. The term *self*, how it is used here, expresses the person's own essence and the person as object of introspection or reflexive action. As the term may also express the person's idiossincrasy, it conveys, in a subtle way, a solipsist standpoint of the Cosmos.

3. Approach

A reading of Synge's works suggests us a diastolic movement which impells him outwards, in expansion, towards experience; and a systolic one, in contraction, that brings him back inwards, towards thought. These impulses represented by aspects which are directly linked to the action-reaction concept connected to binominal relations, have the following characterists:

A. Outwards
1. Geographical Exile X Return
2. Bio-Anthropological Instinct X Culture
3. Sociological Social Rejection X Individual Acceptance

B. Inwards
1. Philosophy-mystical Uncertainty X Certainty
2. Structural Internal (Greek) X External (Modern)
3. Linguistic Language (Expression) X Language (Revelation)
4. Semilologic Word (Language) X Sound (Music)
5. Political Nationalism X Art
6. Religious Belief X Scepticism

These impulses present in Synge as a man and a dramatist are not hierarchical. Nonetheless, the geographical impulse which makes him go to continent; first German, then France and Italy, and live in these places a sort of self exile, seems to supersede the others. It is the same geographical impulse found in Bartley in his determination to leave his Island off the West Ireland and go to Connemara. In *Deirdre of the* Sorrows, Deirdre compares the pleasure of her exile in Alban to Owen's journey to meet Naisi, his brothers and her: "Three weeks of you days might be long surely; but seven years are a short is a way of expressing either a bio-antrophological or a sociological relation. It may be instinctive as in Naise and Deirdre or cultural as in Synge's real life.

The sociological component in Synge's exile has its roots in a sort of social rejection against the ethics of salvation by faith in Atonment,

present in the evangelical group he belongs to and well represented by the strong religious moralism of his family. Although it is not explicitly by Synge at any moment of his life, such a rejection is felt by his mother who, on January 28th 1894, wrote to her son Robert: "I had a long letter from Johnnie on Friday giving a great account of his journey to Würburg and arriving in the dark about 6 o'clock and trying to find a lodging ... The Von Eickens, whom he has just left have been very kind and pleasant, and he feels as if he were his oldest friends instead of the *newest* ! What a pity that, when thown among strangers, we only show ourselves as amiable and agreeable and taking everything in a good part - while at home we show ourselves in a very unpleasant aspect, and temper often forgets this, and I won't remind him. I am glad he is happier than when he was at home, but I am very sorry it was out of power to make him happy though I did all I could for him. He tells me that he has got complete control over his temper. I hope when hecomes home, he may continue on calm unruffled poor boy"[24].

Years later when Synge comes back from his ' exile ' on the continent; in this own homeland he is pushed by the outward impulse to look for another sort of exile in the edenic land of West Ireland to where he is not moved by that *social rejection* anymore, but by a force that impels him to *individual acceptance*. It is not fortuitous that Pat Dirane, Old Mourteen and Michael are the central characters of *The Aran Islands*. When the Tramp in *The Shadow of the Glen* asks Nora: "Is it departed he is?"[25], the Tramp is real, no doubt about it; but his speech is Pat Dirane's, who told Synge the story: "One day I was travelling on foot from Galway to Dublin [...]. Then a hard rain began [...]. As I was looking round I saw a light in some trees[...]. I saw a dead man laid on a table, and candles lighted, and a woman watching him. I was frightened when Isaw him, but it was raining hard, I said to myself, if he was dead he couldn't hurt me. Then I knocked on the door and the woman came and opened it"[26].

The social enviroment of West Ireland with its primitivism gives Synge the opportunity to penetrate the people's mind though a tacit cumplicity implied in mutual individual acceptance, i. e. he takes the raw material to his works from the richly queer imaginary world of his people, and gives it back to them enriched with the beauty of his early years of exile gives place to another form of exile based upon individual acceptance whose content mixes up reality and fancy with nationalist claims that surprise his mother: "What she could not conceive of, nor hope, to comprehend, was her son's determination to be a man of letters, and within a nationalist movement to boot. For hers was a ' Unionist Club', and its rules demanded not only inner morality - John's she never doubted - but piety and income matching the state of grace"[27].

With no morality, no religion and no politics[28] in *stricto sensu* to defend, Synge dives into his self with the determination to go on with the purpose of being the spokesman of the folk's imagination. In a letter to his missionary son, Samuel synge, his mother wrote: "I don't think

he [Synge] likes the advice I gave him to try to earn money by writing what will sell and not that high flown stuff that so few can appreciate!"[29]. By means of individual acceptance in opposition to social rejection, Synge not only grasped that simplicity of his countrymen but the grandeur of their simplicity with the sacrifice of his own living.

As in Synge's life, his characters are impelled by an inward impulse which is either philosophical or mystical and is expressed by uncertainty and certainly. When Maurya in her attempt to bless Bartley sees on the horse not him, but Michael, her son drowned nine days earlier, and not yet found; and later, when the people bring her Bartley's body, she ails; her suffering is not an expression of some sense of guilt, it is rather an expression of mystical uncertainty. However, when Nora gives her mother the Holy Water, and she sprinkles it over Bartley's dead body with Michael clothes across his feet, Murya is a woman, to allude a christian symbol, changed by transfiguration. Her words are the words of a 'state' of centainty:" ... it isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Sanhain, if it's only a bit of wet flouer we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking"[30].

In *Deirdre of the Sorrows,* Deirdre is impelled by a philosophical uncertainty from the very moment she overhears Naisi conversation with Fergus:

"Naisi: [...] I'll not tell you a lie. There have been days a while past when I've throwing a line for salmon, or watching for the run of hares, that I've had a dread upon me a day'd come I'd weary of her voice [...] ...and Deirdre'd see I'd wearied"[31]. Had Deirdre not overheard it would she have gone back to Emain Macha, and so patiently followed Naisi like a lamb going to the slaughterhouse? Later, moved by uncertainty, she finds out that love does not exist without Naisi. Condemned by her uncertainty she finally attains her centainty by committing suicide.

A. E. Morgan commeting the tragic elements in *Deirdre of the Sorrows* says: "There is an element of conflict in the drama; but in a sense the struggle is so unequal that it is hardly appeciable. In this respect the play reminds one not so much of English drama as of a Greek tragedy in which vast fate slowly closes in on the puppets; and men and women, great in themselves, are dwarfed fed by the imensity of circunstance"[32].To reiterate what Morgan says concerning the Hellenism of *Deirdre of the Sorrows,* Synge is impelled by an impulse that veils an internal structure full of Greek tragical connotations and unveils an external one very modern in form. *Deirdre of the Sorrows* by Synge *vis-à-vis* Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* shows the following similarities:

Oedipus Tyrannus

King: Oedipus

Questioner: Sphinx
Answer: Oedipus
Answer connected with: Queen (as act)
Hill: Oedipus (where he has taken from)
Places: Tebas - Colonos - Tebas
Couple: Oedipus - Jocasta
Kingdom: Tebas (being destroyed by wanton acts)
Consequence of Remorse: Oedipus blinds himself
Object of Tragedy: Real Incest
Place far from the tragical event: Colonos (Geographical)
Blindnes (Non-Geographical)
'Couple' survived to tragical event: Oedipus - Antigona
Divine Inspiration - Revelation: Tiresias
Fight: Oedipus kills Laios and his servants
Lover's Suicide: Jocasta

Deirdre of the Sorrows

King: Conchuber
Questioner: Deirdre[33]
Answer: Naisi[34]
Answer connected with: Queen (as potence)
Hill: Deirdre (wants to be taken to)[35]
Places: Emain Macha - Alban - Emain Macha
Couple: Deirdre - Naisi
Kingdom: Emain Macha (destroyed by fire)
Consequense of Remorse: Owen commits suicide
Object of Tragedy: Potencial Incest[36]
Place far from the tragical event: Grave (Geographical)
Death (Non-Geographical)
'Couple' survived to tragical event: Conchuber - Old Woman
Divine Inspiration - Revelation: Larvacham
Fight: Conchuber has Naisi and his brothers killed
Lover's Suicide: Deirdre

The linguistic impulse represented by the language as expression in the student of German, French, Italian and Gaelic gives place to the language as revelation in the playwright: Synge's language "is literary form based on the English patois of the Irish peasant and influenced largely, it is said, by Gaelic idiom. In the English spoken in Ireland Synge tells us that he found a language which was still rich and living. By using a diction which is a selection of real language a writer may achieve beauty of language and yet retain the reality which is an essential quality of poetry"[37].

Since the very beginning of his aprenticeship Synge is submitted to a semiologic which impels him, in a first moment, towards the aural

sign—the sound, and in a second one, towards the oral sign—the word, When he changes music, his initial option, to literature, music continues to affect his literary creation in such a way that sound and word, instead of the initial conflict of his early years, are going to operate in a symbiotic way, i. e. a relationship in close association to the benefit of each other: "... play-writing remained for him very much the private composition of the liric poet or musician, writing as much or more for the ear than the eye, imposing a balance of mood, tone, and the colour on the material he distilled from the life about him rather than allowing characterization alone to control the plot"[38].

Synge was not a politician or a propagandist in the classical sense of the terms. During the public troubles caused by the performance of *The Playboy of the Western World* it was not Synge who was there in front of the angry nationalist mob. To Maud Gaune on April 6th 1897 he wrotes: "You already know how wide my theory of regeneration for Irlande differs from yours and most of the other members of Jeune Irlande. I do not wish to enter the question which of us may be in the right but I think you will not be surprised to hear that I cannot possibly continue to be a member of a society which works on lines such as those laid down for the Irlande libre. I wish to work in my way for the cause of Ireland and I shall never be able to do so if I get mixed up with a revolutionary and semi-military movement. I have considered the matter very carefully and I see there is no course open to me but ask you to take my name off your list of members"[39]. Although not being a politician, his life and works contain much of politics. When he says he wishes to work in his way for the cause of Ireland he is implicitly presenting a political proposal which consists of a sort of nationalism that, in spide of not defending "a revolutionary and semi-military movement", is essentially political. In connection with nationalism, Synge was, in his own way, a revolutionary. The basis of his nationalism is the dramatic action, and he uses it to explore the reality around him and talk about simple things of life changed into weapons able to burst his people's mind. In doing it, he makes a revolution with words and sounds, and through the truth of his speech his people got their own voice in the idealized world of his art.

The religious impulse implicit in Synge is expressed through attitudes of belief and reflect his characters' intrinsical truth. Although most of the plots of his plays are placed in a christian environment, the religious content of their characters are christian in form, but pagan or pantheistic in essence. Few Synge's characters manifest so true christian faith as those in *Riders to the Sea*. Maurya's last speech, in form of prayer, summarizes the christian faith not only of her family's members, but that one of all characters in the play as well: "May Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn [...] ... and may he have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of everyone is left living

on the world"[40].

In *The Playboy of the Western World* Christy Mahon, after telling the story of how he ' killed' his father develops the following dialogue with Michael:

Michael: "Well, God bless you Christy, and a good rest till we meet again when the sun'll be rising to the moon of day."

Christy: "God bless you all"[41].

Considering Christy's attitude against his father and against two of *The Ten Commandments,* the God Michael and Christy refer is not, and should never be, the God of Christian Thelogy. In its suface, Michael's and Christy's speeches are result of a very mechanical attitude; on the other hand, an unconscious demonstration of paganism. When Christy asks Widow Quin to help him to have Pegeen's love, she answers him with the question: "If I aid you, will you swear to give me a right of way I want, and a mountainy ram, and a load of dung at Michaelmas, the time that you'll be master here?[42]. Christy, assuming a pantheistic attitude with respect to his belief, answer at once: "I will, by the elements and stars of night"[43].

In *When the Moon has Set,* Colm, before Sister Eileen's decision of abandoning her nun's veil for his love's sake, creates a new liturgy - the liturgy of senses, and a new God - their own bodies; and so, pantheistically he gives origin to a new religion: "We have incarnated God, and been a part of the world. That is enough. [He takes her hand] In the name of the Summer, and the Sun, and whole world, I need you as my wife. [He puts the ring on her finger]"[44].

In his sceptical view of religion, as an attempt to explain or justify an answer connected to human condition, Synge presents Christy as an inverted parody of Christ. The way Christy arrives at the shebeen and starts talking as he were talking about imposes himself before his attentive audience only by the power of his perssuasive speech. As in religious actions, he feeds his audience with a terribly fantastic deed. Astonished by the audience's acceptance of his queer story, Christy loses his own identity and assumes another one. From now on he is not a mere young yeoman running away from his father. In the eyes of his audience he has something of divinity. Christy - an ellipsis for Christopher, whose ethmological meaning is Christ bearer - is lost in his condition of son as his father in his fatherhood. 'Killed ' for the second time, his father resurrects. When he prevents his son of being hanged, he restores his condition of father, and incorporates in practice what Christy has in name - Christ bearer. Saved by his father, Christy (Christopher) is not Christ bearer anymore, but his father. Christy, then, recuperates his own identity, but to get it, he, yet symbolically, had to kill his father. As an inverted parody of Christ, Christy is taken out from his Calvary where he was to be hanged. Different from the Holy Father who did not hear his Son crying: *"Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani!"*, Old Mahon, the Human Father, heard his son's ailment.

After being saved by his father, Christy gets a new *joie de vivre*: "Ten thousant blessings upon all that's here, for you've turned me a likely gaffer in the end of all, the way I'll go ramancing through a romping lifetime from this hour to the dawning of the judgment day"[45].

4.Conclusion

Synge's use of the language of common people, enriched with cosmogonical elements reordered by their impressionist view of reality, makes us recognize ourselves in the sane human origin, and makes him look for shelter in Art where he is protected from the troubles of the self and the monotonous likenes of life. through an idyllic and an idea life Synge aims art as something captured by language to the senses' rapture. In the last Act of *The Playboy of the Western World,* when Christy tries to kill his father again, Pegeen, as a sort of Synge's *alter ego says:* "... a strange man is a marvel with his mighty talk; but what's a squabble in your back-yard and blow of a loy, have taught me that there's a great gap between a gallows story and a dirty deed"[46]. It is through the gap betyween life as reality and life as imagination that synge reaches the *realm of art.*

Based upon the observation of how the country people recreate, with their myths, beliefs, laws and religion a universe where man is in eternal dilemma with nature, Synge creates a particular aesthetics. In its core it is the absortion of nature in its apparent cruelty and beauty changed into art by the sounds and the words of his language. Commenting this power of nature in *Riders to the Sea,* A. Nicoll says: "We are here in the presence of elemental things. The sea becomes a living force, a demon hungering after men; the figure in the cottage, weak as they may be in face of the physical power of the ocean, are titanic in their courage and grandeur. The tragedy goes back to primal emotions, to the struggle of man with nature. It is strong in its primeval intensity, the weakening force of civilization far off, distant, and unheard"[47].

When the reader penetrates the core of Synge's works he feels that in the appearence of them it is art, but the effect it produces in the reader's mind belongs to other branches of sensorial perceptions. Pegeen in her naïveté sees in Christy values she had never seen in Shawn, the young man whom she betrothed. Insofar as Christy speaks of his 'brave' deed, a process of ecstasy is installed in her in such a way that, she, in rapture, does not perceive that from that moment on there is a rupture between her and Shawn. Old Mahon's words makes her go back to her own reality: "[...] It 's little I care of you put a bag on her back and went picking cockles till the our of death; but my son and myself will be doing our own way and we'll have great times from this out telling stories of villainy of Mayo and the fools is here. [...] Come on now"[48]. After Christy reconstructed his humanity, Pegeen goes back to Shawn,

her only possible reality to be lived, but in her words, Christy will continue to be her unique idealized reality: "[*hiting him a box on the ear].* Quit my sight. *[Putting her shawl over her head and breaking out into wild lamentations.]* Oh my grief, I've lost him surely. I 've lost the only playboy of the western world"[49]. In *Riders to the Sea* the effect caused by Maurya's last words is not only aesthetic. They touch us deeply in terms of beauty, but there is a lot of stoicism in them. In doing so, Synge creates a particular aesthetics whose center is art, but the effects extrapolate it. So, here we are before an aesthetics of multiple effects. It is as if Art were the essence of life, but not the only one.

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Notes

1. Preface to *The Playboy of the Western World.*
2. Vide *Footnotes* no. 4 to 7.
3. In fact he was to be 38 on April 16th, but he died before on March 24th 1909.
4. *Riders to the Sea, The Shadow of the Glen, The Tinker 's Wedding, The Well of the Saints, The Playboy of the Western World, Deirdre of the Sorrows* (published in 1910).
5. *When the Moon has Set.*
6. *The Aran Islands.*
7. Synge's letters were published by Ann Saddlemyer in two volumes under the little *"The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge".*
8. J. M. Synge *apud* Ann Saddlemeyer. Introduction. In: *J. M. Synge: Plays*. p. ix.

9. Allardyce Nicoll. J. M. Synge and Irish School of Imaginative Drama. In: British Drama p. 411.
10. *Idem, ibidem,* p. 411.
11. *Idem, ibidem,* p. 411.
12. Ann Saddlemeyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays*, p. 14.
13. *Idem, ibidem,* p. 177.
14. *Idem, ibidem,* p. 167.
15. J. M. Synge. *The Aran Islands,*. p.180-181.
16. Ann Saddlemyer. Introduction. In: *J. M. Synge: Plays.* p, ix.
17. *Idem, ibidem,* p. ix.
18. J. M. Synge. *The Aran Islands.* p. 12.
19. Preface to *The Playboy of the Western World.*
20. A. E. Morgan. Chapter XIII: Synge (1871-1909). In: *Tendencies of Modern Drama,* p. 171.
21. J. M. Synge. *The Aran Islands,* pp. 201-202.
22. Paul Edward, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences.* p.140.
23. *Deirdre of the Sorrows,* Act One. In: Ann Saddlemyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays,* pp. 188-189.
24. Kathleen Synge *Apud* Ann Saddlemyer. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge,* Vol. One, p.5.
25. *The Shadow of the Glen.* In: Ann Saddlemyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays*, p. 17.
26. *The Aran Islands,* pp. 42-43.
27. Introduction. In Ann Saddlemyer. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge,* Vol. One, p. xii.
28. Althrough his mother thinks the contrary.
29. Kathleen Synge in a letter to her son Samuel Synge apud Ann Saddlemeyer. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge.* Vol. One, p. xii.
30. *Riders to the Sea.* In: Ann Sadlemyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays,* p. 13.
31. *Deirdre of the Sorrows.* In: Ann Saddlemyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays*, p. 191.
32. A. E. Morgan. *Tendencies of Modern English Drama,* p. 170.
33. "Do many know what is foretold, that Deirdre will be the ruin of the sons of Usna, and have a little grave by herself, and story will be told forever? " *Deirdre or the Sorrows,* p. 182.
34. "It 's a long while men have been talking of Deirdre the Child who had all gifts, and the beauty that has no equal. Many know it and there are kings would give a great price to be in my place this night, and you grown to be a queen". *Idem, ibidem.*
35. "... will you take me from this place, Lavarcham, and Keep me safe in the hills?", *Idem,* p. 176.
36. Conchuber, considering his old age, would represent more an unconscious father to Deirdre than a real husband. Lavarcham makes the point when she says: "... it 's a poor thing when you see a settled man putting the love he has for a young child, and the love he has for a full woman, on a girl the like of her, and it's a poor thing , Conchuber, to see a High King the way you are this day, prying after her needles and numbering her lines of thread." *Deirdre of the Sorrows,* p. 172.
37. A. E. Morgan. *Modern English Drama,* p. 171.
38. Introduction. In: Ann Saddlemyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays,* pp. xi-xii.
39. *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge,* Vol. One p. 49.
40. *Riders to the Sea.* In: Ann Saddlemyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays.* p. 14.
41. *The Playboy of the Western World.* In: Ann Saddlemyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays,* p. 117.
42. *Idem,* p. 143.
43. *Idem, ibidem.*

44. *When the Moon has Set.* In: Ann Saddlemeyer. *J. M. Synge: Plays,* p. 225.
45. *The Playboy of the Western World.* In: Ann Saddlemeyer. J. M. Synge: *Plays,* p. 163.
46. *The Playboy of the Western World.* In: Ann Saddlemeyer. J. M. Synge: *Plays,* p. 161.
47. J. M. Synge and the Irish School of Imaginative Dramatists. In: Allardice Nicoll. *British Drama, p. 412.*
48. *The Playboy of the Western World,* p. 163.
49. *Idem, ibidem,* p. 163.

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KATHERINE MANSFIELD AND THE CREATION OF REALITY IN BLISS

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On reading Katherine Mansfield for the first time one is struck by the poetic quality of her prose. The stories she writes are deceptively simple and not overtly violent; more often than not, the subtleness of the underlying theme escapes the reader's perception, due to the writer's light unassuming touch. However, this is no way implies that her stories lack depth. Quite the contrary; in her work one notes a skillful manipulation of symbols together with an endless concern for compositional elements.

An excellent showcase for her talent is undoubtedly *Bliss*, a story that had a strange effect on Virginia Woolf, Katherine's contemporary and colleague. After reading it, Virginia threw the book down with the exclamation, "She's done for !" In her opinion, "Katherine's mind (...) was very thin soil" and the story was "poor and cheap, not the vision, however imperfect, of an interesting mind". [1]

How might one explain such a reaction? Perhaps the answer to this lies in *Bliss* itself, the plot of which is fairly simple but highly effective. Bertha, the main character, who makes the necessary preparations for a party at her house, is carried away by the forthcoming event because Pearl Fulton, a mysteriously seductive woman she chanced to meet at the local club, will be present. As the party progresses, Bertha is overjoyed because everything comes off just as she had planned; only when the party ends and the guests prepare to leave, does Bertha suddenly discover that Harry, her husband, and Pearl are having an affair. A side from the ingenious plot, what stands out in the story is Katherine Mansfield's ability to mould a narrative that goes beyond the communication of mere denotative content.

Bliss starts off in a high key on a bright sunny day, focusing on Bertha's euphoric state of mind. The strong rays of the sun stimulate Bertha, "sending out a little shower of sparcks into every particle, into every finger and toe" of her body. At the age of thirty, the feeling of happiness is so intense that she has the urge "to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement, to bowl a hoop, to throw something up in the air and catch it again, or to stand still and laugh - at nothing - at nothing, simply". The cause of Bertha's well-being is a process that has been set into motion and is to result in a significant change in her life. She imagines she has swallowed a piece of the sun which lights up an existence troubled by personal conflicts, involving problems of a more intimate nature with her husband. More than just a

symbol of the latent five burning in Bertha, the sun is also an aphrodisiac that gives her the strenght needed to carry out the project of changing her life. She sees the blossoming forth of her femaleness as the baring of the human body in a moralistic society. "How idiotic civilization is!" she thinks. "Why be given a human body if you have to keep it shut up in a case like a rare, rare fiddle ?" Here one notes the analogy between the violin and woman's body.

The intense feeling of happiness Bertha experiences when the narrative begins is still with her on the moonlit night of the party, when she and Pearl stand side by side, gazing sitently at a pear tree in th garden. This three may be said to refer to a woman's body too, since "in dreams the pear is a typically erotic symbol, full of sensuality (...) due perhaps to its sweet tase, abundant juices, as well as its shape, evocative of femaleness". [2] The story relies for its effect on the clash of opposing symbols, two of which are very much in evidence: the sun — a masculine symbol — and the moon - a feminine one.

Bertha looks upon Pearl as a "find", a very unusual term which alludes to the woman as though she were a lifeless object, a material thing; however, this term acquires a deeper meaning if the same "Pearl" is taken to imply something of great worth. "Whether originating in the water or on the moon (...) pearls are essentially symbols of a female creativity"; hence the pearl may be defined as "a lunar symbol linked with water and the female sex (...)". In the Orient "the aphrodisiacal, fecund and talismanic properties of the pearl predominate over all the rest". [3] Additionally, the same Pearl also suggests the idea of the pear, since it contains within itself the sign of this particular fruit.

Another word Bertha interprets in her own peculiar way is "perfection", related somehow to her material possessions; in that she has everything, or close to everything: a good understanding husband (they were going abroad in the summer), an adorable child, no financials troubles, a "satisfactory house and garden, losts of friends, interesting people like her husband and herself - writers, playwrights, all keen on social problems. There were also the books, the music, the "wonderful little dressmaker" and their new cook, who made "the most superb omelettes". The perfection Bertha hopes to achieve in life asserts itself when she arranges the fruits on her table in "two pyramids of bright round shapes". The triangular form of the pyramid is said to communicate "divinity, harmony and proportion". The ancient Mayas saw the triangle as being "twice the symbol of femaleness"; however, when the apex of the triangle faces up, it then represents "fire and the masculine sex". [4]

Bertha's pathological quest for perfection and harmony is, in a way, a sign of her insecurity, principally when she buys a bunch of purple grapes to match the colour of a new carpet in the dining room; or when she arranges the positions of the cushions on the chairs and couches after Mary, the maid, has just finished disposing them "so carefully".

The feeling that Bertha belongs to a class of a exceptional people

is confirmed on the night of the party with the arrival of the guests, highly affected individuals who do everything they can to stand out from the middle class - their speech is exaggerated, their apparel garish. They are to form the perfect tableau for Bertha's party and, like Pearl Fulton, might be referred to as "finds". Indeed, Bertha had been carried away so completely by Pearl that she fell in love with her, "as she always did fall in love with beautiful women who had something strange about them ". The passion for Pearl and "beautiful women who had something strange about them" may be explained by Bertha's desire to be just as sensual and provocative as the fascinating creatures she so admires; and this desire is about to be fulfilled on the night of the party. But before Bertha can be transformed into someone "new", she must first go through a ritual, which begins after a "sign"is given by Pearl at a certain point in the party, when she asks Bertha in a "cool sleepy voice", "Do tou have a garden ?" The adjective "sleepy" points up Pearl Fulton's lazy unconcerned nature; the other adjective "cool" occurs more than once in this passage, also in connection with Pearl, whose appearence - blonde hair, extremely pale skin and silver dress - evokes the image of someone distant and untouchable. White and silver are colours linked with the outward coldness of Pearl, and one notes the importance given to these particular colours through the flowers of the pear tree, the white dress Bertha eventually wears for the party, the immense white silk scarf and white socks of one of the guests, the "round silver moon" which is full on the night of the party, and the silver box of cigarettes Harry holds out when offering one to Pearl.

Constructed on the principle of oppositions - Sun / Moon, Male / Female - the narrative emphasizes the sharp difference between the blissful fire burning in Bertha's body and Pearl Fulton's coldness. When Bertha takes hold of her friend's arm to lead her into the dining room. she is emotionally moved by the touch of the woman's "cool arm": "What was there in the touch of that cool arm that could fan - fan - start blazing - blazing - the fire of bliss that Bertha did not know what to do with ?" Pearl's coldness is also a part of Harry's dissimulating nature, when he intentionally holds back a little before receiving the guests in the living room, "and then he would make a great point of coming into the drawing room extravagantly cool and collected". At the end of the party, without knowing he has been caught in the act of adultery, Harry is once again "extravagantly cool and collected". Feigning dislike for Pearl, he speaks "cooly". The affair between Pearl and Harry is suggested while he dines; as he eats he voices his "shameless passion for the white flesh of the lobster"and "the green of pistachios ices - green and cold like the eyelids of Egyptian dancers". The delicacies he savours so avidly call to mind Pearl Fulton, pale and with "heavy eyelids".

The white colour , known as "a colour of passage, is connected with the rite of passage, by means of which the human being undergoes a change, in accordance with the classic scheme of all initiation rites:

death and rebirth".[5] The party may then be regarded as the background for a ritual, possibly of a primitive/sacred nature, that occurs when the two women stand before the "long windows", silently gazing at the pear tree. The significance of this scene with respect to the spring ritual of rebirth is given added weight though the dress Bertha wears for the occasion. The colours of this dress are very similar to the ones that appear in the description of tree and its setting when the story begins: white (the flowers of the pear tree) and green (the green jade of the sky). The analogy between Bertha and the tree now becomes clearer: the tree being in flower, it is assumed that the season of the year is spring and that Bertha, like the tree, is also in the process of blooming.

The arboreal cult played an important role in the religious history of Europe, and traces of this cult may still be found "in the spring or beginning of summer (...)" in many parts of Europe. "It was and still is the custom in certain regions to stroll in the whoods, cut down a tree and then carry it back to the village, where it is raised in the midst of great rejoicing". First of May processions were supposed to attract "the fructifying spirit" of nature; in these processions "this woodland sprite is often represented both by May tree and a man dressed in green leaves (...) or a girl attired in like manner".[6]

The phrase "Her petals rustled softly into the hall"sets the tone for understanding the ritual in *Bliss*, as it refers to Bertha's dress which gives her the appearance of a tree. The word "petals" signalizes the initial phrase of the ritual where by Bertha will come to flower just like the tree. The effects of the ritual are felt during the party when Bertha suddenly desires, "ardently, ardently", her husband for the first time; or when she cries"Good night, good-bye" to the departing guests and feels that "this self of hers was taking leave of them for ever". One is given to understand that another Bertha, looked up for too long, is about to be released. Looking into the "cold mirror (...) she hardly dared to look into", Bertha sees "a woman, radiant, with smiling, trembling lips, dark eyes and an air of listening, waiting for something ... divine to happen ... that she knew must happen ... infallibly". The dualism that is a part of Berthas's life is suggested at the beginning and the end of the narrative, when two cats, one gray, the other, appear. Paradoxically, this dualism seems to be more concerned with Pearl and Harry, accomplished in the art of deception and prevarication, than with the 'other' Bertha.

The unexpected discovery of the affair between Pearl and Harry serves to cut short a narrative which, up to a certain point, seemed destined to end on a happy note, i. e., Bertha, a woman reborn, lying "in the warm bed" in her husband's arms, after all the guests have gone. The much awaited sexual catharsis Bertha has been counting on does not take place, and irony concealed in the meaning of "bliss" now makes itself felt. When Pearl lays her moonbeam fingers on Harry's cheek and smiles her slleepy smile in the final scene, it is now quite

obvious that the contrastive symbols - Sun/Moon, Male/Female, Hot/Cold - are in reality allusions to the physical union of Pearl and Harry, and not Bertha and Harry.

Bliss is impressive in its ability to dissemble the meaning of symbols that arise in the course of the narrative. The heat of the sun, openly asssociated with Bertha's passion, cools with the waning day, to be replaced by the moon, a symbol of Pearl's coldness which, on the other hand, hides a hot carnal passion.

In order to tell her story of marital infidelity, Katherine Mansfield seems to have relied on certain theories of magic introduced by James Frazer in his celebrated work "The Golden Bough"; aside from the identification theory in psychology. The inspiration for *Bliss*, however, may have come from a more personal source. In 1918, the following annotation with regards the departure of a friend was made in her diary:

> And once again the door opened, and she passed as it were into another world - the world of night, cold, timeless, inscrutable. Again she saw the beautiful fall of the steps, the dark garden edged with fluttering ivy - on the other side of the road the huge bare windows - and above them the sky big and bright with stars.
> Again there came the silence that was like a question - but this time she did not hesitate. She moved forward, very softly and gently - as though fearful of making a ripple in that boundless pool of quiet. She put her arm around her friend. The friend is astonished - murmurs "It has been so nice". The other - "Goodnight, dear friend". A long tender embrance. Yes, that was it - of course that was that was waiting. [7]

It is quiet remarkable how closely this scene resembles the one in *Bliss*, when the two women stand without speaking before the tree. Antony Alpers associates it with the relationship between Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf, a relationship in which the homosexual element was never really confirmed. Yet, to look upon *Bliss* as a story dealing with a homosexual relationship would be to ignore more important factors, one of them being the reason why Virginia grew so infuriated as she read the story. Was it envy ? This is quite possible, after all Katherine was an exceptional writer and when she died, Virginia Woolf herself acknowledged in her diary that Katherine's was "the only writing I have ever been jealous of". [8]

But merely envy would not have warranted such a violent outburst. One would like to think that while reading *Bliss* Virginia gradually realized that she was reading a satire of the Bloomsbury group, a close circle of intellectuals and artists she and her husband, Leonard, belonged to. One could go even further and see in the pathetic figure of Bertha a caricature of Virginia Woolf herself. As to Pearl Fulton, wordly and

wise, beautiful and deadly, who better suited to play her part than Katherine Mansfield? It is said that she liked taking on different personalities for different occasions, and would even sign her letters with names she had invented. These masks were evidently grist for her artistic mill. [9]

It seems Virginia and Leonard Woolf had a preconceived idea of Katherine Mansfield as someone intelligent and pretty but somewhat on the vulgar side. In this scene, Pearl Fulton more than adequately fills out the picture of a "femme fetale"Katherine would have enjoyed being. As to Harry, one can only speculate whether or not he was inspired by the personality of Leonard Woolf, Virginia's faithful and solicitous husband.

Virginia Woolf once remarked that Katherine was given to using cheap perfume; [10] nevertheless, this did not prevent her and Leonard from receiving Katherine as a guest in their home and listening closely to her enlightening comments on literature and art. Antony Alpers insinuates that Katherine had a lasting influence on her friend's style. Coincidentally, Virginia wrote *Kew Gardens* after Katherine had already come up with the idea for a similar story. Another short story by Virginia, *The Mark on the Wall*, in which, for the first time, she began writing in a style that was totally innovational, was a result of Katherine's criticisms and suggestions in her review of *Night and Day*, a novel that had not been favourably received by the reading public. As Alpers sees it:

> Virginia undoubtedly learnt both from Katherine's writing and from her criticism, changing her own direction as a writer and taking to heart Katherine's review of "Night and Day" (...) after this, none of her novels was cast again in the old coventional mould. [11]

Leonard and Virginia Woolf were amused by Katherine's witticisms and her enormous supply of anecdotes; aside from being an extremely intelligent woman, she was also an excellent raconteur. All things considered, however, she seems to have had the last laugh.

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TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF POSITIVENESS: PRINCIPLES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Francisco Gomes de Matos

Introduction: A Case for a New Pedagogy

As the world becomes truly global-issues-minded, positive actions are called for. Having been advocating and applying human-rights-centred philosophies to language education, and having made a plea for a Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (cf FIPLV newsletter April 1984) and for the incorporation of the concept of Communicative Peace in methodological frameworks, the time seems ripe for marking a case for a pedagogy centered on positive values, or to use a summary paraphrase: a *Pedagogy of Positiveness*. Accordingly, a list of underlying principles is presented, so as to arouse interest and feedback on the part of colleagues working in other countries. The listing does not reflect any hierachical ordering, but rather the author's present concerns. Given the breadth of the principles, applications can be comprehensively designed.

Principles for the Positive Teaching-Learning of Languages

1 Teaching-learning well is teaching-learning for the well-being of individuals, groups, communities.

2 Interacting with Nature is a constant, dynamic search for acquiring, creating and experiencing positive well-values in one's environment.

3 Developing as human beings involves the integration, nurturing and sharing of positve cultural, ethical, linguistic, moral, social, spiritual values.

4 A language(native, second, foreign) is learned through positive, constructive, human dignifyng use.

5 Enhancing the positive vocabulary of one's culture, as well as that of other cultures, contributes to ecologically-sound perceptions of local and cross-cultural contexts and realities.

6 Reading a text (especially fiction) is the creative construction of positive, life-affirming and life-sustaining meanings (or addition thereof, if they are conspicuously absent from the author's text).

7 Writing a text is the creation and sharing of positively-conceived and intended messages aimed at improving the humanness of persons.

8 Helping a human being become literate (by acquiring varied literacies as called for by economic, sociocultural contexts) is creating conditions for him or her to read.

9 Improving the quality of life on earth is a permanent, open-

ended commitment to helping transform local living conditions, especially of the poor and of all those socially and economically discriminated against.

10 Positive attitudes toward language users and learners need to be inculcated.

11 Teachers can help build positive attitudes and actions for communities to value language-learning (bilingualism, mutilingualism, multiculturalism) as an ecologically formative experience. By integrating insights from ecology, language pedagogy, cross-cultural communication, psychology of learning, linguistics, human rights, a truly inter-disciplinary model can be constructed so that learning languages can become a functionally construcitve experience aimed at the ethical, moral, sociocultural, emotional growth of persons.

12 Ecologically-meaningful, transformative actions are needed in today's classrooms.

Accordingly, language teachers have a crucial role to play by serving as living models of a Positive Pedagogy in which loving one's linguistic and cultural neighbors can come true.

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BOOK REVIEWS

JOSEPH KLEGRAF AND DIETRICH NEHLS (eds.). Essays on the English Language and Applied Linguistics on the Occasion of Gerhard Nickel's 60th Birthday.

Heidelberg: Gross, 1988, xxii + 488 pp., DM 170.00

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This is a landmark publication in the history of Applied Linguistics, since it pays tribute to the actions and achievements of one of the contemporary giants of that field, the German scientist-humanist Gerhard Nickel, whom this reviewer has know for many years in conection with AILA (the International Association of Applied Linguistics) and through IRAL (the International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching), with both of which Nickel's name promienetly associated. Mention should also be made of that scholar's memorable lecture tour of Brasil in 1974.

The volume contains a three-page biographical sketch, an eight-page list of publications by Nickel, a three-page Tabula Gratulatoria and five Parts, namely: I Synchronic English Linguistics (14 essays: 54 pages); III Contrastive Linguistics (8 essays: 102 pages); IV Applied Linguistics (7 essays: 110 pages); V Varieties of English (4 essays: 49 apges). Given the book's comprehensiveness, a selective focus will be adopted, also reflecting this writer's interests.

To those interested in the languages of publication factor, it may be revealing to learn that the 38 essays are all (except for one in French) in English. Surprisingly, there is not a single contribution in Nickel's native language!

From Part I, two essays have attracted this reader's attention: Sidney Greenbaum's *Syntactic devices for compression in English* and David J. Allerton's *Infinitivitis in English*. The former is a cogent case for a well-balanced linguistic economy, duly seasoned with grace and elegance, while the latter capitalizes on the tendency in informal conversational British English for speaks to replace the gerund with the infinitive. In Part II, Dietrich Nehl's long but well-documented and cleary exemplified essay sheds light on the development of the grammatical category of verbal aspect in English.

Part III provides good examples of the productivity of contrativists (the field, by the way, is represented by Contrastive Analysis and by Contrastive Rhetoric in the forthcoming *Oxford International Encyclopaedia of Linguistics*), as is the case with Dwight Bolinger's *The infinitive as complement of nouns in Spanish and English* and Rudiger Zimmermann's *Paraphrase errors and word-formation errors in advanced German learners of English*. Of special cross-cultural and cross-linguistic significative in Josef Vachek's *Some remarks on*

linguistic signals of emotion in Czech and English.

Part IV, the longest (110 pages), has insightful, thought-provovking contributions by well-known specialists, among them Wolfagang Kühlwein, Rudolf Filipovic', Larry Selinker, Bertil Malmberg, and Jan Svartvik. Of special interest to this journal's readership will be Filipovic's *Contact linguistics:Retrospect-prospect* —a plea for in-depth research in 'various areas of languages in contact' concludes the paper— and a pedagogically useful treatment of the teaching of the English prepositions, by Svartvik: *English prepositions in Applied Linguistics.*

The last part (the shortest: 49 pages) might appeal to sociolinguistics because of the sócio-political-linguistic issues dealt with: *A discouse model for Standard English* (James C. Stalker), *The myth of the classless and unchanging grapholect or Standard written English* (James Sledd), *The Channel islands: An anglicist's no man's island (Wolfgang Viereck), Reflections on language and development in tropical Africa* (Johs Spencer). In his paper, Stalker reminds us that 'too frequently we assume adequate similarity in discourse models within a country such as the United States just because we perceive a great deal of shared experience, knowlegde, and language, a perception fostered in part by public education and the pervasiveness of the mass media' and adds that 'there is enough variation even within assumed standard models that interlocutors must be constantly alert' (p. 448). Sledd's essay, a fine illustration of the linguist's application of that this reviewer would call a human rights approach to language education, urges 'teachers [to] constantly remind themselves that literacy, like a lock-pick, may open many doors but does not choose among them ... and before all American citizens, or even most of them, can learn standard written English well enough to use it confidently, drastic social changes must be made'(p. 465).

In short, a descriptively rich, applicationally inspired and inspiring volume, to be read cover to cover and to be cherished by those who share this reviewer's conviction that truly relevant science (both theoretical and applied) is the outcome of universal minds like that of Gerhard Nickel. May his pioneering efforts continue to bear fruit, through his own indefatiglabe work, that of his disciples and followers and those who share his commitment to a truly cross-cultural, human(izing) applied linguistics.

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OFÉLIA GARCÍA AND RICARDO OTHEGUY (EDS). ENGLISH ACROSS CULTURES, CULTURES ACROSS ENGLISH. A READER IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION, ***BERLIN: MOUTON DE GRUYTER, 1989.***

Francisco Gomes de Matos

This collection is volume 53 the series Contributions to the Sociology of Language, whose editor is Joshua A. Fishman, one of the wolrd's most interdisciplinary and prolific social scientists devoted to first-rate causes and issues. Fittingly,García and Otheguy acknowledge the help and trust of the Yeshiva sociolinguist, 'who over the years has been a most generous colleague and inspiring teacher'(p.x). EAC/CAE contains a 2 - page foreword, a 6 - page section on the authors, one page on the editors, a 10-page Introduction and two parts: I - English across Cultures (2 sections totaling 206pp) and II - Cultures across English (2 sections; 222 pp) . There is a 32-page Bibliography (covering mostly works written in the 1970s and the 1980s through 1988), a 6-page Author Index, and a 13-page Subject Index.

The international origin of the work is show by the geographic distribution of is authors: 10 from the United States and 16 from 13 countries (Australia, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, India, Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Sri lanka, The U.K.)

The Editor's Foreword tells us that 'the purpose of this volume is to study cross-cultutal interactions between people who have come to have access to the same English language sistem, but whose cultural and conceptual system have not yet reached high levels of convergence'(p.iii).

In their insighful, well-organized Introduction García and Otheguy cogently stress that 'wc need to examine not only what we, the consumers of the sociolagy of language, know about the oppressed, but what they, often the victims of social circumstances, know about us' (p.9).

Section One (Part) focuses on the impact of diferences in socio-cultural backgrounds of intercutors on communication in English, socio-pragmatic constraints, whereas Section Two deals with the impact of differences in socio-political realites on communication in English, macro-societal constraints. Two papers attracted this reviewer in the first Part: Ian. G. Malcolm's *Invisible culture in the classroom: Minority pupils and the principle of adaptation*, in which he reminds us that 'every multicultural class-room is a laboratory of cultural adptation, and teachers and pupils alike are the investigators who experiment with means of changing what they find there'(p. 134). It was gratifying (given this reviewer's interest in the issue of language learner's rights, cf. Gomes de Matos 1990) to see Malcolm's recognition of 'the right and the need of the learner to negotiate terms for interaction and to express

his/her meanings'(p.135).

Another paper caught the reviewer's attention for its human rights based philosophy and a thought-provoking treatment of current isuues: David Piper's *Socio-political influence on cultural identity in Canada: Implications for cross-cultural communication in English*. Among several statements well worth pondering upon and probing is this: 'Despite the apparent appeal of immmersion progamming to Canadian administrators the policy of submersion should be recognized, perhaps, as one of the greatest threats to successful cross-cultural communication in English in the future, since reduces opportunities for the dual development of secure second-cultural identity and language growth'(p.182).

From Part II, our favorites are John Algeo's *British-Americam lexical diferences. A typology of interdialectal variation* and Celia Alvarez' *Code-switching in narrative performance: A Puerto Rican speech community in New York*. The former provides a lucid, systematic demonstration of how a tipology of interdialectal differences 'can help us be aware of the diversity that overlies the unity of English and to understand the ways in which English varies across cultures'(p.241), and the latter cleary shows that by 'using quantitative methods to uncover the relationship between language use, narrative structure and code switching in discourse, we discovered that language and the structure of narrative did have an effect on the occurrence of code-switching' (p.385). To those intersted in the systemetic study of narrative performance in the East Harlem Puerto Rican speech community, Alvarez'1988 PhD dissertation is a must, to be added to this volume's comprehensive blibliographic coverage.

Readers with a terminological bent might be interested to know that the high-frequency adjective is ever-present in this book, as this partial listing shows(*communicative)* act, synchorny, difficulties, interference, strategies, asynchrony, situations, differences, system, inequality, rules, competence, breakdown, intent, awareness, behaviors, problems, role, patterns, norms, routines, deviation categories, style, needs, skills, functions.

The editors and the publisher are to be commended for having made this highly readable and legible (the often dense messages are relatively comfortable to he eye) book available, for it is a mine of revealing, at times provocative data/information not only for scientist but also for educators. As such, it could become in indispensable source-and-action book in Cross-cultural Communication Programs and in Sociology of Language Seminars.

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